

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

During the week of January 14 - 18, 2008 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Aiken 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, Aiken DSS supervisors, representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health and Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Period under Review: January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007

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. Agency data 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.

Aiken County DSS
 Child Welfare Services Review
 January 2008

Ratings

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

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

The county's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of two items:

- 1) Timeliness of initiating investigations **Area Needing Improvement**
- 2) Repeat Maltreatment **Area Needing Improvement**

| Agency Data | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| Performance Measure 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations | | | | |
| Objective: 100% in <= 24 hours (state law) | | | | |
| | Number of Investigations | Number of Investigations Initiated Timely | Percent of Investigations Initiated Timely | Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 18,824 | 17,791 | 94.5 | (1,033) |
| Aiken | 636 | 590 | 92.8 | (46) |

Explanation of Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all (100%) accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. Agency data indicates that for the 12 month period under review, Aiken County initiated 590 of 636 (92.8%) investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours.

Stakeholder Comments: Child Protective Services workers are efficient at initiating contact within the required timeframes. Workers do not always enter the initial contact in the system correctly. This is predominately a problem for new workers. It takes new workers more than 6 months or more to learn their job.

Aiken County DSS
 Child Welfare Services Review
 January 2008

Agency Data

Performance Measure 3: Treatment Cases With No New Indicated Reports – Of all treatment cases that were closed during the year reporting period, what percentage did Not have a new founded intake within 12 months of the treatment case being closed?

Objective: $\geq 87.55\%$ Agency Average

| | Number of Treatment Cases Closed | Number of Treatment Cases with no founded intake within 12 months | Percent of Treatment Cases that did not have a new Founded intake within 12 months | Number of Cases Above (Below) State Average |
|-------|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| State | 4,948 | 4,332 | 87.55 | N/A |
| Aiken | 256 | 210 | 82.03 | (14.1) |

Explanation of Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item measures the occurrence of maltreatment among children under agency supervision during the period under review. Reviewers found no incidents of repeat maltreatment among children in foster care. However, agency data indicates that the frequency of maltreatment among children in in-home treatment cases failed to meet the state average.

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

The county's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of two items:

- 3) Services to family to protect children and prevent removal **Area Needing Improvement**
- 4) Risk of Harm **Area Needing Improvement**

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Safety Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Children in Home and Prevent Removal. | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Treatment | 8 | 80 | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 12 | 86 | 2 | 14 | 6 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Children and Prevent Removal

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item assesses whether services were adequate to protect children in their home and prevent their removal and placement into foster care. Reviewers found that the agency's decisions to remove children from their homes and place them in foster care were consistently correct. Agency data indicates that 88% of treatment cases were closed within 12 months. However, reviewers found that the families in 20% of the treatment cases were not receiving the services needed to address the safety concerns within the home.

Stakeholder Comments: Some families live further out in the rural areas and services may not be accessible. Transportation is a problem but DSS tries to work with our agency in getting clients to services.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Safety Item 4: Risk of Harm | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 6 | 60 | 4 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 16 | 80 | 4 | 20 | 0 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 4: Risk of Harm

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item assesses whether the agency's interventions reduced risks of harm to children. In 40% of the treatment cases, risk of harm was not adequately managed. In those cases, caseworkers clearly described serious risk factors that remained in the home, but failed to take actions needed to reduce those risk factors. In several cases, reviewers found that children were placed with alternative adult caregivers with no evidence of background checks having been conducted.

Aiken County DSS
 Child Welfare Services Review
 January 2008

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

The county's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of six items:

- 5) Foster care re-entries **Strength**
- 6) Stability of foster care placement **Strength**
- 7) Permanency goal for child **Strength**
- 8) Reunification or permanent placement with relatives **Strength**
- 9) Adoption **Strength**
- 10) Permanency goal of **Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)** **Strength**

Agency Data

Performance Measure 7: Foster Care Re-entries – Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification in the 12 month period prior to the reporting period, the percent that did not re-enter foster care within 12 months of the date of their discharge.

Objective: $\geq 90.1\%$ (federal standard)

| | Number of Children Reunited During Reporting Period | Number of Children Discharged Who Did Not Re-enter Foster Care | Percent of Children Discharged Who Did Not Re-enter Foster Care | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
|-------|---|--|---|--|
| State | 2,458 | 2,316 | 94.22 | 101.3 |
| Aiken | 92 | 83 | 90.22 | 0.1 |

Explanation of Item 5: Foster Care Re-entries

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item measures the frequency of children re-entering foster care within a year of discharge. The federal standard for this measure is that 90.1% of children leaving foster care not re-enter within a year of discharge. Agency data indicates that Aiken County DSS met the standard.

