

**Spartanburg County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2005**

During the week of October 24-28, 2005 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Spartanburg 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, Spartanburg DSS supervisors, and representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Guardian Ad Litem.

Period included in Case Record Review: April 1, 2005 to Sept 30, 2005

Period included in Outcome Measures: October 1, 2005 to Sept 30, 2005

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 assesses the quality of the services rendered and the effectiveness of those services. The review seeks to explain why a county's performance data looks the way it does.

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Section One

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding: Partially Achieved

-Safety Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations. **Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
-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: 10/1/04 to 09/30/05				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective >= 99.99%*	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,472	15,964	16,470	(506.35)
Spartanburg	605	597	604.94	(7.94)

* 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	2	100	0	0	8	0
Treatment	3	100	0	0	7	0
Total Cases	5	100	0	0	15	0

Explanation of Item 1

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Spartanburg DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. Even though all of the cases reviewed onsite were rated “Strength”, the outcome report indicates that, for the 12-month period under review, Spartanburg DSS failed to initiate investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24-hours in 8 of its 605 (1.3%) investigations. No stakeholder expressed concern about Spartanburg DSS’ response to reports.

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Analysis of Safety Item 2 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

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 Reports Between Apr 1, 2004 and Mar 31, 2005

	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	9,771	71	9,174.97	525.03
Spartanburg	565	2	530.54	32.47

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Safety Item 2 : Repeat Maltreatment.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	89	1	11	1	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	17	89	2	11	1	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is a “Strength” for Spartanburg DSS. According to CAPSS data 2 of the 565 cases indicated for abuse or neglect during the period under review was a victim in a previously founded report. Two of the 17 applicable cases reviewed onsite was a case of repeat maltreatment. The data indicates that less than 1 percent of the children served by the Spartanburg DSS child welfare program are repeat victims 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: Not Achieved

-Safety Item 3: Services to prevent removal. **Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
 -Safety Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren). **Finding: Area Needing Improvement**

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	3	100	0	0	7	0
Treatment	6	67	3	33	1	0
Total Cases	9	75	3	25	8	0

Item 3

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Spartanburg DSS. This item assesses the appropriateness of the services selected to prevent the removal of children from their family. Reviewers rated 12 of the applicable 14 cases “strength” for this item. In the cases reviewed, when DSS decided to removed children from their home, that decision was supported by the facts of the case. When DSS decided to leave children in their home after finding that abuse or neglect had occurred, the services selected to protect those children were appropriate. That did not always mean that risks were reduced.

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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	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	15	79	4	21	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 11/01/03 to 10/31/04	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	13,935	1,163	12,750.53	21.48
Spartanburg	964	65	882.06	16.94

* This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation of “Risk of Harm” measure

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Spartanburg DSS. The standard for the outcome report in CAPSS is that no more than 8.5% of alleged child victims have another report within 6 months of the initial report. According to CAPSS 65 of the 964 (6.7%) child victims were reported again to DSS within 6 months of an unfounded determination. It must be understood that “Subsequent reports of abuse” is a proxy measure for “Risk of harm” because additional, unsubstantiated reports of abuse do not conclusively mean that risk has or has not been reduced.

Onsite reviewers are able to assess what CAPSS cannot. Onsite reviewers determine how effective the county DSS office is at managing the risks of harm that necessitate continued involvement by DSS. By this criterion, 4 of the applicable 19 cases reviewed were rated “Area Needing Improvement”. All four cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” were treatment cases in which the risk of harm to the children was not reduced. In three of the four cases the agency did not adequately address the risk to the children posed by the father or live-in boyfriend. In the fourth case the children were

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removed from the parents and placed with a grandparent with a criminal history and with prior DSS involvement.

Supervisors interviewed said that it was more difficult to know if risks were reduced in homes since budget cuts eliminated or reduced availability of in-home services from Family Resources and the Alcohol/Drug treatment agency.

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 placement.
- Item 7: Permanency goal for child
- Item 8: Reunification, plmt w/ relatives
- Item 9: Adoption
- Item 10: Perm goal of other planned arrangement

Partially Achieved

- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Strength**
- 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	4	0	0	0	6	0

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Strategic Outcome Report Findings

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 05/01/04 to 04/30/05	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Fos Care Episode	Number of Children Objective $\geq 91.40\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,255	243	2,975.07	36.93
Spartanburg	306	12	279.68	14.32

* This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

Foster Care Re-entries is a “Strength” for Spartanburg DSS. According to CAPSS, 12 of the 306 children (4%) who entered foster care in Spartanburg County during the period under review had been returned home in the prior 12 months. Consequently, Spartanburg DSS met the federal standard for foster care re-entries. None of the cases reviewed onsite involved a child re-entering foster care.

