

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

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This summary report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) Oconee County Quality Assurance Review, conducted July 21-25, 2014. The period under review was July 1, 2013 to June 30, 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 Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (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**

| <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                    | 100% (9)                      | 0% (0)                    | 0% (0)              |
| <b>Safety 2</b> CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE       | 75% (15)                      | 10% (2)                   | 15% (3)             |
| <b>Permanency 1</b> CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS                 | 20% (2)                       | 70% (7)                   | 10% (1)             |
| <b>Permanency 2</b> THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN  | 50% (5)                       | 40% (4)                   | 10% (1)             |
| <b>Well-Being 1</b> FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S NEEDS             | 70% (14)                      | 25% (5)                   | 5% (1)              |
| <b>Well-Being 2</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS             | 100% (7)                      | 0% (0)                    | 0% (0)              |
| <b>Well-Being 3</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS | 59% (10)                      | 29% (5)                   | 12% (2)             |

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>                 | 45% (9)         | 45% (9)         |
| <i>Area needing improvement</i> | 0% (0)          | 0% (0)          |
| <i>Not Applicable</i>           | 55% (11)        | 55% (11)        |
| Total                           | 100% (20)       | 100% (20)       |
| <i>% Strengths</i>              | <b>100% (9)</b> | <b>100% (9)</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>                 | 45% (9)        | 80% (16)        |
| <i>Area needing improvement</i> | 15% (3)        | 20% (4)         |
| <i>Not Applicable</i>           | 40% (8)        | 0% (0)          |
| Total                           | 100% (20)      | 100% (20)       |
| <i>% Strengths</i>              | <b>75% (9)</b> | <b>80% (16)</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 (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)         | 25% (5)        | 30% (6)        | 5% (1)         | 10% (2)          | 15% (3)         |
| <i>Area needing improvement</i> | 0% (0)          | 25% (5)        | 20% (4)        | 5% (1)         | 25% (5)          | 0% (0)          |
| 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>              | <b>100% (2)</b> | <b>50% (5)</b> | <b>60% (6)</b> | <b>50% (1)</b> | <b>28.6% (2)</b> | <b>100% (3)</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                 | 35% (7)         | 5% (1)         | 25% (5)          | 35% (7)        | 30% (6)          | 15% (3)          |
| Area needing improvement | 0% (0)          | 15% (3)        | 10% (2)          | 15% (3)        | 15% (3)          | 20% (4)          |
| Not Applicable           | 65% (13)        | 80% (16)       | 65% (13)         | 50% (10)       | 55% (11)         | 65% (13)         |
| Total                    | 100% (20)       | 100% (20)      | 100% (20)        | 100% (20)      | 100% (20)        | 100% (20)        |
| % Strengths              | <b>100% (7)</b> | <b>25% (1)</b> | <b>71.4% (5)</b> | <b>70% (7)</b> | <b>66.7% (6)</b> | <b>42.9% (3)</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                 | 70% (14)        | 75% (15)        | 80% (16)        | 60% (12)          |
| Area needing improvement | 30% (6)         | 25% (5)         | 20% (4)         | 25% (5)           |
| Not Applicable           | 0% (0)          | 0% (0)          | 0% (0)          | 15% (3)           |
| Total                    | 100% (20)       | 100% (20)       | 100% (20)       | 100% (20)         |
| % Strengths              | <b>70% (14)</b> | <b>75% (15)</b> | <b>80% (16)</b> | <b>70.6% (12)</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                 | 35% (7)         |
| Area needing improvement | 0% (0)          |
| Not Applicable           | 65% (13)        |
| Total                    | 100% (20)       |
| % Strengths              | <b>100% (7)</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>                 | 55% (11)          | 30% (6)          |
| <i>Area needing improvement</i> | 25% (5)           | 15% (3)          |
| Not Applicable                  | 20% (4)           | 55% (11)         |
| Total                           | 100% (20)         | 100% (20)        |
| <i>% Strengths</i>              | <b>68.8% (11)</b> | <b>66.7% (6)</b> |

