

**Beaufort County DSS  
Child Welfare Services Review  
April 2006**

During the week of April 3-7, 2006 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Beaufort 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, Beaufort DSS supervisors, and representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Guardian Ad Litem.

**Period included in Case Record Review: October 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006**

**Period included in Outcome Measures: April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006**

**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**

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
<b>Measure S1.1: Timeliness of initiating investigations</b> on reports of child maltreatment Data Time Period: 05/1/05 to 04/30/06				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective >= 99.99%*	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,360	15,720	16,358.36	-638.36
Beaufort	380	377	379.96	-2.96

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

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Safety Item 1 : Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	0	0	10	0
Treatment	2	100	0	0	8	0
Total Cases	2	100	0	0	18	0

**Explanation of Item 1**

**This is an "Area Needing Improvement" for Beaufort DSS.** State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. CAPSS data indicates that an investigation of all but 3 of the 380 reports received during the period under review were initiated timely (within 24 hours). Those 3 late investigations caused the Beaufort DSS office to fall short of the standard.

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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 Nov 1, 2004 and Oct 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	10,198	62	9575.92	560.08
Beaufort	217	1	203.76	12.24

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	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	9	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	18	95	1	5	0	0

**Explanation of Item 2**

**This is a “Strength” for Beaufort DSS.** CAPSS data shows that one of the 217 incidents of maltreatment was a reoccurrence during the period under review. Onsite reviewers also saw that preventing reoccurrence of maltreatment as a strength for Beaufort DSS.

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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

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Safety Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal.</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	75	1	25	6	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	13	93	1	7	6	0

**Explanation of Item 3**

**This is a “Strength” for Beaufort DSS.** When children were removed from their homes and brought into foster care the decisions were made appropriately. Reviewers found that Beaufort staff quickly identified risk factors in each case and referred clients to services designed to address those specific factors.

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Analysis of Safety Item 4 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure S2.2: <b>Risk of harm to child</b> – 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 11/01/04 to 10/31/05	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	14,396	1,100	13,172.34	123.66
Beaufort	343	31	313.85	-1.85

\* This is a DSS established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Safety Item 4: Risk of harm.</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80	2	20	0	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	18	90	2	10	0	0

**Explanation of Item 4**

**This is a “Strength” for Beaufort DSS.** Onsite reviewers found that the risk of harm was adequately managed in all 10 of the treatment cases reviewed and 8 of the 10 foster care cases reviewed. This was because, for the most part, the agency’s assessments and interventions were appropriate. However, Risk of Harm was rated “Area Needing Improvement” for 2 foster care cases. In one of those cases the treatment plan appropriately addressed the mothers’ drug addiction, but failed to address ongoing domestic violence.

The other foster care case rated “Area Needing Improvement” for Risk of Harm involved two Hispanic children who were soon to be returned to their mother. The case file indicated that the mother had not only failed to protect the daughter from repeated sexual abuse by the father and the father’s friend, but had attempted to hide the evidence of the sexual abuse and had blamed the daughter for making trouble for the family. It appeared that the children were returned home against the recommendation of the agency caseworker and supervisory staff.

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

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 5 Findings

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 5:</b> Foster care re-entries.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	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 05/01/05 to 04/30/06	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	3,179	241	2,905.61	32.39
Beaufort	57	1	52.10	3.90

\* This is a federally established objective.

**Explanation**

**Foster Care Re-entries is a “Strength” for Beaufort DSS.** According to CAPSS, 1 of the 57 children (2%) who entered foster care in Beaufort County during the period under review had been returned home in the prior 12 months. Onsite reviewers found that children leaving foster care to live with parents or relatives generally remained stable in those placements.

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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 6 Findings

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 6:</b> Stability of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0

<b>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</b>				
Measure P3.2: <b>Stability of Foster Care Placement</b> – 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	3,682	2,962	3,192.29	-230.29
Beaufort	65	49	56.36	-7.36

Note: This is a federally established objective.

