

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

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This summary report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) Lexington County Quality Assurance Review, conducted April 21-25, 2014. The period under review was October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

DSS Child Welfare Quality Assurance Reviews are conducted using the *Onsite Review Instrument* (OSRI) finalized by the federal Administration for Children & Families (ACF) in July 2008. This instrument is used to review foster care and family preservation services cases. Thirty cases were reviewed including 15 foster care and 15 family preservation cases.

The OSRI is divided into three sections: safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. There are two safety outcomes, two permanency outcomes, and three well-being outcomes. Reviewers collect information on a number of *items* related to each of the outcomes. The ratings for each *item* are combined to determine the rating for the outcome. Outcomes are rated as being substantially achieved, partially achieved, not achieved, or not applicable. The *items* are rated as *strength*, *area needing improvement*, or not applicable. Ratings for each of the outcomes are displayed in Table 1.

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

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Substantially Achieved</b>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved</b>
<b>Safety 1</b> CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	88% (7)	12% (1)	0% (0)
<b>Safety 2</b> CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE	47% (14)	16% (5)	37% (11)
<b>Permanency 1</b> CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS	13% (2)	80% (12)	7% (1)
<b>Permanency 2</b> THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN	21% (3)	72% (10)	7% (1)
<b>Well-Being 1</b> FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS	20% (6)	43% (13)	37% (11)
<b>Well-Being 2</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	69% (9)	8% (1)	23% (3)
<b>Well-Being 3</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS	27% (6)	32% (7)	41% (9)

Results for outcomes and *items* are reported by the number of cases and the percentage of total cases given each rating. In addition, the percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *areas needing improvement*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the *percentage of strengths*.

**SECTION I: REVIEW FINDINGS**

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

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

***Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations***

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

**Table 2.**

Rating	Item 1	Item 2
<i>Strength</i>	24% (7)	23% (7)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	3% (1)	0% (0)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	73% (22)	77% (23)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>87.5% (7)</b>	<b>100% (7)</b>

***Item 2: Repeat maltreatment***

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

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

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

***Item 3: Services to family***

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

**Table 3.**

Rating	Item 3	Item 4
<i>Strength</i>	33% (10)	50% (15)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	37% (11)	50% (15)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	30% (9)	0% (0)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>47.6% (10)</b>	<b>50% (15)</b>

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

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

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

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

***Item 5: Foster Care reentries***

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

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

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

**Item 7: Permanency goal for child**

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

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

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

**Item 9: Adoption**

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

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

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

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

Table 4.

Rating	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
<i>Strength</i>	23% (7)	30% (9)	17% (5)	13% (4)	3% (1)	3% (1)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	0% (0)	20% (6)	33% (10)	13% (4)	20% (6)	10% (3)
Not Applicable	77% (23)	50% (15)	50% (15)	74% (22)	77% (23)	87% (26)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>100% (7)</b>	<b>60% (9)</b>	<b>33.3% (5)</b>	<b>50% (4)</b>	<b>14.3% (1)</b>	<b>25% (1)</b>

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

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

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

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

**Item 12: Placement with siblings**

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

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

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

**Item 14: Preserving connections**

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

**Item 15: Relative placement**

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

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

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

Table 5.

Rating	Item 11	Item 12	Item 13	Item 14	Item 15	Item 16
Strength	37% (11)	17% (5)	10% (3)	33% (10)	10% (3)	0% (0)
Area needing improvement	3% (1)	10% (3)	33% (10)	13% (4)	30% (9)	40% (12)
Not Applicable	60% (18)	73% (22)	57% (17)	54% (16)	60% (18)	60% (18)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)
% Strengths	<b>91.7% (11)</b>	<b>62.5% (5)</b>	<b>23.1% (3)</b>	<b>71.4% (10)</b>	<b>25% (3)</b>	<b>0% (0)</b>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents**

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

**Table 6.**

Rating	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20
Strength	23% (7)	20% (6)	57% (17)	7% (2)
Area needing improvement	77% (23)	73% (22)	43% (13)	77% (23)
Not Applicable	0% (0)	7% (2)	0% (0)	16% (5)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)
% Strengths	<b>23.3% (7)</b>	<b>21.4% (6)</b>	<b>56.7% (17)</b>	<b>8% (2)</b>

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

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

**Item 21: Educational needs of child**

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

**Table 7.**

Rating	Item 21
Strength	30% (9)
Area needing improvement	13% (4)
Not Applicable	57% (17)
Total	100% (30)
% Strengths	<b>69.2% (9)</b>

