

**Pickens County DSS  
Child Welfare Services review  
September 2009**

During the week of September 21 - 25, 2009, a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Pickens 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, foster child, Pickens DSS supervisor and workers, representative from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health and Guardian Ad Litem Program.

**Period under Review: September 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009**

**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, and Foster Care.

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.

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**Ratings**

The standard that must be met for all items reviewed onsite is 95%. 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 | <b>Area Needing Improvement</b> |
| 2) Repeat Maltreatment                     | <b>Area Needing Improvement</b> |

**Agency Data**

**Performance Measure 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations on Reports of Child maltreatment** - Of all reports of child maltreatment that were accepted for investigation during the reporting period, what percentage had a dictation type contact of initial contact where the action date is within 24 hours of accepting the report?  
Report Period: August 1, 2008 to July 31, 2009

**Objective:** 100% in <= 24 hours (state law)

	Number of Investigations	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Percent of Investigations Initiated Timely	Numbers of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	17,760	17,418	98.07%	(342)
Pickens	494	492	99.60%	(2)

**Onsite Review Findings**

**Safety Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment**

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	80%	1	20%	5	0
Treatment	8	90%	1	10%	1	0
Total of Cases	12	86%	2	14%	6	0

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**Explanation of Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. Agency data indicates that for the 12-month period under review, Pickens initiated 492 of its 494 investigations (99.60%) of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours. Although those performance numbers are near perfect, 14% of the cases reviewed onsite revealed practice issues that need attention: a) contact with alleged perpetrators made by phone rather than face-to-face, and, b) a case assigned a Low risk rating that should have received a High risk rating, allowing for a response time that did not ensure the immediate safety of the alleged victim child. The inappropriate assignment of risk ratings may be due to the fact that Pickens DSS had only one permanently assigned staff to do intake, with other workers assigned on a rotating basis.

<b>Agency Data</b>				
<b>Performance Measure 3: Treatment Cases With No New Indicated Reports</b> – 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? Report Period: August 1, 2008 to July 31, 2009				
<b>Objective:</b> $\geq$ 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	5,962	5,289	88.71%	
Pickens	181	151	83.43%	(9.6)

<b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b>						
<b>Safety Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	70%	3	30%	0	0
Treatment	7	70%	3	30%	0	0
Total of Cases	14	70%	6	30%	0	0

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**Explanation of Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item measures the occurrence of maltreatment among children under agency supervision, or within a year of having their case closed by the agency. Reviewers determined that 30% of the children under agency supervision experienced additional or ongoing maltreatment because of the agency's failure to resolve risk of harm issues. In most of those cases, additional incident reports were made, accepted by the agency and indicated.

**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 & prevent removal | <b>Strength</b>                 |
| 4) Risk of Harm   | <b>Area Needing Improvement</b> |

**Onsite Review Findings**

**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	10	100%	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	14	100%	0	0	6	0

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

This is an area of **Strength** for Pickens DSS. This item assesses whether services were adequate to protect children in their home and prevent their removal and placement into foster care. In all of the treatment cases reviewed, appropriate services were being offered to safely maintain the children in their home. The decision to place children in foster care was appropriate in every case reviewed.

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<b>Onsite Review Findings</b>						
<b>Safety Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management</b>						
	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 Assessment and Safety Management**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item assesses whether the agency's interventions reduced risk of harm to children. In 100% of the foster care cases, risk of harm was adequately managed. Several practice issues caused 40% of the treatment cases to need improvement. In some of those cases risk of harm to children in the home was not properly managed because the agency did not complete criminal background checks and assessments on paramours who lived in the home. In other cases, background checks were not completed on alternative caregivers who had physical custody of the children. There was a lack of diligent follow-up to address safety concerns once the agency became aware of them.