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

| Agency Data | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Performance Measure 6: Stability of Foster Care Placements – Of all children who had been in foster care at least 8 days but less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? | | | | |
| Objective: $\geq 86\%$ (federal standard) | | | | |
| | Foster Care Services Open > 7 days and < 12 Months | Number With No More than 2 Placements | Percent with No More than 2 Placements | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 4,321 | 3,438 | 79.56 | (308.3) |
| Aiken | 115 | 107 | 93.04 | 7.3 |

Explanation of Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placements

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item measures the frequency of placement changes for children in foster care, and assesses the reasons for those changes. The federal standard for this measure is at least 86% of the children in care (at least 8 days but less than 12 months) have no more than two placements in the past year. Agency data shows that 93.04% of foster children in Aiken County had two or fewer placements.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 7: Permanency Goal for Children | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 9 | 90 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 7: Permanency Goal for Children

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness of permanency goals for children in foster care and the timeliness of those permanency decisions. Reviewers found that in 90% of the cases, the agency quickly determined the correct permanency plan for the children in foster care.

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

| Agency Data | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Performance Measure 8: Length of Time to Achieve Reunification – Of all children who were reunited with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, the percentage that were reunited in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal. | | | | |
| Objective: >= 75.2% (federal standard) | | | | |
| | Number of Children Returned to Parents/Caretakers | Number of Children Reunited in < 12 Months | Percent of Children Reunited in < 12 Months | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 2,296 | 1,776 | 77.35 | 49.4 |
| Aiken | 62 | 56 | 90.23 | 9.4 |

Explanation of Item 8: Reunification or Permanent Placement with Relatives

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the activities and processes necessary to accomplish the goal of reunification with caregivers or placement with relatives. Agency data shows that 90.23% of children were reunited in less than 12 months. Reviewers found that the agency’s decisions to return children home were based on evidence that the risks of harm were reduced.

| Agency Data | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Performance Measure 9: Length of Time to Finalized Adoption – Of all children who left foster care due to finalized adoption during the reporting year, what percentage left foster care within 24 months from the date of their latest removal from home? | | | | |
| Objective: >= 36.6% (federal standard) | | | | |
| Report Period: December 1, 2006 to November 30, 2007 | | | | |
| | Number of Adoptions Finalized | Number of Adoptions Finalized < 24 Months | Percent of Adoptions Finalized in < 24 Months | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 399 | 69 | 17.3 | (330) |
| Aiken | 8 | 4 | 50 | 4 |

Explanation of Item 9: Adoption

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the process within the child welfare system to achieve timely adoptions for children in foster care. The federal standard is that at least 36.6% of adoptions be completed within 24 months of a child entering care. Agency data indicates that 44.4% of Aiken County children were adopted within the timeframe. Agency data also shows that the percentage of timely Merit and Permanency Planning hearings surpassed the state average.

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

| Onsite Review Findings | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 10: Permanency Goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 4 | 100 | | | 6 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 10: Permanency Goal of APPLA

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of services provided to children with the permanency plan of APPLA. Reviewers found that all children with this plan were receiving timely and appropriate services.

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

This outcome is based on the rating of 6 items:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 11) Proximity of foster care placement | Strength |
| 12) Placement with siblings in foster care | Strength |
| 13) Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care | Area Needing Improvement |
| 14) Preserving connections | Area Needing Improvement |
| 15) Relative placement | Area Needing Improvement |
| 16) Relationship of child in care with parents | Area Needing Improvement |

| Onsite Review Findings | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 9 | 100 | | | 1 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to keep children close enough to their families so that essential relationships can be maintained. One measure used to evaluate this item is the percentage of children who are placed within the county. The objective is at least 70% of the children in care be placed within the county. Agency data shows that 80% of Aiken County DSS children were placed within the county.

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 12: Placement with Siblings | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 12: Placement with Siblings in Foster Care

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to keep siblings together when it is appropriate to do so. In every foster care case, reviewers determined that the agency attempted to keep siblings together. When siblings were not together, there was sufficient information to indicate that separating siblings was in their best interest.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 13: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 3 | 43 | 4 | 57 | 3 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 13: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to ensure that visits occur between children in foster care and their parents and siblings. In several cases, reviewers found that visits were not offered to biological fathers even when their whereabouts were known.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 14: Preserving Connections | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 4 | 67 | 2 | 33 | 4 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 14: Preserving Connections

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to preserve children's connections to the people, places and things that are important to them. In

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

33% of the cases, the agency's efforts to preserve connections were limited to the parents and siblings of children in foster care, to the exclusion of other important relationships. As an example, in one case, an aunt and an unrelated friend of the family expressed interest in maintaining contact with a child but there were no documented efforts to help preserve or maintain those relationships.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 15: Relative Placement | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 7 | 78 | 2 | 22 | 1 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 15: Relative Placement