**Table 9. Oconee County Percentage of Strengths on 23 Quality Assurance Items Across Four Reviews**

| Item  | Jan. 2013<br>(PUR 1-1-2012<br>to 12-31-2013) | April 2013<br>(PUR 4-1-2012<br>to 3-31-2013) | July 2013<br>(PUR 7-1-2012<br>to 6-30-2013) | July 2014<br>(PUR 7-1-2013<br>to 6-30-2014) |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations                        | 100%   | 100%   | 93.8%                                       | 100%  |
| 2. Reoccurrence of Maltreatment                                   | 100%   | 100%   | 92.9%                                       | 100%  |
| 3. Services to Family   | 95.2%  | 90%  | 90.5%                                       | 75%   |
| 4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management                          | 96.7%  | 86.7%  | 83.3%                                       | 80%   |
| 5. Foster Care Re-Entries   | 83.3%  | 83.3%  | 100%  | 100%  |
| 6. Stability of Foster Care Placement                             | 80%  | 93.3%  | 80%   | 50%   |
| 7. Permanency Goal for Child                                      | 33.3%  | 60%  | 60%   | 60%   |
| 8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Perm. Placement with Relatives | 55.6%  | 60%  | 85.7%                                       | 50%   |
| 9. Adoption   | 36.4%  | 33.3%  | 40%   | 28.6%                                       |
| 10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement                    | 100%   | 100%   | 80%   | 100%  |
| 11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement                            | 100%   | 100%   | 83.3%                                       | 100%  |
| 12. Placement with Siblings                                       | 81.8%  | 66.7%  | 50%   | 25%   |
| 13. Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care             | 58.3%  | 75%  | 66.7%                                       | 71.4%                                       |
| 14. Preserving Connections  | 92.9%  | 92.9%  | 76.9%                                       | 70%   |
| 15. Relative Placement  | 92.9%  | 80%  | 84.6%                                       | 66.7%                                       |
| 16. Relationship of Child in Care with Parent                     | 41.7%  | 66.7%  | 66.7%                                       | 42.9%                                       |
| 17. Needs and Services for Child, Parents, and Caregivers         | 80%  | 80%  | 83.3%                                       | 70%   |
| 18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning                 | 86.2%  | 82.8%  | 82.8%                                       | 75%   |
| 19. Worker Visits with Child                                      | 86.7%  | 90%  | 90%   | 80%   |
| 20. Worker Visits with Parents                                    | 61.5%  | 46.4%  | 70.4%                                       | 70.6%                                       |
| 21. Educational Needs of the Child                                | 100%   | 100%   | 90.9%                                       | 100%  |
| 22. Physical Health of the Child                                  | 83.3%  | 62.5%  | 73.9%                                       | 68.8%                                       |
| 23. Mental Health of the Child                                    | 100%   | 77.8%  | 66.7%                                       | 66.7%                                       |

## SECTION II: FOSTER HOME LICENSE REVIEW

As part of the Quality Assurance Review Process in Oconee County, eight Foster Home Licenses were 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
- 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 Oconee County

Note: These services are contracted to a private provider, who is responsible for the ratings instead of the county DSS office. These are included in the county report because the QA system is the present system for evaluating compliance for Foster Home License requirements with the samples pulled via the county in which the home is located to assure that all homes have the same opportunity to be in the random sampling.

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

**Background Checks**

- There was not documentation in the case file to verify that a sex offender registry check was completed for all applicable individuals. (1 case)

**Renewal License Cases.** Five cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* because some pieces 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 five cases include:

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

| Rating                          | Initial        | Renewal       |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>Strength</i>                 | 4 (80%)        | 0 (0%)        |
| <i>Area needing improvement</i> | 1 (20%)        | 5 (100%)      |
| Total                           | 5 (100%)       | 5 (100%)      |
| <i>% Strengths</i>              | <b>4 (80%)</b> | <b>0 (0%)</b> |

**Background Checks:**

- There was not documentation in the case file to verify that central registry and sex offender registry checks for all applicable individuals were completed in a timely manner. (2 case)

**Pet Vaccination Records:**

- Documentation verifying that pet vaccinations were up-to-date was not located in the case file. (2 cases)