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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 6 Findings

Site Visit Findings 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

Strategic Outcome Report Findings				
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	3,790	3,106	3,285.93	(179.93)
Spartanburg	335	274	290.45	(16.45)

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

Stability of foster care placement is an “Area Needing Improvement”. The outcome report shows that 274 of the 335 children (82%) in care less than 12 months had no more than 2 foster care placements. This falls short of the standard of 86.7%. In the sample of 10 foster care cases reviewed onsite, two involved a child who had moved more than twice within the past 12 months. The children did not disrupt their placements because they were inappropriately placed. They were in ISCEDC-funded therapeutic placements – residential treatment facilities, high management group homes, therapeutic foster care. The children disrupted because those facilities could not manage their behaviors.

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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 05/04 –04/05	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective ≥ 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,541	1,657	1,876.73	(219.73)
Spartanburg	266	140	140.98	(0.98)

* 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	9	90	1	10	0	0

Explanation of Item 7

This is a “Strength” for Spartanburg DSS. 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. For Spartanburg DSS the percentage is 52.6 (140/266). If DSS does not pursue TPR for a child in foster care for 15 of the past 22 months, there should be compelling reason for not doing so. Spartanburg DSS’s numbers in this area were likely affected by the number of older teenagers who refuse adoption. The agency generally does not pursue Termination of Parental Rights for such children.

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? Nine of the ten cases reviewed onsite were rated “Strength” for this item. The agency’s goal in the case rated “Area Needing Improvement” was to return the child home. The case involved a teenagers who adamantly refused to go home because she felt that she would not be safe with her parents.

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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 05/01/04–04/30/05	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,075	1,712	1,581.15	130.85
Spartanburg	117	101	89.15	11.85

* 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	8	89	1	11	1	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Spartanburg 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 Spartanburg County 86% of the children returned home within a year of removal. Onsite reviewers rated 8 of the 9 applicable cases “Strength” because the casework in those cases was moving the children toward reunification in a timely manner, based on the parents’ progress on items specified in treatment plans.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 9 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

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)
Spartanburg	44	9	14.08	(5.08)

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 9: Adoption.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	0	0	10	0

Explanation

This is a “Area Needing Improvement”. To meet this federally established objective 32% of the adoptions in a county must be completed within 24 months of the children entering care. The outcome report shows that 9 of the 44 adoptions (20%) completed during the 12-month period under review were completed within 24 months of the children entering care. Spartanburg DSS fell short of the standard by 5 adoptions. None of the cases reviewed on site involved children with a plan of adoption.

Stakeholders also said that DSS was not effective in pursuing and accomplishing adoptions for children in foster care. Some stakeholders cited the increased number of children entering foster care, which caused caseload sizes to increase as a factor.

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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 05/01/04 – 04/30/05	Number of Children In Care With Perm Plan “Other Planned Living Arrangement”	Number of Children Objective >= 85.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	8,192	1,084	6,963.20	144.80
Spartanburg	502	58	426.70	17.30

* 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	1	100	0	0	9	0

Explanation-*

This is a “Strength” for Spartanburg DSS. The standard for this objective is that no more than 15% of the children in foster care should have this plan. Approximately 12% of the children in Spartanburg DSS custody have this plan. Only one of the cases evaluated by onsite reviewers had the plan of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). The plan was appropriate for the child and the child was receiving appropriate independent living services.

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

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 05/01/04 – 04/30/05	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	6,114	4,021	65.77	4,279.80	(258.80)
Spartanburg	503	313	62.23	352.10	(39.10)

* 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	8	80	2	20	0	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Spartanburg DSS. To meet this objective 70%, or more, of the children in care must be placed in Spartanburg County. The outcome report indicates that 62% (313/503) of the children in care were placed in the county. The 190 Spartanburg children placed out-of-county cause caseworkers to spend time on the road that should be spent performing other critical tasks. Stakeholders explained that the number of children entering foster care has increased. Spartanburg DSS has exhausted its available foster homes.

