

South Carolina Department of Social Services
Child Welfare Quality Assurance Review Report
Dorchester County
July 2015

This report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SC DSS) Dorchester County Quality Assurance Review. The period under review was July 1, 2014 to the date of the case review, which was during the week of July 6 - 10, 2015. The following report provides a description of the items, the results for the outcomes and items, and a brief summary of the county's performance on the items. For more information on the quality assurance process, please visit (www.dss.sc.gov).

SC DSS Child Welfare Quality Assurance Reviews are conducted using the federal Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI). The newly revised OSRI was finalized by the Administration for Children & Families in July 2014. The instrument is used to review foster care and family preservation cases. Twenty cases were reviewed including ten foster care and ten 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 used to rate each item on the OSRI.

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*.

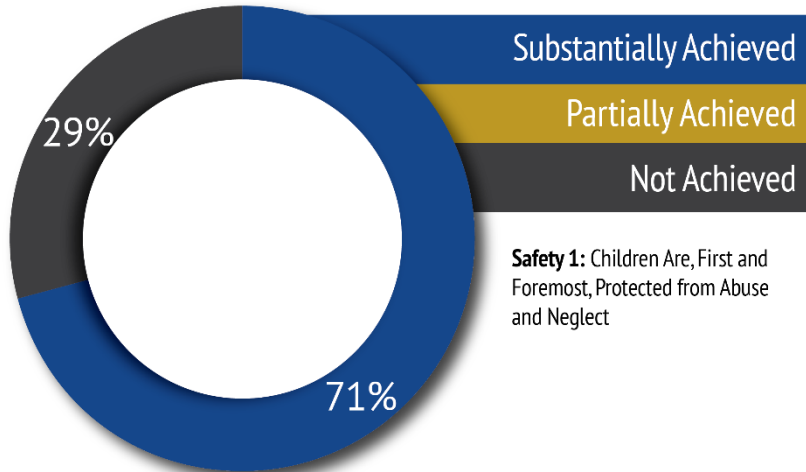
Child Welfare Quality Assurance Review – Outcome Ratings

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. The percentage of strengths for each item as well as a summary of what the agency did to achieve that rating for those cases is provided in Section I.

Section I: Item Ratings

Safety Outcome 1: Children Are, First and Foremost, Protected from Abuse and Neglect

One item is included under Safety Outcome 1.

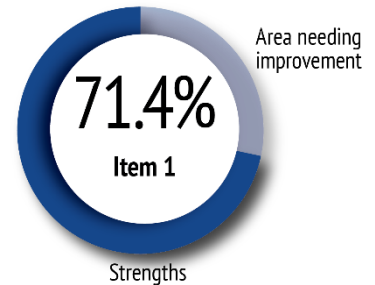


Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

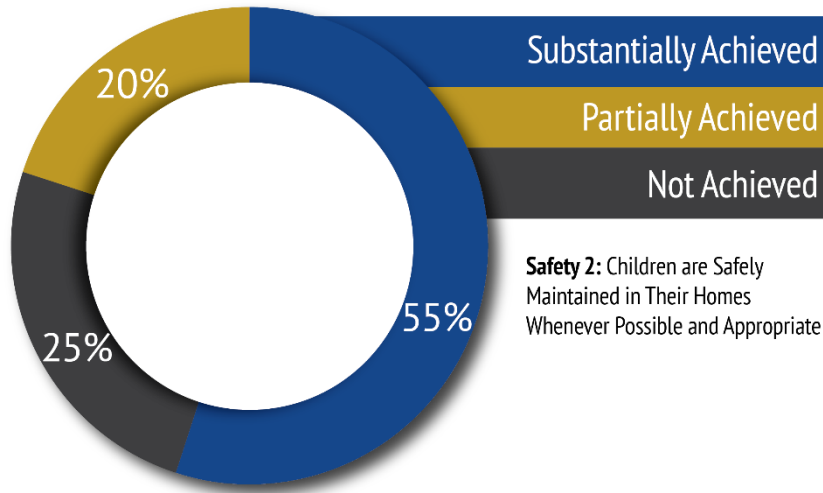
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated and face-to-face contact with the child made, within the timeframes established by agency policies or State statute.