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to identify and assess relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. In 22% of the cases, reviewers found instances of relatives who expressed interest in caring for children, but no evidence that those relatives were assessed. Reviewers also found that relatives of the custodial parent (usually the mother) were assessed, but relatives of the non-custodial parent (usually the father) were not assessed.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 50 | 2 | 50 | 6 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to promote a supportive relationship between children in care and their parents, beyond the twice minimum visitation requirement. Half of the cases were managed properly and half needed improvement in this area, because contact between children and their parents was based on minimum agency requirements rather than based on the needs of the child.

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

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

This outcome is based on the rating of four items:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 17) Needs and services of child, parents and caregivers | Area Needing Improvement |
| 18) Child and family involvement in case planning | Area Needing Improvement |
| 19) Worker visits with child | Area Needing Improvement |
| 20) Worker visits with parents | Area Needing Improvement |

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|
| Well Being Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, Foster Parents | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 8 | 80 | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 5 | 50 | 5 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 13 | 65 | 7 | 35 | 0 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents and Caregivers

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) Were the needs of the child, parents, and caregivers assessed, and 2) Did the agency take steps to meet the identified needs? In 80% of foster care cases, this item was rated strength. In 50% of the treatment cases, this was an area needing improvement. The most common deficiencies were failing to address the needs of alternative caregivers (including paramours and non-custodial parents).

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|
| Well Being Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 4 | 50 | 4 | 50 | 2 | 0 |
| Treatment | 4 | 40 | 6 | 60 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 8 | 44 | 10 | 56 | 2 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to involve parents and children in the case planning process. Reviewers found that involving parents and age-appropriate children in case planning was not a common practice for

Aiken County DSS
 Child Welfare Services Review
 January 2008

caseworkers in foster care or treatment cases. Overall, only 44% of the clients had some say in the development of their case plan.

Stakeholder Comments: All treatment plans look alike. Clients seem to be rarely involved in case planning. The agency does not seem to be involving the families in developing or engaging them in treatment planning.

| Agency Data | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Well Being Item 19: Face-to-Face Visits with Children | | | | |
| Objective: 100% (Agency Policy) | | | | |
| Report Period: December 1, 2006 - November 30, 2007 | | | | |
| | Number of Children Under Agency Supervision at Least One Complete Calendar Month | Number of Children Visited Every Month | Percent of Children Visited Every Month | Children Without a Documented Face-to-Face Visit Every Month |
| Foster Care | 134 | 108 | 80.6 | -26 |
| Treatment | 785 | 448 | 57.07 | -337 |

Explanation of Item 19: Face-to-Face Visits with Children

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with children under agency supervision, and evaluates the quality of those visits. Agency data shows that children in in-home treatment cases were less likely to be seen each month than children in foster care. Policy requires that at least half of worker visits with children in foster care occur at the child’s place of residence. For Aiken DSS, only 34.53% of the visits occurred at the child’s place of residence. Reviewers found that caseworkers consistently addressed appropriate issues during their visits with children.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 20: Worker Visits with Parent(s) | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 33 | 4 | 67 | 4 | 0 |
| Treatment | 4 | 40 | 6 | 60 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 6 | 38 | 10 | 62 | 4 | 0 |

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

Explanation of Item 20: Worker Visits with Parents

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with parents, and evaluates the quality of those visits. Both foster care and treatment cases showed significant deficiencies in this area. Reviewers found evidence of caseworkers who made their monthly visits, but did not appear to understand the purpose of those visits. In some instances, there was no explanation given why the agency did not attempt to involve the fathers of children in care. In one case, a father was in the home during a visit but the worker appeared to focus primarily on the mother.

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

21) Educational need of the child

Strength

Onsite Review Findings

Well Being Item 21: Educational Needs of Child

| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
|-------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 7 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Treatment | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 12 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and address the educational needs of children under agency supervision. Both foster care and in-home treatment cases sufficiently assessed children's educational needs and followed up when appropriate. Every record contained recent school documentation including report cards and other relevant information.

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

22) Physical health of the child

23) Mental health of the child

Area Needing Improvement

Strength

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 22: Physical Health of the Child | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 8 | 80 | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 8 | 80 | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 16 | 80 | 4 | 20 | 0 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 22: Physical Health of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and attend to the physical and dental health needs of children under agency supervision. In 20% of foster care and treatment cases this area needed improvement because either a child's needs were not assessed or there was no documentation to indicate that there was appropriate follow-up. As an example, in one foster care case, a child was eligible to receive services through BabyNet, yet no referral was made.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 23: Mental Health of the Child | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 8 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Treatment | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 12 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 23: Mental Health of the Child

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and meet the mental health needs of children under agency supervision. Reviewers found documentation in both foster care and treatment cases to support that this item was assessed and appropriately addressed. Both foster care and treatment cases had excellent supporting documentation for this item.