Spartanburg DSS has a licensing unit with staff dedicated to foster home recruitment. A recruitment campaign is underway. On the other hand, Spartanburg DSS has experienced an increase in cases in with parents using methamphetamine. They expect the risk associated with this drug to force the agency to remove more children from their homes and place them in foster care. If the agency cannot increase its foster parent pool enough to accommodate this increase, the percentage of Spartanburg children placed out-of-county will increase.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	100	0	0	6	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength”. It was apparent that the agency attempted to place siblings together when resources and circumstances made that possible. When siblings were not placed together, it was not in their best interest to be placed together.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	56	4	44	1	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. The cases rated Area Needing Improvement involved sibling groups not placed together because one or more sibling was placed out of county in a therapeutic placement. When those situations occurred, visiting between siblings was not planned, and often did not occur. The other situation that caused cases to be rated Area Needing Improvement involved the lack of planned visits between children in foster care and their non-custodial fathers.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	67	3	33	1	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. Six of the applicable 9 cases reviewed were rated “Strength” for this item. This means that in most, but not all cases, the agency tries to help children in foster care maintain relationships that are important to them. In three of the nine cases reviewed the agency focused on visits with parents but not with others in the children’s lives whose relationships were as, if not more, significant. One case involved a child who entered care from her aunt’s custody, who had been raising the child. Another case involved a child with four adult siblings with whom the child wanted, but had no contact.

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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	5	63	3	37	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 5 of the 8 applicable cases, both maternal and paternal relatives were assessed as placement options. In the 3 cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” there was no evidence that paternal relatives were assessed. Paternal relatives were not assessed in those cases because DSS was not working with the children’s fathers. In one case the child’s father lived in Charlotte and said that he wanted his daughter. That was early in the life of the case. There was evidence that he was ever contacted again.

<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	5	56	4	44	1	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in promoting or maintaining a strong emotionally supportive relationship between children in care and their parents. Five of the applicable 9 cases were rated “Strength” because in those cases provisions were made for parents to be involved in their children’s lives beyond the minimum visitation required by policy. However, in almost half of the cases reviewed (44%) relationships with the non-custodial fathers of children in foster care were ignored.

Stakeholders interviewed supported this finding by saying that Spartanburg DSS was not effective in helping children maintain their relationships with their parents.

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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)

Not Achieved

- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- 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	7	70	3	30	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	12	60	8	40	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? Even though 60 percent of the cases reviewed were strong in this area, this is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Spartanburg DSS. Assessment and appropriate service delivery was more likely to occur in foster care cases than in treatment cases. CPS Treatment workers focused on the mothers of the children and, at times, did not include the father in the assessment or treatment planning process. Another deficiency seen in treatment cases was that the workers often failed to assess and address the needs of the children's caregiver if that caregiver was not a parent. Consequently, the worker focused on the needs of the parents, while the needs of the caregiver (grandmother, aunt, etc.) were ignored.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	60	4	40	0	0
Treatment	7	78	2	22	1	0
Total Cases	13	68	6	32	1	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. Family meetings are a routine part of case planning for both foster care and treatment cases. That is why 68% of the cases reviewed were rated “Strength”. The cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” had one or more of the following deficiencies:

- 1) In foster care cases, there was not evidence of family involvement in case planning beyond the initial family meeting.
- 2) Some cases did not show evidence of involvement by the father or by age-appropriate children.

For those reasons, several stakeholders stated that Spartanburg DSS was not effective at involving parents and children in case planning.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40		0
Total Cases	15	75	5	25	0	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This rating is based on two questions: 1) were Spartanburg DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) did the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? For the 10 foster child cases reviewed, one month without a face-to-face visit with one child was identified. Treatment files showed that workers saw some, most, but not all of the children in a family each month.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	17	5	83	4	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	6	36	10	64	4	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Spartanburg DSS. Face-to-Face visits with parents were sporadic. The mothers would be seen some months, but not others – the same for the fathers. This problem was more prevalent in foster care cases than in treatment cases. Both parents were seen monthly, according to policy in 36% of the cases reviewed.

It should be noted that during the month of the onsite review, 8 of Spartanburg DSS’s 18 foster care caseworker positions were vacant. The caseloads from those 8 vacant positions were distributed among the remaining caseworkers and supervisors.

It should also be noted that all 9 of Spartanburg DSS’s CPS treatment positions were filled during the month of the onsite review. However, because there were 536 children in the 227 treatment cases, each treatment worker averaged 60 children in their caseload. Those factors significantly diminished the agency’s ability to address the Well-Being needs of their clients.