Ten of 14 applicable cases received a strength for Item 1 meaning that investigations were initiated in a timely manner and face-to-face contact was made within the established time frame.

% Strengths



Safety Outcome 2: Children are Safely Maintained in Their Homes Whenever Possible and Appropriate



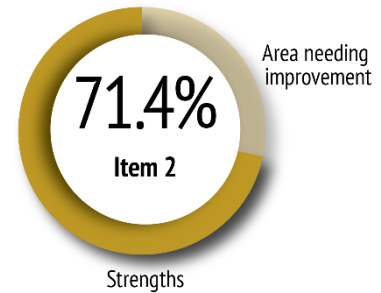
Two items are included under Safety Outcome 2.

Item 2: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care

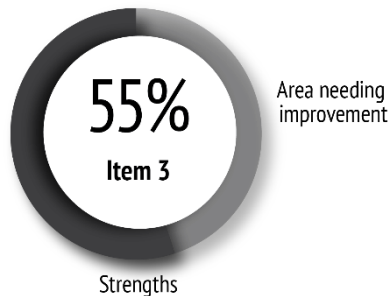
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children’s entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

Ten of 14 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 2 indicating that the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.

% Strengths



% Strengths

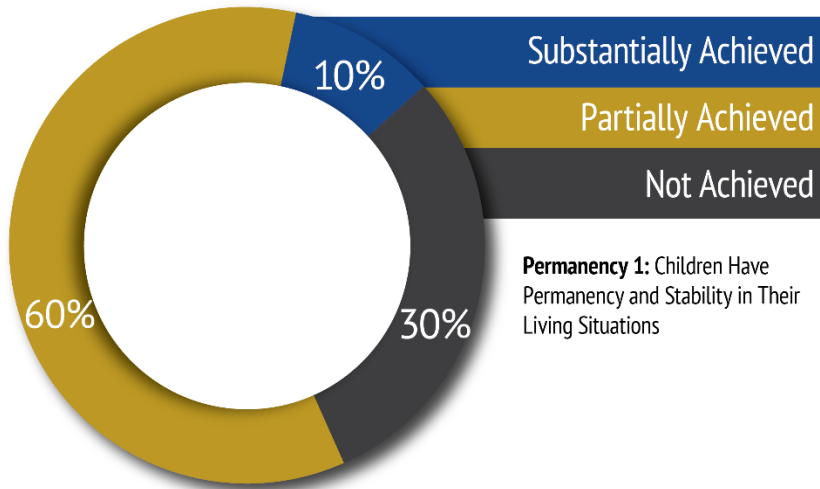


Item 3: Risk and safety assessment and management

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.

Eleven of 20 cases were rated as a strength for Item 3 because the agency properly assessed all applicable individuals for risk and safety and appropriately addressed all identified concerns.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children Have Permanency and Stability in Their Living Situations



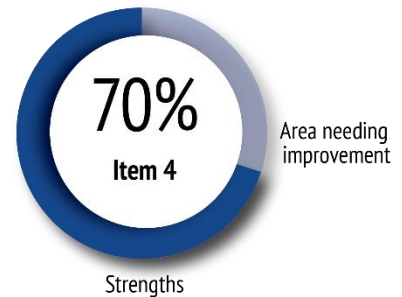
Three items are included under Permanency Outcome 1.

Item 4: Stability of foster care placement

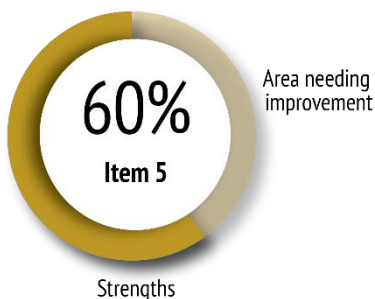
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goals.

Seven of ten applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 4 meaning that the children remained in a stable placement without unplanned moves.

% Strengths



% Strengths



Item 5: Permanency goal for child

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

Six of ten applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 5. In these six cases, the permanency goal was appropriate for the child and was established in a timely manner.

