

**Lee County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
December 2004**

A team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Lee County. A sample of open and closed foster care and treatment cases were reviewed. Also reviewed were screened-out intakes, foster home licensing records, and unfounded investigations. Stakeholders interviewed for this review included foster parents, Lee DSS staff, and representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Guardian Ad Litem.

Period included in Case Record Review: June 1, 2004 to November 30, 2004

Period included in Outcome Measures: Nov 1, 2003 to Oct 31, 2004

Purpose

The Department of Social Services engages in a review of child welfare services in each county to:

- a) Determine to what degree services are delivered in compliance with federal and state laws and agency policy; and
- b) Assess the outcomes for children and families engaged in the child welfare system.

State law (sec 43-1-115) states, in part:

The state department shall conduct, at least once every five years, a substantive quality review of the child protective services and foster care programs in each county and each adoption office in the State. The county's performance must be assessed with reference to specific outcome measures published in advance by the department.

The information obtained by the child welfare services review process will:

- a) Give county staff feedback on the effectiveness of their interventions.
- b) Direct state office technical assistance staff to assist county staff with their areas needing improvement.
- c) Inform agency administrators of which systemic factors impair county staff's ability to achieve specific outcomes.
- d) Direct training staff to provide training for county staff specific to their needs.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

The county-specific review of child welfare services is both quantitative and qualitative.

The review is **quantitative** because it begins with an analysis of every child welfare outcome report for that county for the period under review. The outcome reports reflect the performance of the county in all areas of the child welfare program: Child Protective Services (CPS) Intake, CPS Investigations, CPS In-Home Treatment, Foster Care, Managed Treatment Services (MTS), and Adoptions.

The review is **qualitative** because it includes an analysis of information obtained from agency clients, staff and stakeholders. Client and stakeholder information was obtained by interviews. The questions posed to clients and stakeholders are designed to illicit information about the quality of the services rendered and the effectiveness of those services.

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Section One

Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.

<u>Summary of Findings</u>	Overall Finding: Substantially Achieved
-Safety Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations.	Finding: Strength
-Safety Item 2: Repeat maltreatment.	Finding: Strength

Analysis of Safety Item 1 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure S1.1: Timeliness of initiating investigations on reports of child maltreatment				
Data Time Period: 11/1/03 to 10/31/04				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective $\geq 99.99\%^*$	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	15,932	15, 120	15,930.41	(810.41)
Lee	111	111	110.99	0.01

* This standard is based on state law. It is not a federally established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 1 : Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0
Treatment	1	100	0	0	9	0
Total Cases	2	100	0	0	18	0

Explanation of Item 1

This is a strength for Lee DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. The outcome report above applies the 24-hour standard to all accepted reports. The agency standard allows a .66% margin of error. Lee DSS met this standard for all of the 111 cases investigated during the period under review.

Stakeholder interviews indicate that Lee DSS is very effective in initiating investigations in a timely manner. Workers can call Central Dispatch to get an officer to

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accompany them on a call. In addition, calls received after hours go directly to Central Dispatch staff that is responsible for contacting DSS on-call staff. Law Enforcement is given a monthly on-call calendar.

Analysis of Safety Item 2 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure S1.2: Recurrence of Maltreatment – Of all children who were victims of indicated reports of child abuse and/or neglect during the reporting period, the percent having another indicated report within a subsequent 6 month period.				
Indicated Report Between Feb 1, 2003 and Jan 31, 2004				
	Number of Child Victims	Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Rept	Number of Children Objective <= 93.90%	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	9,265	64	8,699.84	501.17
Lee	61	0	57.28	3.72

Note: This is a federally established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 2 : Repeat Maltreatment.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	20	100	0	0	0	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is a Strength for Lee DSS. According to CAPSS data no children in Lee County had a second indicated report of maltreatment during the period under review.

Stakeholder interviews indicate that services provided by Lee County staff are very effective in preventing the recurrence of maltreatment.

