

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

This summary report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) Dorchester County Quality Assurance Review, conducted June 9-13, 2014. The period under review was June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014.

DSS Child Welfare Quality Assurance Reviews are conducted using the *Onsite Review Instrument* (OSRI) finalized by the federal Administration for Children & Families (ACF) in July 2008. This instrument is used to review foster care and family preservation services cases. Twenty cases were reviewed including 10 foster care and 10 family preservation cases.

The OSRI is divided into three sections: safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. There are two safety outcomes, two permanency outcomes, and three well-being outcomes. Reviewers collect information on a number of *items* related to each of the outcomes through case file review, the use of the Child and Adult Protective Services System (CAPSS), and case related interviews. CAPSS is South Carolina’s SACWIS, which contains all case related information. This information is detailed on the OSRI as support for rating selection.

The ratings for each *item* are combined to determine the rating for the outcome. The *items* are rated as *strength*, *area needing improvement*, or not applicable. Outcomes are rated as being substantially achieved, partially achieved, not achieved, or not applicable. Ratings for each of the outcomes are displayed in Table 1.

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

Outcome	Substantially Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
Safety 1 CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	89% (8)	0% (0)	11% (1)
Safety 2 CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE	55% (11)	5% (1)	40% (8)
Permanency 1 CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS	10% (1)	80% (8)	10% (1)
Permanency 2 THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN	0% (0)	90% (9)	10% (1)
Well-Being 1 FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S NEEDS	20% (4)	70% (14)	10% (2)
Well-Being 2 CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	100% (9)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Well-Being 3 CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS	23% (4)	30% (5)	47% (8)

Results for outcomes and *items* are reported by the number of cases and the percentage of total cases given each rating. In addition, the percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *areas needing improvement*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the *percentage of strengths*. Appendix 1 provides more detailed analysis of issues impacting the ANI ratings.

SECTION I: REVIEW FINDINGS

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

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

Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations

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

Table 2.

Rating	Item 1	Item 2
<i>Strength</i>	35% (7)	35% (7)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5% (1)	0% (0)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	60% (12)	65% (13)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	87.5% (7)	100% (7)

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>	20% (4)	60% (12)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	45% (9)	40% (8)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	35% (7)	0% (0)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	30.8% (4)	60% (12)

Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management

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

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

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

Item 5: Foster Care reentries

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

Item 6: Stability of foster care placement

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

Item 7: Permanency goal for child

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

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

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

Item 9: Adoption

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

Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA)

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

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

Table 4.

Rating	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
<i>Strength</i>	10% (2)	30% (6)	25% (5)	0% (0)	5% (1)	5% (1)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	0% (0)	20% (4)	25% (5)	10% (2)	30% (6)	10% (2)
Not Applicable	90% (18)	50% (10)	50% (10)	90% (18)	65% (13)	85% (17)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	100% (2)	60% (6)	50% (5)	0% (0)	14.3% (1)	33.3%(1)

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	25% (5)	20% (4)	0% (0)	15% (3)	20% (4)	0% (0)
Area needing improvement	0% (0)	20% (4)	45% (9)	30% (6)	30% (6)	40% (8)
Not Applicable	75% (15)	60% (12)	55% (11)	55% (11)	50% (10)	60% (12)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	100% (5)	50% (4)	0% (0)	33.3% (3)	40% (4)	0% (0)

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	30% (6)	20% (4)	80% (16)	5% (1)
Area needing improvement	70% (14)	65% (13)	20% (4)	75% (15)
Not Applicable	0% (0)	15% (3)	0% (0)	20% (4)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	30% (6)	23.5% (4)	80% (16)	6.3% (1)

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	45% (9)
Area needing improvement	0% (0)
Not Applicable	55% (11)
Total	100% (20)
% Strengths	100% (9)

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

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

Item 22: Physical health of child

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

Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of child

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

Table 8.

Rating	Item 22	Item 23
<i>Strength</i>	15% (3)	40% (8)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	50% (10)	25% (5)
Not Applicable	35% (7)	35% (7)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	23.1% (3)	61.5% (8)

SECTION II: FOSTER HOME LICENSE REVIEW

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

Initial License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Information related to firearms and ammunition in the house
- Pet vaccination information
- Background checks
- Convictions
- Required trainings
- Medical reports
- Fire inspections/re-inspections
- DHEC/Lead inspections
- Central registry check on alternative caregiver, if applicable
- A review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS
- Completion and issuance of the 1513 prior to the license being issued
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools

Renewal License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Convictions
- Training hours
- Medical reports if a new household member has been added or if there is a change in foster parent's medical status
- Fire inspections
- FBI checks, if applicable
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools
- 1513 completed prior to issuance of the license
- Any amendments to the license, if applicable
- Documentation regarding if there are more than five children in the home
- Annual firearms location update
- 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
- 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 9.

Foster Home Licensing Findings for Dorchester County

Initial License Cases. Four foster care issuances for initial/standard license were reviewed. Two of the cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* 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 two cases include:

Firearms:

- There was not documentation to support that ammunition was stored separately from the firearm.