Item 6: Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement

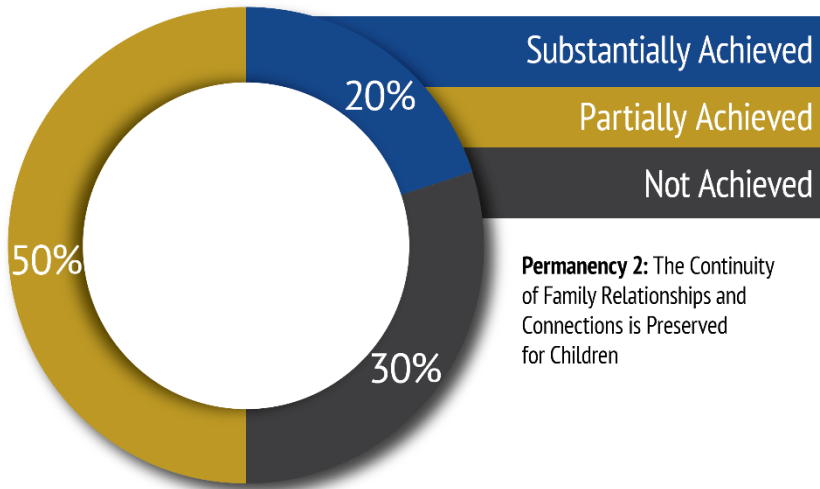
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

One of ten applicable cases was rated as a strength indicating that the permanency goal was appropriate, and the agency made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner.

% Strengths



Permanency Outcome 2: The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections is Preserved for Children



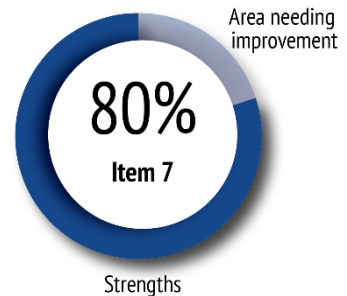
Five items are included under Permanency Outcome 2.

Item 7: Placement with siblings

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, 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.

Four of five applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 7 meaning that the agency made concerted efforts to place siblings together or separated siblings due to the specialized care needs of a child.

% Strengths



% Strengths



Strengths

Item 8: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, 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.

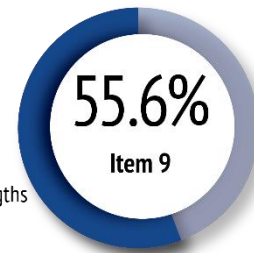
None of the seven applicable cases received a strength rating for Item 8.

Item 9: 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.

Five of nine applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 9 because the agency made concerted efforts to maintain the child's prior connections by facilitating visits with extended family, friends from the community, and to the previous legal guardian and families because the legality would have ended upon entry to foster care when the agency gained custody.

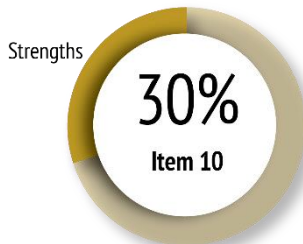
% Strengths



Strengths

Area needing improvement

% Strengths



Strengths

Area needing improvement

Item 10: 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.

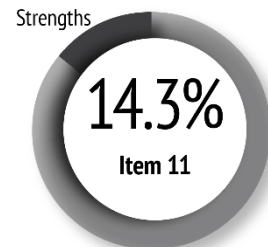
Three of ten applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 10 indicating that the agency made concerted efforts to identify and place the child with relatives when appropriate.

Item 11: 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.

One of seven applicable cases was rated as a strength for Item 11 meaning the agency invited the parents to medical activities for the child and encouraged telephone contact and visits.