**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  | <b>Area Needing Improvement</b> |
| 6) Stability of foster care placement  | <b>Strength</b>                 |
| 7) Permanency goal for child   | <b>Area Needing Improvement</b> |
| 8) Reunification/ permanent placement with relatives                             | <b>Area Needing Improvement</b> |
| 9) Adoption  | <b>Area Needing Improvement</b> |
| 10) Permanency goal of Alternate Planned<br>Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) | <b>Strength</b>                 |

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<b>Agency Data</b>				
<b>Performance Measure 7: Foster Children Who do Not Re-Enter Care</b> - Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification in the 12 month period prior to reporting period, what percentage did Not re-enter foster care within 12 months of the date of their discharge from the prior foster care episode.				
<b>Objective:</b> 90.1% (Federal Standard)				
	Number of Foster Children Reunified during Reporting Period	Number of Children Who Did Not Re-enter Foster Care Within 12 Months	Percent of Children Who Did Not Re-Enter Foster Care Within 12 Months	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,008	2,754	91.56%	
Pickens	62	48	77.42%	(7.9)

**Explanation of Item 5: Foster Care Re-entries**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item measures the frequency of children re-entering foster care within a year of discharge. To meet the objective for this item, 90.1% of children must not re-enter foster care within a year of discharge. Agency data shows that 77.42% of the children did not re-enter foster care within 12-months of the date of their discharge from the previous foster care episode. This is below the federal standard.

<b>Agency Data</b>				
<b>Performance Measure 6: Stability of Foster Care Placements</b> – 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, the percentage that had no more than two placement settings.				
<b>Objective:</b> >= 86.0% (federal standard)				
	FC Services Open >7 days and < 12 months	Number with No More than 2 placements	Percent with No More than 2 placements	Number Above (Below) Objective
State	3,903	2,918	74.76%	(231.7)
Pickens	115	100	86.96%	1.1

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**Onsite Review Findings**

**Permanency Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement**

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100%	0	0	0	0

**Explanation of Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement**

This is an area of **Strength** for Pickens DSS. This item measures the frequency of placement changes for children in foster care, and assesses the reasons for those changes. The objective is that at least 86% of the children in care have two or fewer placements within 12 months.

Agency data shows that 86.96% of Pickens county children had two or fewer placements. All of the foster care cases reviewed onsite involved children in stable placements, or placement changes made to help children achieve permanency.

**Onsite Review Findings**

**Permanency Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child**

	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 Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness of permanency goals for children in foster care and the timeliness of those permanency decisions. Reviewers determined that in 90% of the foster care cases, the agency quickly identified the appropriate goal. One case needed improvement because the child entered foster care in September 2008, and the agency did not establish a goal of reunification until March 2009.

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<b>Onsite Review Findings</b>						
<b>Permanency Item 8: Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement with Relatives</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	75%	1	25%	6	0

**Explanation of Item 8: Reunification or Permanent Placement with Relatives**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens 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 74.19% of children who entered foster care in Pickens returned home within a year. That is only one percentage point below the federal standard of 75.2%. However, agency data also shows that only 37.29% of children in foster care had Merit Hearings within the required 35 days. The late Merit Hearings, along with non-compliance on the part of drug-addicted parents, delayed permanency for the children with this permanency plan.

<b>Agency Data</b>				
<b>Performance Measure 9: Time to Finalized Adoption</b> – 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?				
<b>Objective:</b> >= 36.6% (National 75 <sup>th</sup> percentile)				
<b>Report Period:</b> August 1, 2008 – July 31, 2009				
	Number of Adoptions Finalized	Number of Adoptions Finalized in < 24 months	Percent of Adoptions Finalized in < 24 Months	Number of Adoptions Above (Below) Objective
State	529	104	19.66%	(89.6)
Pickens	11	4	36.36%	0.0

<b>Onsite Review Findings</b>						
<b>Permanency Item 9: Adoption</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	4	100%	6	0



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**Explanation of Item 9: Adoption**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the process within the child welfare system to achieve timely adoptions for children in foster care. During the period under review Pickens DSS completed 4 of its 11 adoptions (36.36%) within 24 months of the children entering foster care. That is less than a percentage point below the 36.6% federal standard. This is an area needing improvement because of casework practice issues and legal processes that need improvement. Agency data shows that only 4% of the children in care more than 17 months were legally free for adoption. That was because of late merit, permanency and TPR hearings. In every case with a plan of adoption reviewers found that the agency did not diligently look for or assess the legal fathers of children.