Renewal License Cases. Three of six cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* 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 that led to the rating of *ANI* for three cases include:

Table 9. Summary of Ratings for Initial and Renewal Cases.

Rating	Initial	Renewal
<i>Strength</i>	2 (50%)	3 (50%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	2 (50%)	3 (50%)
Total	4 (100%)	6 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	2 (50%)	3 (50%)

Fire Safety:

- The case file did not include documentation supporting that all annual fire inspections for the re-licensure period were conducted.

Background Checks:

- There was not documentation in the case file to support that SLED, sex offender registry checks, and/or CPS checks for all individuals were completed.

Documentation:

- Documentation in the case file contained contradictory information regarding whether the family had pets or fire arms.

Medical Records:

- Medical statement documentation for all family members was not noted in the case file.

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

Initial Case Deficiencies

Alternative Caregiver:

- Case file documentation did not include identification of an alternative caregiver/ babysitter as required.

Renewal Case Deficiencies

Alternative Caregiver:

- Case file documentation did not include identification of an alternative caregiver/ babysitter as required.

Fire Drills:

- Documentation verifying that fire drills were conducted within 24 hours of a child's placement was not noted in the case file.

Safety:

- Case file documentation did not provide verification that quarterly home visits were either timely or completed at all.

SECTION III: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE NO ACTION REPORTS REVIEW

A review of ten no action reports was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed. The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports on which no action was taken by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review No Action Reports Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and fourteen questions regarding the no action decisions and processes (see Table 10).

Table 10. 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	1	9	0	10
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	8	2	0	10
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	10	0	0	10
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	2	0	8	10
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	9	1	0	10
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	3	2	5	10
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	1	0	9	10
5. Safety factors documented on Intake Assessment not discovered by intake worker	1	9	0	10
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	9	0	1	10
7a. Risk Matrix results included statements contradictory to allegation	7	1	2	10
7b. Risk Matrix results failed to include all statements that support allegation	4	4	2	10
8. Contact with necessary collaterals prior to screen-out decision	2	4	4	10
9. Another intake referral on same perpetrator and/or child within 12 months	6	4	0	10
10. Intake Supervisor ensured consultation with another supervisory-level authority	0	6	4	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 11.

Table 11. Summary of Ratings for No Action Reports Review

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	2 (20%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	8 (80%)
Total	10 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	2 (20%)

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

- Statements documented on the Risk Matrix were contradictory to the documentation of the allegations.
- Documentation of the statements that supported the allegations made by the report was not supported in the documentation on the Risk Matrix in the file.
- Documentation of the section of information regarding prior CPS involvement did not include thorough documentation as there was a failure to reference one unfounded case in the documentation as required.

- There was no documentation in the case file to support that the agency made, or attempted to make, any direct contact with all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts as required.
- There was no documentation in the record to support that the agency followed up with all appropriate collateral contacts as required.
- There was no documentation in the file to indicate that a supervisor consulted with another supervisory-level individual, as required by policy.
- Risk factors identified in CAPSS documentation were not documented on the Risk Matrix assessment documentation.
- Documentation of the allegations made included safety factors that were not documented at intake as required.

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 12):

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

Table 12. Summary of Item Ratings for Unfounded Review

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
1A. Investigation not initiated in accordance with timeframes and requirements	0	5	0	5
1B. Face-to-face contact not made in accordance with timeframes and requirements	0	5	0	5
1C. Delays in investigation initiation or face-to-face contact beyond control of agency	0	0	5	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	5	0	0	5
3B. Ongoing assessment(s) of risk to the children and family in the home	3	2	0	5
3C. Safety concerns that were not adequately or appropriately addressed by the agency	0	5	0	5

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

The percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each decision to unfound. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 13.

Table 13. Summary of Ratings for Unfounded Review

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

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

- Case documentation did not confirm that sufficient ongoing risk and safety assessments with children in their home were provided by the agency.
- Documentation did not note that all members of the family were assessed.
- There was no documentation to support that the agency made, or attempted to make, direct contact with all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts.

SECTION V: FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for reports referred 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 sixteen questions regarding the referral to the (FSS) Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 14).

Table 14. 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	4	1	0	5
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	0	0	5	5
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	4	1	0	5
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	1	2	2	5
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	0	0	5	5
5. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	0	5	0	5
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	4	0	1	5
7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	3	2	0	5
7b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter	2	3	0	5
8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	3	0	2	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	1	4	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	1	0	4	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	3	2	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 15.

Table 15. Summary of Ratings for FSS Review

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

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

- The Maltreatment Tab documentation in CAPSS was not accurately completed by the agency.
- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to the documentations of the allegations made.
- The Risk Matrix did not include statements that supported the documentation of the allegations.
- The agency failed to document a review of all the intake referrals previously made as required.
- Documentation at intake noted that the allegation met the legal definition of maltreatment; however, the case was referred to the community provider without any documented explanation for such, as required.