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Section Two

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding: Substantially Achieved

-Safety Item 3: Services to prevent removal.

Finding: Strength

-Safety Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren).

Finding: Strength

Analysis of Safety Item 3 Findings

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0
Treatment	7	100	0	0	3	0
Total Cases	8	100	0	0	12	0

Item 3

This is a “Strength” for Lee County. This item assesses the appropriateness of the agency’s interventions to prevent the removal of children from their family. Reviewers determined that 100% of the applicable cases were rated “strength” for this item.

Stakeholders rated the county as being very effective in providing services to prevent removal from the home. A parent stated that DSS has worked very hard to assist the family through the provision of in-home treatment services.

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Analysis of Safety Item 4 Findings

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 4: Risk of harm.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	100	0	0	1	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	18	95	1	5	1	0

Strategic Outcome Report Findings				
Measure S2.2: Risk of harm to child – Of all unfounded investigations during the reporting period, the percent receiving subsequent reports within six months of the initial report.				
	Number Alleged Child Victims in an Unfounded Rept 05/01/03 to 04/30/04	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective $\geq 91.50\%*$	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	13,954	1,176	12,767.91	10.09
Lee	121	13	110.72	(2.72)

* This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation of “Risk of Harm” measure

This is a “Strength”. The CAPSS report and the onsite review assess this item using different criteria. The CAPSS report uses subsequent reports of maltreatment as a measure of “risk of harm”. That is a proxy measure for “risk of harm” because subsequent reports do not necessarily mean that the children who are the subjects of those reports are at risk of harm. Those reports may or may not be substantiated after CPS assessment. The onsite reviewers determine how effective the county DSS office is at managing the risks of harm that necessitate continued involvement by DSS.

Reviewers found that risk of harm was adequately managed in 18 of the applicable 19 cases reviewed (95%). In the item rated “Area Needing Improvement” the reviewer found that although a parent’s random drug screen was positive for cocaine usage, no referral for drug assessment was made.

Stakeholders commented that DSS is very effective in reducing the risk of harm to children, including those in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes.

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Section Three

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding:

- Item 5: Foster care re-entries
- Item 6: Stability of foster care placemt.
- Item 7: Permanency goal for child
- Item 8: Reunification, plmt w/ relatives
- Item 9: Adoption
- Item 10: Perm goal of other planned arrangmt

Partially Achieved

- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Strength**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Strength**

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 5 Findings

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 5: Foster care re-entries.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	100	0	0	8	0

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.1: Foster Care Re-entries – Of all children who entered care during the year under review, the percent that re-entered foster care Within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.				
	Number Children Entering Care 11/01/03 to 10/31/04	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Fos Care Episode	Number of Children Objective >= 91.40%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,080	259	2,815.12	5.88
Lee	11	0	10.05	0.95

* This is a federally established objective.

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Explanation

Foster Care Re-entries is a Strength for Lee DSS. According to CAPSS, none of the 11 children (100%) who entered care in Lee County during the period under review had been returned home in the prior 12 months.

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 6 Findings

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80	2	20	0	0

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.2: Stability of Foster Care Placement – Of all children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, the percent that had not more than 2 placement settings.				
	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number of Children With No More Than 2 Placements	Number of Children Objective $\geq 86.70\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,606	2,974	3126.40	(152.40)
Lee	13	9	11.27	(2.27)

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

Stability of foster care placement is an “Area Needing Improvement”. The outcome report shows that 9 of the 13 children (69%) in care less than 12 months had no more than 2 foster care placements. This did not meet the standard of 86.7%. Onsite reviewers found that children in 2 of 10 cases had more than 2 placements in the period under review. One child had four placements during a 12-month period and another child had three placements, although the county provided excellent support services to the foster parent.