**Stakeholder’s Comment:** “Pickens County has court on Wednesdays from 2pm to 5pm. The limited amount of court time causes delays in permanency.”

**Onsite Review Findings**

**Permanency Item 10: Permanency Goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)**

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	100%	0	0	8	0

**Explanation of Item 10: Permanency Goal of APPLA**

This is an area of **Strength** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of services provided to children with the permanency plan of APPLA. Reviewers also rate whether the agency attempted to locate and reassess relatives or non-relatives that were willing to commit to the youth’s long-term care every six months. Reviewers found that in 100% of the cases the children with the plan of APPLA were receiving the appropriate Independent Living services.

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

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

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

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<b>Agency Data</b>				
<b>Performance Measure 13: Foster Children Placed Within county of Origin</b> – Of all children in foster care during the reporting period (excluding MTS and Adoptions children), what percentage are placed within the county of origin?				
<b>Objective:</b> >= 70% (Agency established objective)				
	Number of Children in Foster Care	Number of Children Placed <b>Within</b> County of Origin	Percent of Children Placed <b>Within</b> County of Origin	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	6,037	4,108	68.05%	(117.9)
Pickens	166	96	57.83%	(20.2)

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens 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 that at least 70% of the children in care be placed within the county. Agency data shows that 57.83% of Pickens DSS children were placed within the county. It should be noted that Pickens DSS has a total of 52 foster homes serving 93 foster children. Of the 93 children, 17 are ISCEDC\* eligible and require therapeutic placements.

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

**Explanation of Item 12: Placement with Siblings in Foster Care**

This is an area of **Strength** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to keep siblings together when it is appropriate to do so. In 100% of the cases reviewed, sibling groups were kept together when appropriate.

\*Interagency System of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children (ISCEDC) is a specialized funding source.

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<b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b>						
<b>Permanency Item 13: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	56%	4	44%	1	0

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to ensure that visits occur between children in foster care and their siblings and parents. In most cases the agency arranged for visits between children and their mothers, and formalized those arrangements in written visitation plans. However, in 44% of the cases reviewed, the agency failed to include non-custodial fathers in those visitation plans, and failed to communicate with non-custodial fathers to determine if such visits were possible or appropriate.

<b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b>						
<b>Permanency Item 14: Preserving Connections</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	89%	1	11%	1	0

**Explanation of Item 14: Preserving Connections**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens 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 89% of the cases reviewed, agency efforts were present to keep children within their same communities, and to help children maintain their relationships with family and friends. One case needed improvement because the agency failed to address the need for a child who entered care at the age of 13 to maintain his relationship with extended family members.

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<b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b>						
<b>Permanency Item 15: Relative Placement</b>						
	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 Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to identify and assess relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. In 78% of the cases reviewed, reviewers found that the agency consistently assessed maternal and paternal relatives as placement options. However, two cases needed improvement because the agency failed to assess the relatives of the children's father.

<b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b>						
<b>Permanency Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	75%	2	25%	2	0

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to support or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities (examples: phone calls, email, accompanying to various appointments, school activities, etc.). In 75% of the cases reviewed there were activities to support the parent-child relationship based on the needs of the child. In 25% of the cases, visitation plans failed to take into consideration such factors as the child's age or the need to increase contact for children transitioning from foster care to home.