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 Dorchester County conducted June 9-13, 2014. The period under review was June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014.

Positives:

Items 2 (Repeat Maltreatment), 5 (Foster Care reentries, 11 (Proximity of Foster Care Placement), and 21 (Educational needs of child) were identified as *strengths* of the agency; all applicable cases reviewed were rated as *strength* with no *area needing improvement (ANI)*.

Concerns:

The following examines the *items* that had the highest *ANI* ratings.

- *Item 3 (Services to family)* - 9 of 13 (69.2%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The agency did not make concerted efforts to provide appropriate services to the family to prevent the child(ren) from entering foster care. (8 cases)
Individuals to whom services were not provided:
 - Mother (6 cases)
 - Father(s) (5 cases)
 - The agency failed to document the completion of thorough assessments of all members of the family, specifically the following individuals: (4 cases)
 - Mother (3 cases)
 - Father (2 cases)
 - The agency failed to seek court intervention when a mother was noncompliant with treatment related services. (1 case)
- *Item 8 (Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives)* – 2 of 2 (100%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of reunification in a timely manner. (2 cases)
 - There was no evidence in the case file that concerted efforts were made to locate a mother once she checked out of a treatment facility. (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. (6 cases) Cases that provided specific reasoning noted the following issues:
 - Documentation indicated that children were eligible for TPR, yet TPR complaints were not filed and/or completed in a timely manner. (5 cases)
- The agency failed to establish the goal of adoption in a timely manner. The case detailed that the goal was not established until 25 months after the child entered foster care. (1 case)
- *Item 10 (Other planned permanent living arrangement)* – 2 of 3 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI
 - Concerted efforts were not made to achieve the goal of other planned permanent living arrangements in a timely manner. (2 cases)
 - The agency failed to identify a committed adult to help the child transition into adulthood. (1 case)
 - There was not documentation in the case file to indicate a case plan describing the needs of the target child to achieve independence. (1 case)
 - There was not an Ansell-Casey Life Skills assessment in the case file. (1 case)
- *Item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care)* – 9 of 9 (100%) applicable cases rated as ANI
 - The frequency of the visits with the following family members was, per agency policy, insufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship, according to agency policy requirements: (9 cases)
 - Mother (6 cases)
 - Sibling(s) (5 cases)
 - Father (3 cases)
 - Diligent searches were not conducted when the whereabouts of the following individuals were unknown: (2 cases)
 - Father (2 cases)
 - Mother (1 case)
- *Item 14 (Preserving connections)* – 6 of 9 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI
 - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his/her extended family, community, and/or friends. (5 cases)

- The agency failed to seek appropriate relative placement. (1 case)
- *Item 15 (Relative placement)* – 6 of 10 (60%) 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. (5 cases) Potential placements included:
 - Paternal relatives (5 cases)
 - Maternal relatives (2 cases)
 - The agency failed to maintain the child’s connections to his neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school, and friends. (1 case)
- *Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents)* – 8 of 8 (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. (8 cases) Specific relationships affected include:
 - Child and mother (7 cases)
 - Child and father (4 cases)
- *Item 17 (Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents)* – 14 of 20 (70%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - Ongoing informal assessments of risk and safety were not conducted for the following individuals: (8 cases)
 - Father(s) (6 cases)
 - Mother (5 cases)
 - The agency did not make concerted efforts to provide any services for the following individuals: (7 cases)
 - Mother (6 cases)
 - Father (5 cases)
 - Initial formal assessments of risk and safety were not conducted for the following individuals: (6 cases)
 - Father(s) (6 cases)
 - Mother (4 cases)
 - Child (1 case)
 - Foster parent (1 case)
- *Item 18 (Child & family involvement in case planning)* – 13 of 17 (76.5%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*

- The agency failed to make concerted efforts to involve the following people in the case planning process: (13 cases)
 - Father(s) (11 cases)
 - Mother (11 cases)
- Diligent searches were not conducted when the whereabouts of the following individuals were unknown: (2 cases)
 - Father (1 case)
 - Mother (1 case)
- *Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parents)* – 15 of 16 (93.7%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The frequency of the visitation with the following family members was, per agency policy, insufficient to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and to promote achievement of case goals: (14 cases)
 - Father(s) (10 cases)
 - Mother (9 cases)
 - The quality of visitation between the agency and the following individuals was, per agency policy, insufficient to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and to promote achievement of case goals: (6 cases)
 - Father (5 cases)
 - Mother (4 cases)
 - Diligent searches were not conducted when the whereabouts of the mother were unknown. (1 case)
- *Item 22 (Physical health of child)* – 10 of 13 (76.9%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - Dental health records were not located in the case file. (7 cases)
 - Medical/physical health records were not located in the case file. (6 cases)
 - Medical/physical health assessments were not conducted when indicated and appropriate. (4 cases)
 - There was no documentation of direct contact with all appropriate health care collaterals to ensure the health and well-being of child(ren). (2 cases)
 - A dental assessment was not conducted when indicated and appropriate. (1 case)