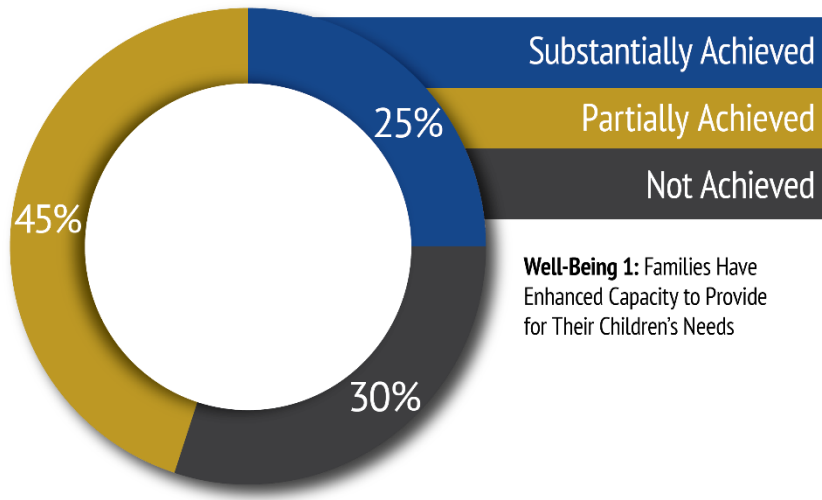
% Strengths



Strengths

Area needing improvement

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families Have Enhanced Capacity to Provide for Their Children’s Needs

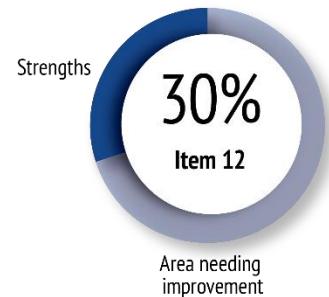


Four items are included under Well-Being Outcome 1.

Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents

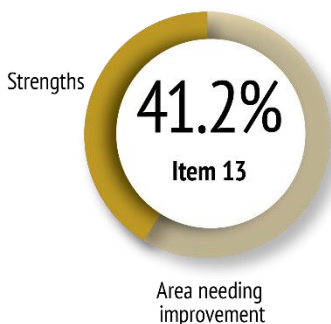
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents (both at the child’s entry into foster care [if the child entered during the period under review] or on an ongoing basis) to identify 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.

% Strengths



Six of 20 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 12 because the needs and services of the child, parents, and foster parents were assessed, and appropriate service referrals were made.

% Strengths



Item 13: 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.

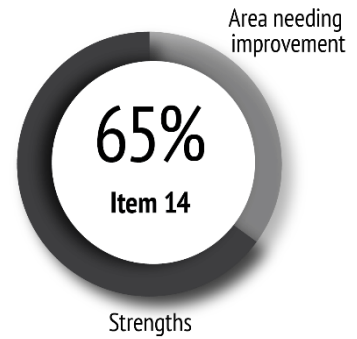
Seven of 17 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 13. In these seven cases, the agency adequately involved all parents and age-appropriate children in the case planning process.

Item 14: Caseworker visits with the child

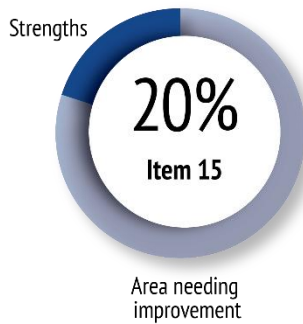
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote achievement of case goals.

Thirteen of 20 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 14 indicating that the caseworker had visits with the child that were of sufficient frequency and quality.

% Strengths



% Strengths

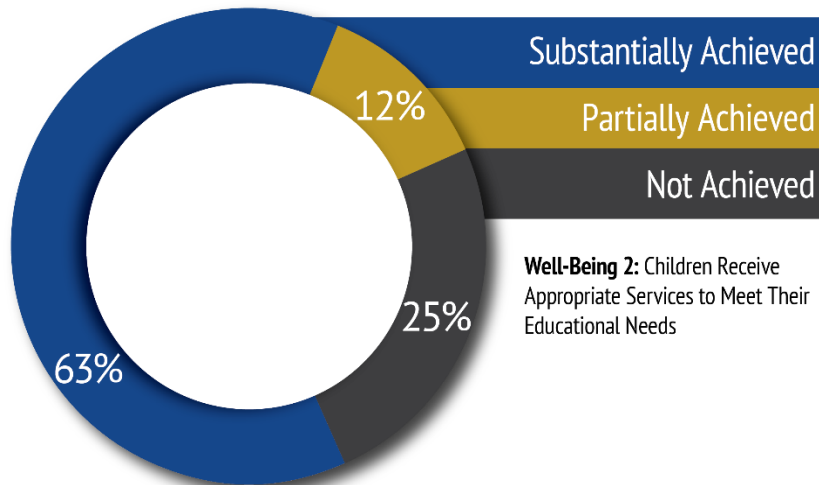


Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents

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.