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

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

**Item 22: Physical health of child**

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

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

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

**Table 8.**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Item 22</b>	<b>Item 23</b>
<i>Strength</i>	23% (7)	27% (8)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	40% (12)	27% (8)
Not Applicable	37% (11)	46% (14)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>36.8% (7)</b>	<b>50% (8)</b>

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

Item	October 2013 (PUR 10-1-2012 to 9-30-2013)	April 2014 (PUR 10-1-2013 to 3-31-2014)
1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations	60.0%	87.5%
2. Reoccurrence of Maltreatment	81.8%	100.0%
3. Services to Family	41.7%	47.6%
4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	43.3%	50.0%
5. Foster Care Re-Entries	87.5%	100.0%
6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	66.7%	60.0%
7. Permanency Goal for Child	53.3%	33.3%
8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Perm. Placement with Relatives	11.1%	50.0%
9. Adoption	44.4%	14.3%
10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	100.0%	25.0%
11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	81.8%	91.7%
12. Placement with Siblings	100.0%	62.5%
13. Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	58.3%	23.1%
14. Preserving Connections	78.6%	71.4%
15. Relative Placement	64.3%	25.0%
16. Relationship of Child in Care with Parent	33.3%	0.0%
17. Needs and Services for Child, Parents, and Caregivers	20.0%	23.3%
18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	26.7%	21.4%
19. Worker Visits with Child	50.0%	56.7%
20. Worker Visits with Parents	22.2%	8.0%
21. Educational Needs of the Child	76.9%	69.2%
22. Physical Health of the Child	21.7%	36.8%
23. Mental Health of the Child	50.0%	50.0%

## SECTION II: FOSTER HOME LICENSE REVIEW

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

Initial License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Applications
- Autobiography information
- Financial information
- Child factor's checklists
- Initial home assessment studies
- References
- Information related to firearms and ammunition in the house
- Pet vaccination information
- Background checks
- Convictions
- Required trainings
- Medical reports
- Fire inspections/re-inspections
- Disaster Preparedness Plans
- DHEC/Lead inspections
- Alternative caregiver forms
- Central registry check on alternative caregiver, if applicable
- A review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS
- Discipline Agreements
- Completion and issuance of the 1513 prior to the license being issued
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools

Renewal License review criteria include the following *items*:

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

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

- Updated home studies
- Discipline Agreements
- Fire drills
- Quarterly home visits



- Disaster Preparedness Plans
- Information concerning the alternative caregivers
- Alternative caregiver forms
- Applications
- Autobiography information
- Financial information
- Child factor’s checklists
- Initial home assessment studies
- References

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

Additionally, the percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Results of the review are noted in Table 10.

### Foster Home Licensing Findings for Lexington County

**Initial License Cases.** Two foster home issuances for initial/standard license were reviewed. One case reviewed was rated as *area needing improvement* because all of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license issuance. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* for the one case include:

**Background Checks:**

- File documentation did not reflect that sex offender registry checks for a foster child were completed as required by policy.

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

**Table 10. Summary of Ratings for Initial and Renewal Cases.**

Rating	Initial	Renewal
<i>Strength</i>	1 (50%)	1 (12.5%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	1 (50%)	7 (87.5%)
Total	2 (100%)	8 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>1 (50%)</b>	<b>1 (12.5%)</b>

**Background Checks:**

- There was not documentation to support that central registry, SLED, sex offender registry checks, and/or FBI checks for all individuals were completed or were completed in a timely manner.

**Medical Records:**

- Medical statements for all family members were not located in the file.

**Documentation:**

- There was a discrepancy between the information in CAPSS and the information on the current license regarding the number and age of children allowed in the home.

**Training:**

- Documentation of the required 28 hours of training was not noted in the file.

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

**Alternative Caregiver:**

- There was no alternative caregiver form in the file, thus no alternative caregiver/babysitter was identified according to the case record review.

**Fire Drills:**

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

**Safety:**

- All discipline agreements were not located in the case file or were not signed and/or dated.
- All disaster plans were not located in the case file or were not signed and/or dated.
- Documentation did not provide verification that quarterly home visits were completed and/or were timely.

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

A review of ten no action reports was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for a no action report. The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports on which no action was taken by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review No Action Reports Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and eleven questions regarding the no action decisions and processes (see Table 11).