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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 7 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.5: Permanency Goal for Child – Of all children who have been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the percent for which a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition has been filed.				
	Children in Care At Least 15 of Last 22 Months 11/03 –10/04	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective ≥ 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,629	1,952	1923.37	28.63
Lee	28	18	14.84	3.16

* This is DSS established objective. The federal agency, Administration for Children & Families, gathers data on this measure, but has not established a numerical objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 7: Permanency goal for children.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80	2	20	0	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Lee DSS. The CAPSS report and the onsite reviewers consider related, but different information to rate this item. To meet the criteria established in the CAPSS report 53.00% or more of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months must have a TPR petition filed. In Lee DSS 64.29% (18/28) of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months had a TPR petition filed.

Onsite reviewers rated this item based on two criteria: 1) Is the permanency goal appropriately matched to the child’s need? and 2) Is the agency acting to cause the goal to be achieved timely? Reviewers found that 80% of the foster care cases met those two criteria. To achieve a rating of “Strength” 90% of the cases reviewed would need to meet the two criteria.

One case was rated “Area Needing Improvement” because the plan of reunification was not appropriate at this point in the life of the case. Child’s father has failed to comply with key requirements of the treatment plan. In another case the plan was changed to extended foster care 17 months after placement without an assessment for adoption.

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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 8 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.3: Length of Time to Achieve Reunification – Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caregiver, at the time of discharge from foster care, the percent reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home.				
	Number of Children Where Fos Care Services Closed. Last Plan Was Return Home 11/01/03 – 10/31/04	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,107	1,725	1605.53	119.47
Lee	87	82	66.29	15.71

* This is a federally established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	50	1	50	8	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Lee DSS. To meet this federally establish criteria at least 76.20% of the children returned to their parents from foster care must be returned within 12 months of their removal from home. In Lee County 94% of the children returned home within a year of removal.

Onsite reviewers determined that only 2 of the 10 cases could be assessed by the definition of this item. Therefore, only the outcome report was used to rate this item.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 9 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.4: Length of Time to Achieve Adoption – Of all children who exited from foster care during the year under review to a finalized adoption, the percent that exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home.				
	Number of Children With Finalized Adoption W/in Past 12 Months	Number of Children Where Adoption Was Finalized Within 24 Months of Entering Care	Number of Children Objective $\geq 32.00\%*$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	364	73	116.48	(43.48)
Lee	2	0	0.64	(0.64)

Note: This is a federally established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 9: Adoption.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	100	0	0	6	0

Explanation

This is a “Area Needing Improvement”. Onsite reviewers evaluated four applicable cases involving children with a plan of adoption. All four cases were rated “Strength” because the county was successful in proceeding with TPR in a timely manner and referring the child for adoption services.

The strategic outcome report shows that 2 adoptions were finalized during the 12 months captured by this report. Neither of those adoptions occurred within 24 months of the child entering foster care. Therefore, the agency did not meet this federally established criteria. The four cases evaluated by onsite reviewers had the plan of TPR & Adoption, but those adoptions had not been finalized.

It should be noted that court hearings involving DSS cases are rarely continued in Lee County. The judge stated that hearings are scheduled in advance and everyone is prepared when they come to court. The court schedule is given to the attorney in advance.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 10 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.6: Permanency Goal of “Other Planned Living Arrangement” – Of all children in foster care, the percent with a permanency goal of emancipation (Indep Liv Services) or a planned permanent living arrangement other than adoption, guardianship, or return to family.				
	Number of Children In Care at Least One Day 11/01/03 – 10/31/04	Number of Children In Care With Perm Plan “Other Planned Living Arrangement”	Number of Children Objective $\geq 85.00\%^*$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	8,029	1,122	6,824.65	82.35
Lee	22	5	18.70	(1.70)

* This is a DSS established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	100	0	0	7	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Lee DSS. Of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the permanency goal was appropriate. In one case a medically fragile, blind child’s plan of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement was approved by court order. This child will have extensive medical bills. The parents no longer visit. In another case there was documentation to support the permanency plan and the child was receiving independent living services. A total of 7 cases were rated as “Not Applicable” because of having other permanency plans.