**Deficiencies found in Initial and Renewal Cases.** Deficiencies were noted for four cases reviewed. Issues identified by the reviewers include:

#### **Initial Case Deficiencies**

##### **Documentation:**

- The foster parent’s autobiography located in the case file was not dated. (1 case)

#### **Renewal Case Deficiencies**

##### **Alternative Caregivers:**

- Documentation did not include identification of an alternative caregiver/ babysitter. (1 case)

##### **Fire Drills:**

- Documentation verifying that fire drills were conducted within 24 hours of a child’s placement was not located in the case file. (4 cases)
- Documentation verifying that quarterly fire drills were conducted while children were placed in foster homes was not located in the case file. (3 cases)

##### **Safety:**

- Case file documentation did not provide verification that quarterly home visits were either timely or completed at all. (3 cases)
- All Disaster Preparedness Plans were not located in the case file. (3 cases)
- All Discipline Agreements were not located in the case file. (2 case)

### 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 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                          | 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               | 0   | 0  | 10 | 10    |
| 4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed   | 10  | 0  | 0  | 10    |
| 4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation                       | 0   | 0  | 10 | 10    |
| 4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information           | 0   | 0  | 10 | 10    |
| 5. Safety factors documented on Intake Assessment not discovered by intake worker   | 0   | 10 | 0  | 10    |
| 6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix                                      | 10  | 0  | 0  | 10    |
| 7a. Risk Matrix results included statements contradictory to allegation             | 10  | 0  | 0  | 10    |
| 7b. Risk Matrix results failed to include all statements that support allegation    | 10  | 0  | 0  | 10    |
| 8. Contact with necessary collaterals prior to screen-out decision                  | 3   | 1  | 6  | 10    |
| 9. Another intake referral on same perpetrator and/or child within 12 months        | 4   | 6  | 0  | 10    |
| 10. Intake Supervisor ensured consultation with another supervisory-level authority | 0   | 4  | 6  | 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>                 | 0 (0%)                                      |
| <i>Area needing improvement</i> | 10 (100%)                                   |
| Total                           | 10 (100%)                                   |
| <i>% Strengths</i>              | <b>0 (0%)</b>                               |

In ten cases, pieces of 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 in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (10 cases)
- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix and/or other documentation did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (9 cases)
- The agency did not document the entire family’s history noted from a file review with no reconciliation documented. (2 cases)

- There was no documentation to verify that the agency made, or attempted to make, contact with all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts. (1 case)
- The agency did not verify through documentation that a supervisor consulted with another supervisory-level individual prior to final decision. (1 case)

## 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           | 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    | 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 pieces of agency policy and procedures include:

- There was no documentation to verify that the agency appropriately addressed all safety concerns documented, such as children’s contact with named perpetrators and concerns regarding a mother’s parenting discovered during a forensic interview, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (3 cases)
- Case file documentation did not verify that sufficient ongoing risk and safety assessments with children in their home were provided by the agency. (2 cases)
- Documentation did not verify that all appropriate referrals for services were made. (2 cases)
- There was no documentation to verify that the agency made efforts to establish the identity of one of the victim children’s biological father. (1 case)

- It was unclear from the documentation written in the file that the agency considered information regarding family history and the current custody circumstances prior to making the case decision. (1 case)
- Per case file documentation, the agency made the decision to unfind the case prior to documenting an assessment of the mother based on the information provided through the forensic interview documentation. (1 case)
- The agency did not verify in documentation that an indicated drug screen was completed prior to the decision nor did they document adequate justification for not taking this action. (1 case)
- There was no documentation to verify agency efforts to make contact with appropriate and indicated collaterals. (1 case)
- There was no documentation to verify that the agency made concerted efforts to make contact with a father. (1 case)
- Documentation did not verify that the children were interviewed alone and in a safe environment. (1 case)
- There was no documentation that a referral to BabyNet was made for a minor child in the home. (1 case)