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

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	10	0	10
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	6	4	0	10
3a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	6	4	0	10
3b. Explanation given why allegation did not meet legal definition of maltreatment	0	0	10	10
4. Safety factors documented on Intake Assessment not discovered by intake worker	2	8	0	10
5. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	8	0	2	10
6a. Risk Matrix results included statements contradictory to allegation	8	0	2	10
6b. Risk Matrix results failed to include all statements that support allegation	6	2	2	10
7. Contact with necessary collaterals prior to screen-out decision	2	4	4	10
8. Another intake referral on same perpetrator and/or child within 12 months	9	1	0	10
9. Intake Supervisor ensured consultation with another supervisory-level authority	0	9	1	10

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

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 12.

**Table 12. Summary of Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

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

In nine of ten cases of no actions reviewed, agency policy and procedures were not followed. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- The Risk Matrix was not thoroughly completed.
- The maltreatment tab selections were not consistent with the allegations documented.
- The results of the Risk Matrix included contradictory statements and failed to include statements addressing the family’s history with the agency.
- The risk assessment did not accurately reflect the level of risk due to a repeated and ongoing pattern of abuse and/or neglect.
- The documentation in the maltreatment tab in CAPSS was not thoroughly completed, and no explanation was provided.

- There were existing safety factors noted in the record which were not included in the intake assessment documentation.
- The family CPS history documented by the agency in the Risk Matrix did not reflect the history or reports documented in the CAPSS system.
- The agency failed to properly document a major injury/follow up to this in the file after they received notification that the injury occurred.
- Documentation did not include verification that the agency contacted all appropriate collaterals prior to deeming the case no action.
- The agency documented in the file that the allegation met the legal definition of maltreatment but failed to accept the report.

## SECTION IV: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES UNFOUNDED REPORTS REVIEW

Five unfounded reports were reviewed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed. The five unfounded reports were randomly selected from the list of all reports unfounded by the county during the period under review. The review was conducted using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Unfounded Report Instrument*. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and items regarding three primary areas (see Table 13):

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

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

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

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

The percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each decision to unfound. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 14.

**Table 14. Summary of Ratings for Unfounded Review**

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

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

- File documentation did not reflect that risk assessments of children in the home were adequate or ongoing. (3 cases)
- Documentation did not indicate that the initial contact was made within the assigned timeframe. (1 case)
- Documentation did not reflect that the agency made contact with a child during the entire case. (1 case)
- Documentation did not reflect that the agency made contact with and/or adequately completed follow-up with all collateral contacts. (3 cases)

- Documentation reflected that background checks for all appropriate individuals were not timely. (1 case)
- Documentation did not reflect that background checks were not conducted on all appropriate individuals. (1 case)
- Documentation did not reflect that the agency adequately assessed a parent. (1 case)
- Documentation in the file did not reflect that risk and safety concerns that were documented were addressed prior to unbounding the case. (1 case)

**SECTION V: FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES REVIEW**

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed prior to a referral to Family Support Services (FSS). The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Community-Based Prevention Services Assessment Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and eleven questions regarding the referral to the (FSS) Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 15).

**Table 15. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	1	4	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	5	0	0	5
3a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	1	4	0	5
3b. Explanation for allegation not meeting the legal definition of maltreatment	0	0	5	5
4. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	1	4	0	5
5. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	5	0	0	5
6a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	5	0	0	5
6b. Risk Matrix did not include statements that supported allegations	4	1	0	5
7. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	0	2	3	5
8. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	1	4	0	5
9. Family received community-based prevention services	1	1	3	5
10. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5

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

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 16.

**Table 16. Summary of Ratings for FSS Review**

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

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. In all five cases reviewed, there were deficiencies noted in following policy and procedure prior to a referral to FSS that led to the rating of *ANI*

Those issues identified include:

- Documentation of the results of the Risk Matrix were contradictory to the documentation of the allegations made by the reporter without reconciliation noted. (4 cases)

- The maltreatment tab documentation was not completed based on the documented allegations made by the reporter. (1 case)
- Statements included in the maltreatment tab documentation were not supported by the documentation of the allegation. (1 case)
- The maltreatment tab documentation was not thoroughly completed. (1 case)
- The agency documentation indicated that the allegation met the legal definition of maltreatment when the documentation of the allegation did not support this. (2 cases)
- Child and family risk factors were not appropriately documented in the case file. (2 cases)
- The Risk Matrix documentation was not thoroughly completed. (1 case)
- The intake assessment documentation did not include all applicable safety factors. (1 case)
- The agency failed to document any contact with the service provider who had previously worked with the family. (1 case)
- The agency failed to document any collateral contact with a school. (1 case)



## SECTION VI: VOLUNTARY CASE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for cases referred to Voluntary Case Management (VCM). The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Community-Based Prevention Services Assessment Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and twelve questions regarding the referral to the VCM Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 17).