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Section Four

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding:

- Item 11: Proximity of placement
- Item 12: Placement with siblings.
- Item 13: Visiting w/ parents & siblings
- Item 14: Preserving connections
- Item 15: Relative placement
- Item 16: Relationship of child w/ parents

Partially Achieved

- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Strength**

Analysis of Permanency Item 11 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P4.1: **Proximity of Foster Care Placement** – Of all children in foster care during the reporting period (excluding MTS and Adoptions children), the percent placed within their county of origin.

	Number of Children In Care 10/1/03 – 09/30/04	Number of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Percent of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Number of Children Objective >= 70.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	5,947	3,930	66.08	4,162.90	(232.90)
Lee	22	13	59.09	15.40	(2.40)

* This is a DSS established objective.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	100	0	0	3	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Lee DSS. To meet this objective 70%, or more, of the children in care must be placed in Lee County. The outcome report indicates that 59% (13/22) of the children in care are placed in the county. Onsite reviewers rated this item by different criteria. If a child was placed in an adjacent county but close to his/her home this item was rated “strength”. If a child was placed out of county to receive medical or behavioral treatment this item was rated “strength”. Onsite reviewers rated all applicable cases “strength”.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	100	0		7	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength”. It appears that placement with siblings was assessed in all cases. Where appropriate, siblings were placed together. In one case a child was not placed with siblings due to allegations of sexual abuse. The child was placed in a sexual offender treatment program. In “Not Applicable” cases there were no other siblings in foster care.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	67	1	33	7	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. Two out of three applicable cases were rated as strengths. In the other case, documentation indicated that the mother calls often to check on the child’s welfare. Visits are arranged at the request of the mother. During the reporting period, the mother visited only once. The siblings did not visit at all. Onsite reviewers rated that case “Area Needing Improvement”.

Stakeholders interviewed stated that DSS is very effective in planning and facilitating visitation with parents and siblings placed separately in foster care. One of the cases reviewed supported these opinions. Although the child no longer has siblings in foster care, a former caregiver brings the siblings for monthly visits. A foster child stated that he/she visits with mother on a regular basis. The child is able to call the DSS office for assistance with visitation. An incarcerated parent stated that regular visits are scheduled with the child.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	57	3	43	3	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. This item addresses the agency’s ability to preserve a child in foster care’s connection to his/her community, family, and faith. Only 4 cases for which this item applied were rated “Strength”. Although TPR has occurred in two of the cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” the children have siblings and attempts should be made to continue those family ties. In another case the child’s main connection is with Godparents. Support for this relationship is inadequate. The child’s disruptive behavior is associated with the desire to maintain a relationship with these individuals.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	88	1	12	2	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in identifying and assessing the relatives of children in foster care as possible caregivers. In 7 of the 10 cases reviewed the child (ren) were either placed with relatives or the workers made every attempt to place with relatives. Workers used available resources (Diligent Search, DNA testing) to identify paternal relatives for placement when necessary. In the case rated “Area Needing Improvement” there was no documentation to show that any effort was made to contact a relative for possible placement.

Stakeholders rated DSS as being very effective in identifying relatives who could care for children entering foster care and using them as placement settings when appropriate.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	100	0	00	7	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength”. This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in promoting or maintaining a strong emotionally supportive relationship between children in care and their parents. Of the applicable cases, documentation supported the agency’s efforts to promote the relationship between the child and care with the parents. Of the cases rated “Not Applicable” the parental rights have been terminated in 4 of the cases; the agency has been relieved of working with the parent in one case; and in 2 cases the parents’ whereabouts are unknown.