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

The agency's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of four items:

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

**Onsite Review Findings**

**Well Being Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents and Caregivers**

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80%	2	20%	0	0
Treatment	7	70%	3	30%	0	0
Total Cases	15	75%	5	25%	0	0

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens 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? This was an area needing improvement for both foster care and treatment cases because caseworkers assessed some, but not all of the caregivers significant to the case. For example, a case might include a thorough assessment of both of the child's parents. However, the agency placed the child with grandparents without assessing the caregivers in that home.

**Onsite Review Findings**

**Well Being Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning**

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	44%	5	56%	0	0
Treatment	7	70%	3	30%	0	0
Total Cases	11	58%	8	42%	0	0

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to involve parents and children in the case planning process. Reviewers found that in 56% of the foster care and 30% of the treatment cases, parents and the age-appropriate children were not involved in the case planning process. In some of those cases, the treatment plans were not completed or updated when significant changes occurred in the case.

<b>Agency Data</b>				
<b>Performance Measure 14: Face-to-Face Visits With Children</b>				
<b>Objective: &gt;= 100% (Agency Policy)</b>				
	Number of Children Under Agency Supervision at Least One Complete Calendar Month	Number of Children Visited Every Month	Percent of Children Visited Every Month	Number of Children Above or (Below) Standard
Foster Care	134	132	98.51%	(2)
Treatment	798	591	74.06%	(62.6)

**Explanation of Item 19: Worker Visits with Child**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with children under agency supervision, and evaluates the quality of those visits. State law and agency policy require that children under agency supervision be seen each month. This is a strong area for foster care in that all of the children in care received face-to-face visits each month. Using information gathered onsite; reviewers determined that the two contacts that were not captured in CAPSS did occur. Almost 80% of those visits occurred in the child's place of residence, which is well above the 50% requirement. However, the 74.06% of the children in treatment cases visited each month fell below policy requirements. The number of in-home treatment cases doubled over the past three years, causing caseloads to increase beyond manageable levels, which caused the missed monthly visits.

<b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b>						
<b>Well Being Item 20: Worker Visit with Parent(s).</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	25%	6	75%	2	0
Treatment	6	70%	4	30%	0	0
Total Cases	8	44%	10	56%	0	0

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**Explanation of Item 20: Worker Visits with Parents**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with parents, and evaluates the quality of those visits. In 75% of the foster care cases and in 40% of the treatment cases improvement was needed because the agency failed to visit both parents during the period under review. In most of the foster care cases, the county failed to diligently search for or consistently follow up with the fathers of the children in foster care. This practice has serious permanency implications when and if the agency seeks to terminate parental rights.

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

The agency's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of one item:  
21) Educational needs of the child **Strength**

**Onsite Review Findings**

**Well Being Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child(ren)**

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

**Explanation of Item 21: Educational needs of the child**

This is an area of **Strength** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and meet the educational needs of children under agency supervision. In every case reviewed workers made direct contact with the schools and included copies of grade reports and attendance records in case files.

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

The agency's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of two items:  
22) Physical health of the child **Area Needing Improvement**  
23) Mental health of the child **Strength**

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<b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b>						
<b>Well Being Item 22: Physical Health of Child(ren)</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80%	2	20%	0	0
Treatment	9	90%	1	10%	0	0
Total Cases	17	85%	3	15%	0	0

**Explanation of Item 22: Physical Health of the Child**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and address the medical needs of children under agency supervision. In 80% of the foster care and in 90% of the treatment cases reviewed, the physical health and dental needs of the children were assessed and the identified medical needs were met. Copies of medical, dental and immunizations records were in most of the cases. Fifteen percent of the care cases needed improvement because they either lacked any medical assessment or failed to follow up on identified medical needs.

<b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b>						
<b>Well Being Item 23: Mental Health of Child(ren)</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	100%	0	0	3	0
Treatment	10	100%	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	17	100%	0	0	3	0

**Explanation of Item 23: Mental Health of the Child**

This is an area of **Strength** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and meet the mental health needs of children under agency supervision. In 100% of the foster care and treatment cases reviewed, the children's mental health needs were assessed and met.