**Table 17. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	5	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	4	1	0	5
3a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	3	2	0	5
3b. Explanation for allegation not meeting the legal definition of maltreatment	0	0	5	5
4. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	1	4	0	5
5. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	5	0	0	5
6a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	4	1	0	5
6b. Risk Matrix did not include statements that supported allegations	1	4	0	5
7. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	0	4	1	5
8. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	3	2	0	5
9. Family received community-based prevention services	0	3	2	5
10. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5

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

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 18.

**Table 18. Summary of Ratings for VCM Review**

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

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

- The information in and/or results documented on the Risk Matrix included contradictory information. (3 cases)
- Documentation did not indicate that all appropriate collateral contacts were made. (3 cases)

- The agency documented in the record that an allegation met the legal definition of maltreatment, when it did not meet the legal definition as stated by agency policy. (1 case)
- Documentation of the statements regarding the allegations were found to be contradictory. (1 case)
- There was no reference in the report documentation to support statements included in the documentation on the Risk Matrix. (1 case)
- Documentation did not reflect that a thorough search was conducted using CAPSS. (1 case)
- The maltreatment tab documentation was not adequately and accurately completed. (1 case)
- The rating level assigned to the case did not reflect the repeating and ongoing pattern of abuse as documented in the history. (1 case)

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

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses that were found in the cases for Lexington County during the review conducted April 21-25, 2014. The period under review was October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

### **Positives:**

*Item 2 (Repeat maltreatment)* and *Item 5 (Foster Care reentries)* were identified as *strengths* of the agency; all applicable cases reviewed were rated as *strength* with no *area needing improvement* (ANI).

### **Concerns:**

Information detailing those *items* rated as *area needing improvement* was obtained by reviewers through case file review, which includes the use of CAPSS, and through case related interviews. This information was detailed on the CFSR OSRI as support for rating selection. The following examines the *items* that had the highest negative ratings.

- *Item 3 (Services to family)* - 11 of 21 (52.4%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to provide appropriate services to the family to prevent the children from entering foster care. (4 cases)
  - The agency failed to assess the mother for safety related services. (4 cases)  
Cases that provided specific reasoning noted the following issues:
    - The agency failed to provide recommended random drug screens for the mother and her paramour. (1 case)
  - An alternative caregiver was not assessed for safety related services. (1 case)
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure the safety of the minor children in the home of the protector. (2 cases)
  - The agency did not see the mother for two consecutive sixty day periods during the PUR. (1 case)
  
- *Item 4 (Risk assessment and safety management)* - 15 of 30 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency failed to conduct risk and safety assessments on an ongoing basis. (7 cases)

- Assessments that were not being completed on an ongoing basis include:
        - Minor child(ren) (4 cases)
        - Foster Home (1 case)
        - Mother and paramour's home (1 case)
      - One case specifically detailed that there was no evidence the agency conducted assessments with a family for ninety days while the caseworker was out on medical leave. (1 case)
    - The agency did not make concerted efforts to assess and/or address the risk and safety concerns of the household. (8 cases)
      - Members of the family that were not being assessed and/or addressed for risk and safety include:
        - Child(ren) (5 cases)
        - Mother (2 cases)
        - Father (1 case)
      - One case specifically detailed that the agency failed to assess a mother after she had been arrested the day prior to the PUR for Cruelty to Children and Disorderly Conduct (under the influence of narcotics). (1 case)
- *Item 7 (Permanency goal for child) – 10 of 15 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The permanency goal was not established in a timely manner. (4 cases)  
Cases that provided specific reasoning noted the following issue:
    - The permanency goal of APPLA was not established in a timely manner. (2 cases)
  - The permanency goal was not appropriate for the target child. (2 cases)
  - The permanency goal of reunification was not specified in case file documentation. (1 case)
  - The agency was unable to provide the date a TPR complaint was filed. (1 case)
  - The exact date a concurrent goal was established could not be determined; therefore, timeliness could not be adequately assessed. (1 case)
  - The agency did not file a TPR in a timely manner. (1 case)
- *Item 8 (Reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives) – 4 of 8 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The permanency goal of guardianship/permanent custody was not achieved in a timely manner. (3 cases)