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

| |
|--------------------------|
| Unfounded Investigations |
|--------------------------|

| | Yes | No |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Was the investigation initiated timely? | 5 | 0 |
| Was the assessment adequate? | 5 | 0 |
| Was the decision appropriate? | 5 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 24: Unfounded Investigations

This is an area of **Strength** Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the agency’s investigative process and determines if decisions were supported by the facts of the cases. Reviewers found quality assessments and decisions that were well supported by the evidence gathered.

| |
|----------------------|
| Screened Out Intakes |
|----------------------|

| | Yes | No | Cannot Determine |
|--|------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Was the Intake Appropriately Screened Out? | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Not Applicable |
| Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted? | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| Were Appropriate Referrals Made? | 1 | 1 | 8 |

Explanation of Item 25: Screened Out Intakes

This is area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency screens out reports of incidents that the agency does not have the legal authority to investigate. All of the intakes were screened out because they did not allege anything that met the legal definition of abuse or neglect. The agency did an excellent job of contacting schools, law enforcement and other collaterals to gather information before making the decision to screen out intakes.

| |
|----------------------|
| Foster Home Licenses |
|----------------------|

Explanation of Item 26: Foster Home Licenses

This is an area of **Strength** for Aiken DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency ensures that all foster homes comply with licensing requirements. There were no unlicensed foster homes. Documentation in the hard files and in CAPSS was consistent. There

Aiken County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
January 2008

was evidence of quality quarterly reviews being conducted, annual background checks, timely fire inspections and evidence of supervisory reviews being conducted.

| Aiken County DSS Summary Sheet | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 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: | *ANI | Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment | 10/10= 100% | 0 | 10 |
| Item 2: | *ANI | Repeat maltreatment | 20/20= 100% | 0 | 0 |
| Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. | | | | | |
| Item 3: | ANI | Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal | 12/14= 86% | 2/14=14% | 6 |
| Item 4: | ANI | Risk of harm to child(ren) | 16/20 = 80% | 4/20 = 20% | 0 |
| Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. | | | | | |
| Item 5: | Str | Foster care re-entries | 2/2=100% | 0 | 8 |
| Item 6: | Str | Stability of foster care placement | 9/10 = 90% | 1/10=10% | 0 |
| Item 7: | Str | Permanency goal for child | 9/10 = 90% | 1/10 =10 % | 0 |
| Item 8: | Str | Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives | 2/2 =100% | 0 | 8 |
| Item 9: | *Str | Adoption | 3/4=75% | 1/4 = 25% | 6 |
| Item 10: | Str | Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) | 4/4 = 100% | 0 | 6 |
| Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children. | | | | | |
| Item 11: | Str | Proximity of foster care placement | 9/9 = 100% | 0 | 1 |
| Item 12: | Str | Placement with siblings | 4/4 = 100 % | 0 | 6 |
| Item 13: | ANI | Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care | 4/7 = 57 % | 3/7 = 43 % | 3 |
| Item 14: | ANI | Preserving connections | 4/6 = 67% | 2/6 = 33 % | 4 |
| Item 15: | ANI | Relative placement | 7/9 = 77 % | 2/9 = 23% | 1 |
| Item 16: | ANI | Relationship of child in care with parents | 2/4 = 50 % | 2/4 = 50 % | 6 |
| Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. | | | | | |
| Item 17: | ANI | Needs and services of child, parents, caregiver | 13/20= 65% | 6/20 = 32% | 0 |
| Item 18: | ANI | Child and family involvement in case planning | 8/18 = 44% | 10/18= 56% | 2 |
| Item 19: | ANI | Worker visits with child | 16/20 = 80 % | 4/20 = 20% | 0 |
| Item 20: | ANI | Worker visits with parent(s) | 6/16 = 38% | 9/16= 62% | 4 |
| Item 21: | Str | Educational needs of the child | 12/12 = 100% | 0 | 8 |
| Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. | | | | | |
| Item 22: | ANI | Physical health of the child | 16/20 = 80% | 4/20 = 20% | 0 |
| Item 23: | Str | Mental health of the child | 12/12=100% | 0 | 8 |

The objective is that 90% of cases be rated "Strength".

Str = Strength

ANI = Area Needing Improvement

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Child Welfare Services Review
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* = Rating based on agency data, not onsite review findings