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Section Five

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding:

- Item 17: Needs & services
- Item 18: Involvement in case planning
- Item 19: Worker visits with child
- Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)

Partially Achieved

- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Strength**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20	0	0
Total Cases	18	90	2	10	0	0

Explanation

This item asks two questions: 1) Were the needs of the child, parents, and foster parents assessed, and 2) Did the agency take steps to meet the identified needs? This is an **“Strength”** for Lee DSS.

Reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents and foster parents were being met in all of the foster care cases reviewed, and in 8 of the 10 treatment cases reviewed. The area needing attention in the two treatment cases had to do with the non-custodial fathers of children who were not assessed, even though they were involved in their child's life.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	88	1	12	2	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	14	78	4	22	2	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. There was active participation in the treatment planning in 88% of the foster care cases. Particularly noteworthy is that in one foster care case the 8-year-old MTS child was actively involved in the plan and signed it. In the foster care case rated “Area Needing Improvement’ even though the child was 13 years old, there was no evidence of involvement in case planning. In the treatment cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” there was no evidence of client involvement in one plan. In another case the father is interacting with the mother however he is not on the treatment plan and has not been assessed for services. In the third case the father is not mentioned and there have been no referral to services for mother.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20		0
Total Cases	18	90	2	10	0	0

Explanation

This is a “**Strength**”. This rating is based on two questions: 1) are Lee DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) do the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? Face-to-Face visits with children in foster care and in treatment cases are being done according to state law and policy. Workers made the monthly face-to face contact with all of the applicable foster care cases. Two treatment cases were rated as “Area Needing Improvement” because there was no documentation to show that the worker made the required monthly face-to-face visits during two months of the six-month review period. Foster parents and foster children interviewed felt that DSS met the monthly visitation mandate. A foster child stated that there was regular contact with the DSS caseworker.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	100	0	0	7	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20	0	0
Total Cases	11	85	2	15	7	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for treatment cases. In 4 of the foster care cases rated “Not Applicable” the parents’ rights have been terminated; in 2 cases the court has relieved the agency of working with the parents and in one case the father is in prison and the mother’s whereabouts are unknown.

Reviewers found in one of the treatment cases that home visits were not documented for the months of August and September 2004. In the other treatment case the worker visited with the mother and not with the father, although the father appeared to be involved with the mother.

During a parent interview, the parent stated that a face-to-face visit without the child as well as with the child occurs at least monthly. The parent stated that the child is brought for visitation on a regular basis, so the worker is seen several times during the month.

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Section Six

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding:

Partially Achieved

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 21: Educational needs of child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	100	0	0	2	0
Treatment	4	67	2	33	4	0
Total Cases	12	86	2	14	6	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This item asks two questions: 1) Did DSS assess the educational needs of the children under their supervision, and 2) Were identified educational needs addressed? The results of the on-site review indicate that educational needs of all of the foster care children reviewed were addressed, while the needs of only 67% of the children in treatment cases were addressed.

Reviewers found that in one treatment case the children were 10 and 11 years old and in the 2nd the 3rd grades. One child is in a self-contained classroom. There were no school records on file or documentation regarding contact with the school during the period under review. In another treatment case, the treatment plan was not completed for one child and educational needs were not addressed.

School personnel indicated during the Stakeholder Review that DSS provides a list of children to the schools. This individual described the relationship with DSS personnel as being “great”. Foster parents and other professionals also considered DSS to be effective in addressing the educational needs of foster children and those receiving in-home services.

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Section Seven

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding:

- Item 22: Physical health of the child
- Item 23: Mental health of the child

Substantially Achieved

Finding: Strength

Finding: Strength

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 22: Physical health of the child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	19	95	1	5	0	0

Explanation

This is a **“Strength”**. The physical health needs of all of the foster care children reviewed (100%) were properly attended to. Case records contained immunization records and other health information. Dictation indicated that the workers continuously discussed and assessed the children’s needs. In the one treatment case that was rated as “Area Needing Improvement”, the reviewer found that the child’s physical health needs had not been assessed.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	100	0	0	3	0
Treatment	3		1		6	0
Total Cases	10	91	1	9	9	0

Explanation

This is a **“Strength”**. In 100% of the foster care cases, documentation was on file to indicate that children were assessed for Mental Health services and received counseling as needed. This item was rated as an “Area Needing Improvement” in one treatment case. The reviewer noted that the mother and children had been scheduled for two psychological evaluations, both of which the parent failed to keep.