Three of 15 applicable cases reviewed were rated as a strength for Item 15 meaning the agency conducted visits of sufficient frequency and quality with the parents or guardian to promote the achievement of case goals.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children Receive Appropriate Services to Meet Their Educational Needs



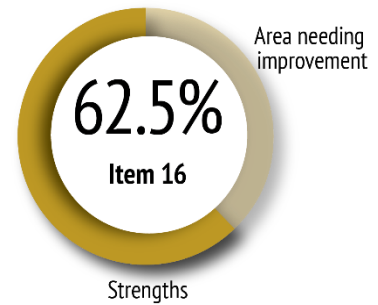
One item is included under Well-Being Outcome 2.

Item 16: Educational needs of child

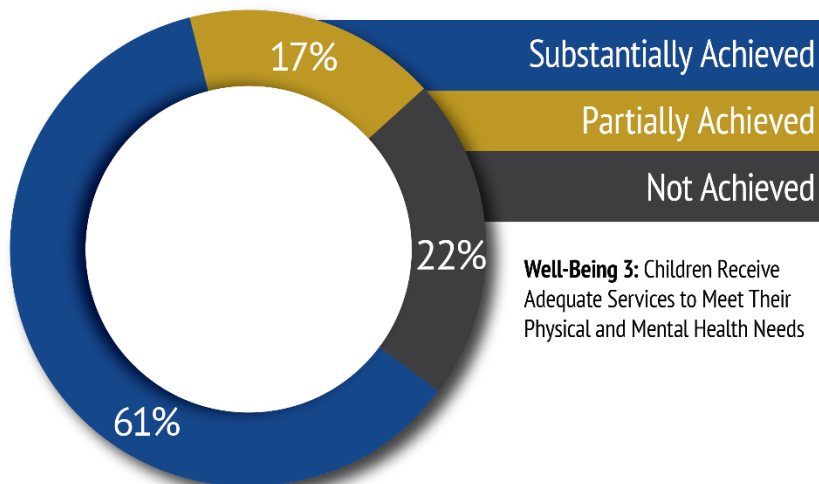
Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children’s educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period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

Five of eight applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 16 indicating that the agency assessed and provided the appropriate service referrals to meet the educational needs of the child.

% Strengths



Well-Being Outcome 3: Children Receive Adequate Services to Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs



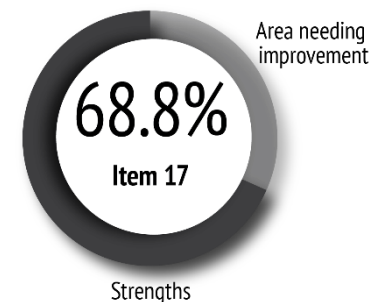
Two items are included under Well-Being Outcome 3.

Item 17: Physical health of child

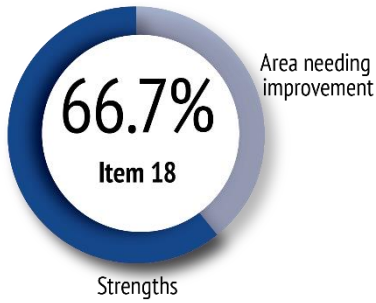
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the child, including dental health needs.

Eleven of 16 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 17 because the agency assessed and provided the appropriate service referrals to meet the physical health needs of the child.

% Strengths



% Strengths



Item 18: 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).

Ten of 15 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 18. In these ten cases, the agency assessed and provided the appropriate service referrals to meet the mental/behavioral needs of the child.