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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

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 21: Educational needs of child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	89	1	11	1	0
Treatment	6	75	2	25	2	0
Total Cases	14	82	3	18	3	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Spartanburg DSS. 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 answer to both questions was “Yes” for all but one of the reviewed foster care cases. Even though 75% of the reviewed treatment cases were rated “Strength”, deficiencies were noted in a failure of the worker to follow up on education-related problems identified by the worker.

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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

Not Achieved

- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 22: Physical health of the child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80	2	20	0	0
Treatment	7	78	2	22	1	0
Total Cases	15	79	4	21	1	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Spartanburg DSS. It was evident that the medical needs of children in treatment and foster care cases were consistently assessed. The problem in those cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” was a failure to follow up on identified medical needs.

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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	8	89	1	11	1	0
Treatment	4	67	2	33	4	0
Total Cases	12	80	3	20	5	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Spartanburg DSS. The mental health needs of most (80%) of the children reviewed were appropriately attended to. However this percentage did not meet the 90% standard. The problem in the 3 cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” was a failure to follow-up on identified mental health needs. There was either no evidence of an appropriate referral made, or no evidence that the worker checked to see if the needed services were sought by the client, received, or effective.

Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

This is a “**Strength**” for Spartanburg DSS. At the time of the onsite review Spartanburg DSS had 131 licensed foster homes. Ten foster home records were reviewed.

1. Relicensing was completed timely in all reviewed records.
2. Quarterly visits were done in all reviewed records.
3. Foster fathers were not consistently seen during quarterly visits.
4. Quarterly visit checklists were in all records ensuring that all required areas were covered during the visits.
5. CAPSS documentation was good.
6. Training hours were documented and continually tracked.
7. All placements complied with foster parent documented preferences.
8. References – in 2 instances the references did not know the foster parent for the required 3 years. In those instances, additional references were used.
9. All inspections were done timely. In one instance, follow-up on a cited deficiency was not documented.

The foster homes were being managed appropriately. However, there were not enough foster homes to serve the number of children in foster care.

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Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Investigation initiated timely?	5	0
Was assessment adequate?	4	1
Was decision appropriate?	3	2

This is an Area Needing Improvement for Spartanburg DSS. In the one case that had an inadequate assessment the DSS worker had the mother sign a safety plan while she was in jail, but did not assess the risk to the children left in the care of the man who was living in the mother’s house. There was neglect. The case should not have been unfounded. Trouble ensued.

Another case was adequately assessed. The allegation was for “Physical Abuse”, but all findings indicated that the case should have been unfounded. However, the parents were sent a letter stating that the case was indicated for “Physical Neglect”, then the case was closed.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	8	2	0
	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	0	2	8
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	0	1	9

Explanation: Not all calls to the Dept. of Social Services alleging abuse or neglect meet the legal definition of abuse or neglect. Those calls are screened out, and not investigated. The table above contains the findings of a reviewer who examined 10 screened out intakes.

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Spartanburg DSS. Although 80% of the reviewed intakes were screened out appropriately, two of those intakes should have been

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accepted for investigation, but were not. One involved two children who were allegedly placed with a grandmother by NC DSS. The grandmother returned the children to drug addicted parents in Spartanburg. The other intake alleged that parents were leaving their children with a sitter who blows smoke from his drugs in the children's faces.

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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.				18 (90%)		2 (10%)	
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	5 (100%)		15				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	17 (89%)	2 (11%)	1				
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				14 (70%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	
Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	9 (75%)	3 (25%)	8				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren)	15 (75%)	5 (25%)					
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	3 (100%)		7				
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	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	6				
Item 9: Adoption	1 (20)	4 (80)	5				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	1 (100%)		9				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				5 (50%)	5 (50%)		
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	6 (100%)		4				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	7 (78%)	2(22%)	1				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	3				
Item 14: Preserving connections	3 (33%)	6 (67%)	1				
Item 15: Relative placement	5 (50%)	5 (50%)					
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	4				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				10 (50%)	8(40%)	2 (10%)	
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	12 (60%)	8 (40%)					
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	13 (68%)	6 (32%)	1				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	15 (75%)	5 (25%)	1				
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	6 (38%)	10 (62%)	4				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				14 (82%)	1 (6%)	2 (12%)	3
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	14 (82%)	3 (18%)	3				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				14 (74%)	3 (16%)	2 (10%)	1
Item 22: Physical health of the child	15 (79%)	4 (21%)	1				
Item 23: Mental health of the child	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	5				