Stakeholders felt that DSS staff was very effective in identifying and addressing the physical and mental health of children receiving in-home and foster care services. Mental Health staff stated that client referrals are made by telephone and DSS will follow-up in writing.

Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

This is a strength for Lee DSS. There are 17 foster homes licensed by DSS in Lee County. Ten of those licensing records were reviewed. Regardless of foster parents’ stated preference, all homes are licensed for “either sex, ages 0 to18 years”. For the most part, licensing requirements were met, with two exceptions.

1. Background check on one foster parent found Criminal Domestic Violence (CDV) in 1996.
2. Follow-up to corrections required by fire & health inspections not documented in two record.

Documentation of inspections, background checks and quarterly visits was in both CAPSS and the case file.

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Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

	Yes	No
Investigation Initiated Timely?	5	0
Assessment Adequate?	4	1
Case Decision Appropriate?	5	0

This is a Strength for Lee County. Onsite reviewers read two cases that did not meet the legal definition of abuse or neglect (one treatment case, one unfounded investigation). They were poverty cases. In each case the agency’s intervention improved the conditions in the home that created risks to the children. The one unfounded case that did not receive an adequate assessment was one of those poverty cases. The decision to close it was appropriate because it did not have to be opened.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

Appropriately Screened Out?	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
	9	0	1

Appropriate Collaterals Contacted?	Yes	No	Not Applicable
	2	1	7

Appropriate Referrals Made?	Yes	No	Not Applicable
	4	3	4

Explanation

Not all calls made to DSS meet the legal definition of child abuse or neglect. Each DSS office must have an intake process that accurately determines which calls should be accepted for investigation and which should be screened out. Ten screened out intakes were reviewed.

Analysis

This is Strength.

The majority of the screened out intakes (90%) were appropriate. For the undetermined case, the worker should have contacted collaterals at the hospital to verify allegation. If allegation was true, case should have been investigated by DSS.

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Case Rating Summary

The performance and outcome ratings below show the number of cases receiving that rating, followed by the percent of the total that number represents. Not Applicable (N/A) cases do not factor in the percentage.

Performance Item or Outcome	Perf. Item Ratings			Outcome Ratings			
	Strength	Area Needing Improvement	N/A*	Substantially Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	N/A*
Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.				20 (100%)	0	0	0
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	2 (100%)	0	18				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	20 (100%)	0	0				
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				18 (95%)	1 (5%)	0	1
Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	8 (100%)	0	12				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren)	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	1				
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				7 (70%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	0
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	2 (100%)	0	8				
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0				
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0				
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	8				
Item 9: Adoption	4 (100%)	0	6				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	7				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				6 (67%)	3 (33%)	0	1
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	7 (100%)	0	3				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	3 (100%)	0	7				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	7				
Item 14: Preserving connections	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	3				
Item 15: Relative placement	7 (88%)	1 (12%)	2				
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	3 (100%)	0	7				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				17 (85%)	3 (15%)	0	0
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	18 (90%)	2 (10%)	0				
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	14 (78%)	4 (22%)	2				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	18 (90%)	2 (10%)	0				
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	11 (85%)	2 (15%)	7				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				12 (86%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	6
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	12 (86%)	2 (14%)	6				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				18 (90%)	2 (10%)	0	0
Item 22: Physical health of the child	19 (95%)	1 (5%)	0				
Item 23: Mental health of the child	10 (91%)	1 (9%)	9				

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