**Explanation**

**Stability of foster care placement is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** The outcome report shows that 16 of the 65 children (25%) in care less than 12 months had more than 2 foster care placements. This rate of placement change among children in foster care fails to meet the federally established standard. Onsite reviewers found that foster care placements were generally stable. Children with more than two moves within a 12 month period had psychological or behavioral disorders. Disrupted pre-adoptive placements also contributed to instability in some cases.



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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 7 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.5: <b>Permanency Goal for Child</b> – 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 05/2005 –04/2006	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective ≥ 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,587	1,673	1,901.11	-228.11
Beaufort	50	22	26.50	-4.50

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

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 7:</b> Permanency goal for children.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	40	6	60	0	0

**Explanation of Item 7**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Beaufort 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 Beaufort DSS the percentage is 44.0 (22/50). 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. That determination requires a qualitative analysis. Onsite reviewers provided that qualitative analysis.

Onsite rated 6 of the 10 cases reviewed for this item as “Area Needing Improvement”. Reviewers found that in three of the cases reviewed the agency pursued a plan of Return Home for too long before changing the child’s plan to something else. Reviewers also found cases in which the agency pursued placement of a child with a questionable maternal relative without diligently looking for potential paternal relatives as placement options.

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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 8 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.3: <b>Length of Time to Achieve Reunification</b> – 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 05/01/05–04/30/06	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,378	1,992	1,812.04	179.96
Beaufort	32	30	24.38	5.62

\* This is a federally established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 8:</b> Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	4	100	6	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Beaufort 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 Beaufort County 30 of the 32 who returned home in the past year had been in care less than a year. That outcome report focuses on closed foster care cases. Onsite reviewers examined open foster care cases with the plan of Return Home and found something different than what the outcome report indicates.

All 4 of the cases reviewed with a plan of Return Home were rated “Area Needing Improvement”. All 4 cases involved children who had been in foster care more than 12 months. All involved target families with significant risk factors that had not been reduced after 12 or more months of intervention by the agency. All involved target families for which the prognosis for improvement was poor.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 9 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.4: <b>Length of Time to Achieve Adoption</b> – 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	384	50	122.88	-72.88
Beaufort	1	0	0.32	-0.32

Note: This is a federally established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 9: Adoption.</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	50	2	50	6	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** The outcome report shows that Beaufort DSS completed one adoption in the prior 12 months and that adoption took longer than 24 months to complete. Onsite reviewers read the cases of 4 children in foster care with plans of adoption. Two of those children could potentially be adopted within 24 months. Two children had already been in care more than two years.

Two circumstances contribute to delays in adoptions in Beaufort County.

1. The agency does not consistently use concurrent planning. The result is that a plan of Return Home can be pursued for a year or more. If that fails, the plan may be changed to TPR/Adoption. Instead, the agency should be building its case for TPR and adoption while concurrently pursuing the plan of returning the child home.
2. Parents who appeal TPR actions can delay the finalization of those actions for 2 or more years.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 10 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.6: <b>Permanency Goal of “Other Planned Living Arrangement”</b> – 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 05/01/05 – 04/30/06	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	8,139	1,466	6,918.15	-245.15
Beaufort	98	11	83.30	3.70

\* This is a DSS established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 10:</b> Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	100	0	0	8	0

**Explanation-\***

**This is a “Strength” for Beaufort DSS.** The standard for this objective is that no more than 15% of the children in foster care should have this plan (APPLA – Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement). Approximately 11% of the children in Beaufort DSS custody have this plan. This means that foster children are not being given this plan too soon, and are only given this plan when all other options have been appropriately ruled out. The two youth with the plan of APPLA were 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: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Strength**
- 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 05/01/05 – 04/30/06	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	6,045	3,877	64.14	4,231.50	-354.50
Beaufort	99	81	81.82	69.30	11.70

\* This is a DSS established objective.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 11:</b> Proximity of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	100	0	0	1	0

**Explanation**

**This is a “Strength” for Beaufort DSS.** To meet this objective 70%, or more, of the children in care must be placed in Beaufort County. The outcome report indicates that 82% (81/99) of the children in care were placed in the county. At the time of the onsite review the county had 34 foster homes to serve the 56 children in care. Children were placed out of county in therapeutic facilities or in pre-adoptive placements. Reviewers did not identify any children placed out of county because there were no available foster homes.