## SECTION V: FAMILY STRENGTHENING SERVICES REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for reports referred to Family Strengthening 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 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        | 0   | 5  | 0  | 5     |
| 2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement                         | 5   | 0  | 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                      | 0   | 0  | 5  | 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                 | 1   | 4  | 0  | 5     |
| 6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix                                     | 5   | 0  | 0  | 5     |
| 7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter          | 5   | 0  | 0  | 5     |
| 7b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter | 5   | 0  | 0  | 5     |
| 8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services            | 0   | 1  | 4  | 5     |
| 9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child                | 1   | 4  | 0  | 5     |
| 10. Family received community-based prevention services                            | 0   | 1  | 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     | 4   | 1  | 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 five cases reviewed, there were pieces of agency policy and procedures that were not followed. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to the documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (5 cases)
- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (5 cases)
- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (1 case)
- The Maltreatment Tab documentation conflicted with the information provided within the corresponding report with no reconciliation of facts documented. (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 reports 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 sixteen 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. 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  | 3   | 2  | 0  | 5     |
| 4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation                      | 0   | 0  | 5  | 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                                     | 5   | 0  | 0  | 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 | 3   | 2  | 0  | 5     |
| 8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services            | 2   | 1  | 2  | 5     |
| 9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child                | 3   | 2  | 0  | 5     |
| 10. Family received community-based prevention services                            | 1   | 2  | 2  | 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 18.

**Table 18. Summary of Ratings for VCM 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. In four cases reviewed, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to the documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (3 cases)
- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (3 cases)
- The Maltreatment Tab documentation in CAPSS conflicted with other documentation in the record, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (2 cases)
- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (1 case)
- A research of the CAPSS system for family history with CPS revealed information that was not documented and/or reconciled in documentation during the intake process. (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 Oconee County conducted July 21-25, 2014. The period under review was July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

### **Positives:**

*Items 1 (Timeliness of initiating investigations), 2 (Repeat Maltreatment), 5 (Foster Care reentries), 10 (Other planned permanent living arrangement), 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 6 (Stability of foster care cases)* – 5 of 10 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - Children experienced multiple unplanned placement changes which were not in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving their permanency goal. (4 cases)
    - Children experienced three placement changes. (3 cases)
    - A child experienced four placement changes. (1 case)
  - Children were placed in group homes when unnecessary and inappropriate to their needs. (2 cases)
    - The group home placement was age inappropriate as a child was only 8 years old. (1 case)
    - The target child had a baby and the group home was not an appropriate setting in which to raise her child. Additionally, the child had communicated to the agency that she did not want to be in a group home. (1 case)
  
- *Item 8 (Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives)* – 1 of 2 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of reunification in a timely manner. (1 case)
    - The case file documented that the court ordered a 6-month extension for the agency to work with the parents, even though they had not been engaging in services since the child entered care. The extension made timely achievement of reunification unlikely. (1 case)

- *Item 9 (Adoption)* – 5 of 7 (71.4%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner. (5 cases)
    - Due to extensions granted by court and untimely Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), the goal of adoption within 24 months was unlikely. (1 case)
    - The child had been in care for 80 months and the goal of adoption had not been achieved. (1 case)
    - A child was in care for 65 months prior to the finalization of adoption. There was a delay because the target child was resistant to being adopted. (1 case)
    - A child had been in care for 13 months, and the agency did not demonstrate any documented efforts to achieve the goal of adoption making it unlikely that it would be finalized within 24 months of the child's entry into care. (1 case)
  - The agency failed to establish adoption in a timely manner. (1 case)
    - The child had been in care for 45 months when the current plan of adoption was established for a second time. (1 case)
  
- *Item 12 (Placement with siblings)* – 3 of 4 (75%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - Concerted efforts were not made by the agency to locate an appropriate placement to ensure that siblings in foster care were placed together. (2 cases)
  - Children were not placed with all their siblings in foster care. No barrier as to why the children were not placed together in foster care was found. (2 cases)
  
- *Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents)* – 4 of 7 (57.1%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote, support, and maintain positive relationships between the child and the family. (4 cases)
    - Specific relationships affected include:
      - Child and mother (4 cases)
      - Child and father (3 cases)
    - Specific events that parents were not invited to include:
      - Dental appointments (3 cases)
      - Medical appointments (2 cases)
      - School activities (1 case)
      - Counseling (1 case)