- The mother was not informed of all the treatment services she needed to complete in order to have the target child returned to her. (1 case)
- *Item 9 (Adoption)* – 6 of 7 (85.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner. (4 cases) A case that provided specific reasoning noted the following issue:
    - A child had been in care for 47 months at the time of the onsite review. (1 case)
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the concurrent goal of adoption during the PUR. (1 case)
  - The agency did not file a TPR complaint resulting in adoption unlikely being achieved in its 24 month time frame. (1 case)
- *Item 10 (Other planned permanent living arrangement)* – 3 of 4 (75%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA) in a timely manner. (2 cases)
  - The reviewers were unable to determine if the agency made concerted efforts to achieve the goal of APPLA in a timely manner. (1 case)
- *Item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care)* – 10 of 13 (76.9%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The frequency of the visits between the child and following members of the family was insufficient according to agency policy requirements: (10 cases)
    - Target child and mother (6 cases)
    - Target child and father (5 cases)
    - Target child and sibling(s) (3 cases)
  - The quality of the visits between the child and the following members of the family was insufficient: (2 cases)
    - Target child and mother (1 case)
    - Target child and siblings (1 case)
- *Item 15 (Relative placement)* – 9 of 12 (75%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to identify, locate, and evaluate relatives as potential placements for the target child. (9 cases) Potential placements include:

- Paternal relatives (8 cases)
  - Maternal relatives (5 case)
- *Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents)* – All 12 (100%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote, support, and maintain positive relationships between the child and family. (11 cases)  
Specific events that parents were not invited to included:
    - Medical/mental health appointments (6 cases)
    - School events/activities (2 cases)
  - The agency did not make diligent efforts to locate the father. (1 case)
  - There was no evidence suggesting that the agency made efforts to maintain the relationship between the mother and father during the PUR after the caseworker on the case was no longer with the agency. (1 case)
- *Item 17 (Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents)* – 23 of 30 (76.7%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to assess the needs of the following people for case planning purposes: (17 cases)
    - Father (11 cases)
    - Mother (7 cases)
    - Target child(ren) (4 cases)
    - Paramour (1 case)
  - The agency failed to address and provide appropriate and/or recommended services for the following: (6 cases)
    - Father and/or mother (3 cases)
    - Foster parents (1 case)
    - Transportation for a mother to attend AOD treatment (1 case)
    - Mentoring services for a target child (1 case)
    - Home health services for a foster parent (1 case)
- *Item 18 (Child & family involvement in case planning)* – 22 of 28 (78.6%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to involve the following people in the case planning process: (20 cases)
    - Father (15 cases)
    - Mother (10 cases)
    - Target child(ren) (4 cases)

- Paramour (1 case)
  - The reviewers were unable to determine if the agency involved a mother and/or father in case planning. (1 case)
  - A mother’s whereabouts were unknown to the agency during the majority of the PUR without concerted efforts to find her. (1 case)
- *Item 19 (Caseworker visits with the child)* – 13 of 30 (43.3%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The frequency of the visits was insufficient according to agency policy requirements. (10 cases)
  - The quality of the visits was insufficient. (8 cases)
- *Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parents)* – 23 of 25 (92%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The frequency of the visits was insufficient according to agency policy requirements. (22 cases)
    - The agency specifically did not meet with the following people:
      - Mother (16 cases)
      - Father (15 cases)
      - Paramour (1 case)
    - The agency failed to meet the mother or father during the entire PUR. (3 cases)
    - The agency failed to make face-to-face contact with the mother for two consecutive months due to inclement weather with no other concerted efforts noted. (1 case)
  - The quality of the visits with the following people was insufficient: (7 cases)
    - Father (5 cases)
    - Mother (5 cases)
    - Paramour (1 case)
  - The agency did not make diligent efforts to locate the father. (1 case)
- *Item 22 (Physical health of child)* – 12 of 19 (63.2%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The following records were not located in the case file as required by policy: (8 cases)
    - Dental (6 cases)
    - Medical/Physical (5 cases)
  - A BabyNet referral was not made by the agency as required by policy and regulation. (2 cases)

- The agency failed to provide the appropriate dental health services for a target child. (1 case)
- A child was never assessed for physical health needs. (1 case)
- The agency failed to conduct ongoing assessments to provide updated information regarding a child's physical health needs. (1 case)
  
- *Item 23 (Mental/behavioral health of child) – 8 of 16 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - Mental health records, progress notes, and/or evidence of direct contact with provider were not located in the case file. (5 cases)
  - Mental health assessments were either not conducted or were not ongoing. (3 cases)
  - Identified mental health needs were not adequately addressed. (1 case)