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 12:</b> Placement with siblings						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	86	1	14	3	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** It was apparent that the agency attempted to place siblings together when resources and circumstances made that possible. Six of the 7 sibling groups reviewed were placed together. However, in one sibling group of four, two of the children were in one foster home. The other two were in another foster home. They were separated because the county had no home willing to care for all four children.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 13:</b> Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	75	2	25	2	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** In most (75%) instances the agency did an excellent job of arranging for visits between children in foster care and their parents and with siblings placed in another setting. However, in some (25%) instances that was not the case. Not having ready access to an interpreter prevented the agency from consistently providing visitation between a 12 year old foster child and her mother prior to the child being returned home. In another case, visitation for a youth in care for 11 years was sporadic.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 14:</b> Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	89	1	11	1	0

**Explanation**

**This is a “Strength”.** This item addresses the agency’s ability to preserve a child in foster care’s connection to the people, places and things that are important to him. Eight of the applicable 9 cases reviewed were rated “Strength” for this item. Beaufort DSS staff documented their efforts to help children maintain their relationships with relatives; their efforts to keep children within the county and within their same school, when possible. Beaufort foster parents appeared to be actively involved with the biological families of the children in their care.

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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	78	2	22	1	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 78% of the cases reviewed there was evidence that both maternal and paternal relatives were assessed as placement options for the children in foster care. The agency made good use of its relationship with the local Marine Base to locate military fathers as they moved from assignment to assignment in different states and countries. However, in two of the cases reviewed the paternal relatives were not assessed as placement options for the children in care.

<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	7	100	0	0	3	0

**Explanation**

**This 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. Whenever appropriate Beaufort DSS consistently went beyond the minimum required visitation according to policy. Visitation was based instead on the needs of the children. Parents were involved with their children to the extent their circumstances allowed.



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

**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	6	67	3	33	1	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	11	58	8	42	1	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Beaufort DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) Were the needs of the child, parents, and caregivers assessed, and 2) Did the agency take steps to meet the identified needs? Half of the treatment cases reviewed were strong in this area and half were rated “Area Needing Improvement”. The deficiency in treatment cases usually involved children who had been removed from their parents and placed with a relative. However, relatives were not consistently assessed as to their needs or protective capacity.

Most (67%) foster care cases were strong in this area. Each of the 3 cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” received that rating for different reasons. In one case domestic violence problems were not adequately addressed. In another, the inability of the agency to communicate with the Spanish speaking family diminished the agency’s ability to adequately assess and address needs. In a third case, the focus was on the mother and her children, but the stepfather was practically left out of the picture.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	70	3	30	0	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	13	65	7	45	0	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This item, more than most others, seemed to be affected by the practice of specific workers than the office as a whole. Some workers consistently involved age-appropriate children and their parents in the case planning process. Whereas some workers consistently wrote case plans in isolation and then had a parent sign the plan. Those workers who appeared to write case plans in isolation tended not to involve age-appropriate children at all.

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	18	90	2	10	0	0

**Explanation**

This is a “**Strength**” for Beaufort DSS. This rating is based on two questions: 1) were Beaufort DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) did the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? This was generally a strong area for both foster care and treatment cases. In most cases the agency managed to see all of the children in its care each month, even when sibling groups were living with different caregivers.

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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	8	100	0	0	2	0
Treatment	8	89	1	11	1	0
Total Cases	16	94	1	6	3	0

**Explanation**

This is a “**Strength**” for Beaufort DSS. Face-to-face contact with parents was conducted according to policy and in accord with the circumstances of cases in all but one of the cases reviewed onsite. The agency did a very good job of locating and attempting to communicate with parents in other parts of South Carolina and in other states.