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Unfounded Investigations
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	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Was the investigation initiated timely?	5	0
Was the assessment adequate?	4	1
Was the decision appropriate?	5	0

**Explanation of Item 24: Unfounded Investigations**

This is an area of **Strength** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the agency’s investigative process and determines if decisions were supported by the facts of the cases. All five investigations were initiated timely and the decisions to unfound the cases were supported by the evidence collected during the assessment.

Screened Out Intakes
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	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Cannot Determine</b>
Was the Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	4	6	0
			<b>Not Applicable</b>
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	3	4	3
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	1	3	6

**Explanation of Item 25: Screened Out Intakes**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency screens out reports of abuse and/or neglect to determine if intakes were appropriately screened out. Reviewers determined that 6 of the 10 intakes that were screened out should have been accepted for investigation. Reviewers learned that two of those intakes were subsequently re-reported, accepted, investigated and indicated by the agency. The other four intakes were accepted for investigation as a result of information provided during the onsite review.

Foster Home Licenses
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**Explanation of Item 26: Foster Home Licenses**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Pickens DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency ensures that all foster homes comply with licensing requirements. One of the foster home licenses reviewed was not valid because there was no FBI check completed on the foster parent’s 19 years old son. Documentation in the hard files and in CAPSS was consistent.

**Pickens County DSS  
Child Welfare Services review  
September 2009**

<b>Pickens County DSS Summary Sheet</b>				
<b>Performance Item or Outcome</b>		<b>Performance Item Ratings</b>		
		<b>Strength</b>	<b>Area Needing Improvement</b>	<b>N/A*</b>
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.				
Item 1: <b>ANI</b>	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	12/14=86%	2/14=14%	6
Item 2: <b>ANI</b>	Repeat maltreatment	14/20=70%	6/20=30%	0
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				
Item 3: <b>Str</b>	Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	15/15=100%	0	5
Item 4: <b>ANI</b>	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: <b>*ANI</b>	Foster care re-entries	6/6=100%	0	4
Item 6: <b>Str</b>	Stability of foster care placement	10/10=100%	0	0
Item 7: <b>ANI</b>	Permanency goal for child	9/10=90%	1/10=10%	0
Item 8: <b>*ANI</b>	Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	3/4 =75%	1/4 =25%	6
Item 9: <b>ANI</b>	Adoption		4/4 =100%	6
Item 10: <b>Str</b>	Permanency goal of <b>Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)</b>	2/2=100%	0	8
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				
Item 11: <b>*ANI</b>	Proximity of foster care placement	9/9=100%	0	1
Item 12: <b>Str</b>	Placement with siblings	6/6=100%	0	4
Item 13: <b>ANI</b>	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	5/9=56%	4/9=44%	1
Item 14: <b>ANI</b>	Preserving connections	8/9=89%	1/9=11%	0
Item 15: <b>ANI</b>	Relative placement	7/9=78%	2/9=22%	1
Item 16: <b>ANI</b>	Relationship of child in care with parents	6/8=75%	2/8=25%	2
Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				
Item 17: <b>ANI</b>	Needs and services of child, parents, caregiver	15/20=75%	5/20=25%	0
Item 18: <b>ANI</b>	Child and family involvement in case planning	11/19=58%	8/19=42%	1
Item 19: <b>ANI</b>	Worker visits with child	16/20=80%	4/20=20%	0
Item 20: <b>ANI</b>	Worker visits with parent(s)	8/18=44%	10/18=56%	2
Item 21: <b>Str</b>	Educational needs of the child	16/16=100%	0	4
Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				
Item 22: <b>ANI</b>	Physical health of the child	17/20=85%	3/20=15%	0
Item 23: <b>Str</b>	Mental health of the child	17/17=100%	0	3

The objective is that 95% of cases be rated "Strength."

Str = Strength

ANI = Area Needing Improvement

\* = Rating based on agency data, not onsite review findings