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Section Six

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

**Summary of Findings**

**Overall Finding:**

**Substantially Achieved**

**Site Visit Findings**    Performance Item Ratings

**Well Being Item 21:** Educational needs of child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	100	0	0	3	0
Treatment	7	78	2	22	1	0
Total Cases	14	88	2	12	4	0

**Explanation**

This is a “**Strength**” for Beaufort 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 the reviewed foster care cases. The reason only 78% of the treatment cases rated Strength was because in two cases the worker did not follow up on educational issues that were identified in the cases after the initial assessment.

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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

**Partially Achieved**

**Finding: Strength**

**Finding: Area Needing Improvement**

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 22:</b> 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
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Explanation**

This is a “**Strength**” for Beaufort DSS. The medical needs of 95% of the cases reviewed were handled properly. Assessments of medical needs were done during the investigative phase of each case and was monitored throughout the life of the cases.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	83	1	17	4	0
Treatment	6	67	3	33	1	0
Total Cases	11	73	4	27	5	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for **Beaufort DSS**. The mental health needs of most (73%) children reviewed were appropriately attended to. There were significant lapses in one foster care and 3 treatment cases reviewed. In those cases the worker clearly documented the mental health needs of the child but failed to ensure that the child received appropriate treatment.

**Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses**

**This is an area needing improvement.** Licensing records were reviewed for 10 of the 34 foster homes.

1. Quarterly visits were conducted and documented in the record.
2. Even though BCDSS uses a checklist it developed rather than the agency checklist, all relevant areas are covered.
3. Sex offender and other background checks completed timely on all age appropriate residents.
4. Two of the 10 licenses were expired.
5. One license was expired from 11/03 to 6/05. It has since been renewed

There were no children in the foster homes with expired licenses. The records showed that Beaufort DSS staff were aware of the problems, had relicensed two of the foster homes in December 2005 and was in the process of correcting the third expired license. The supervisor expressed concern about maintaining foster homes that would not accept the type of children entering care.

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Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

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

**This is a “Strength” for Beaufort County DSS.** All decisions to unfound the cases were appropriate based on the information available at the time of the decision. Investigations included forensic interviews when appropriate. Workers in all but one case made appropriate collateral contacts. The reviewer found that the decision to unfound one of the investigations was probably appropriate although law enforcement should have been checked for criminal history of alleged perpetrator.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

**Screened Out Intakes**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Cannot Determine</b>
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	7	2	1
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	5	2	3
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	1	0	9

**This is an area needing improvement for Beaufort County DSS.** Two of the 10 intakes reviewed should not have been screened out. One involved a man accused of sexually molesting his 3 year old niece. Law enforcement chose not to pursue charges even though the man failed a polygraph test. The man has a 3 year old daughter in his home. That child is at risk.

The other cases alleged that 4 small children were at risk from domestic violence. Intake dictation identified the sheriff’s office and the maternal grandmother as collateral contacts. There was no evidence that they were contacted.

One intake required contact with a medical provider to determine that the 3 year old child’s condition was not the result of sexual abuse. That contact was not documented.

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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.				19 (95%)		1 (5%)	0
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	2 (100%)		18				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	1				
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				18 (90%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0
Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	13 (93%)	1 (7%)	6				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child(ren)	18 (90%)	2 (10%)	0				
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	0
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	1 (100%)		9				
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	0				
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	0				
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives		4 (100%)	6				
Item 9: Adoption	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	6				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	2 (100%)		8				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				8 (89%)	1 (11%)		0
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	9 (100%)		1				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	3				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	2				
Item 14: Preserving connections	8 (89%)	1 (11%)	1				
Item 15: Relative placement	7 (78%)	2 (22%)	1				
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	7 (100%)		0				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				10 (50%)	10(50%)		0
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	11 (58%)	8 (42%)	1				
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	0				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	18 (90%)	2 (10%)	0				
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	16 (94%)	1 (6%)	3				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				14 (88%)	2 (12%)		4
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	14 (88%)	2 (12%)	0				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				16 (80%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	0
Item 22: Physical health of the child	19 (95%)	1 (5%)	0				
Item 23: Mental health of the child	11 (73%)	4 (27%)	5				