

**Calhoun County DSS  
Child Welfare Services Review  
July 2005**

**During the week of July 11-15, 2005 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Calhoun County. A sample of open and closed foster care and treatment cases was reviewed. Also reviewed were screened-out intakes, foster home licensing records, and unfounded investigations. Stakeholders interviewed for this review included foster parents, Calhoun DSS supervisor, representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Guardian Ad Litem, law enforcement, legal representatives, foster children, and biological parents.**

**Period included in Case Record Review: January 1, 2005 to June 30, 2005**

**Period included in Outcome Measures: July 1, 2004 to June 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

<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: 07/01/04 to 06/30/05				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective $\geq 99.99\%*$	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,465	15,632	16,463.35	(831.35)
Calhoun	50	49	50.0	(0.99)

\* 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	2	100	0	0	5	0
Treatment	3	100	0	0	7	0
Total Cases	5	100	0	0	12	0

**Explanation of Item 1**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Calhoun DSS.** State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. The outcome report indicates that for the 12-month period under review Calhoun initiated 98% (49/50) of the investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24-hours. The objective for this item is 99.99%. The on-site review indicates that all of the applicable cases met the objective. However, the outcome report accounts for all of the cases during a 12-month period whereas the on-site review focused only on the 6-month period under review. Therefore the data from the outcome report is being used to rate this item.

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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 Report Between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004

	Number of Child Victims	Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Rept	Number of Children Objective $\geq 93.90\%$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	9,531	72	8,949.61	509.39
Calhoun	14	0	13.15	0.85

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	7	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	9	100	0	0	1	0
Total Cases	16	100	0	0	1	0

**Explanation of Item 2**

**This item is a “Strength” for Calhoun DSS.** According to CAPSS data none of the 14 cases indicated for abuse or neglect during the period under review were victims in a previously founded report. None of the applicable cases reviewed on-site involved repeat maltreatment. Calhoun DSS met the federally established objective for this item.

Stakeholders interviewed stated DSS is very effective in preventing the recurrence of maltreatment. The agency assesses all household members and the issues that caused DSS’ involvement. During the assessment, the case manager looks for other risk factors. Services are put into place to assist families and referrals are made as needed.

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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**

**Partially Achieved**

-Safety Item 3: Services to prevent removal.

**Finding: Strength**

-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	4	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	12	92	1	8	4	0

**Item 3**

**Item 3 is a “Strength” for Calhoun DSS.** This item assesses the appropriateness of the agency’s interventions to prevent the removal of children from their family. The agency assessed relatives for placement, as appropriate. It was determined in one treatment case that the parents were not appropriately assessed for alcohol and drug abuse services.

One stakeholder commented that families are thoroughly assessed in order to determine what services are needed. The lack of funding is sometimes a barrier to meeting the needs of families. The agency is limited in providing help to individuals with recurring problems. Overall stakeholders rated the county as being very effective in offering preventive services to eliminate removing children from their homes.

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Analysis of Safety Item 4 Findings

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Safety Item 4: Risk of harm.</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20	0	0
Total Cases	15	88	2	12	0	0

<b>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</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 01/01/04 to 12/31/04	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective >= 91.50%*	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	13,866	1,118	12,687.39	60.61
Calhoun	42	1	38.43	2.57

\*This is a DSS established objective.

**Explanation of “Risk of Harm” measure**

**This item is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** The standard for the outcome report in CAPSS is that no more than 8.5% of alleged child victims have another report within six months of the initial report. According to CAPSS, Calhoun DSS met the objective for this item. It must be understood that “subsequent reports of abuse” is a proxy measure for “risk of harm” since additional unsubstantiated reports of abuse do not always mean that a child remains at risk.

On-site reviewers are able to assess what CAPSS cannot. On-site reviewers determine how effective the county DSS office is at managing the risks of harm that necessitate continued involvement by DSS. By these criteria, risk of harm was reduced in 100% of the foster care cases. However the risk was reduced in only 88% of the treatment cases. One treatment case was rated “area needing improvement”. The reviewer determined the risk of harm to children was not reduced. The family lived in a hotel and the mother continued to use drugs. The agency should have explored placement with relatives.

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There was no documentation to rule out prior agency involvement in the state of Virginia, the family's former state of residence. In the other treatment case the custody of one child was given to the maternal grandmother. Although they were not thoroughly assessed the biological parents were allowed to retain custody of the new born. In addition, the case dictation indicates the parents were noncompliant with the treatment plan and court order.

**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	<b>Partially Achieved</b> <b>Finding: Strength</b>
-Item 6: Stability of foster care placemt.	<b>Finding: Area Needing Improvement</b>
-Item 7: Permanency goal for child	<b>Finding: Area Needing Improvement</b>
-Item 8: Reunification, plmt w/ relatives	<b>Finding: Strength</b>
-Item 9: Adoption	<b>Finding: Area Needing Improvement</b>
-Item 10: Perm goal of other planned arrangmt	<b>Finding: Area Needing Improvement</b>

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	3	100	0	0	4	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 0701/04 to 06/30/05	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	3,217	253	2,940.34	23.66
Calhoun	6	0	5.48	0.52

\* This is a federally established objective.

**Explanation**

**Foster Care Re-entries is a “Strength” for Calhoun DSS.** According to CAPSS, none of the children who entered care in Calhoun County during the period under review had been returned home in the prior 12 months.

On-site reviewers determined none of the three applicable foster care cases was a re-entry. The cases rated “not applicable” were opened prior to the period under review.

Stakeholders reported DSS is very effective in preventing multiple entries of children into foster care. Although most cases involve drug abuse Calhoun County has few foster care re-entries. One stakeholder commented a barrier to preventing multiple foster care entries is the short length of time a parent spends in drug rehabilitation. This individual feels that parents need more rehabilitation time before children are returned home. Once children are returned home, family support is often lacking, which is also a barrier to stability in the home of removal.

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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	6	86	1	14	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	3,704	3,017	3,211.37	(194.37)
Calhoun	6	5	5.20	(0.20)

Note: This is a federally established objective.

**Explanation**

**Stability of foster care placement is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** The outcome report shows 5 of the 6 children (83%) in care less than 12 months had no more than two foster care placements. This is below the standard of 86.70%.

On-site reviewers not only counted the number of moves children in foster care experienced, but also looked at the reasons for those moves. Reviewers determined one child had three placements during the period under review.



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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 07/04 –06/05	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective >= 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,557	1,652	1,885.21	(233.21)
Calhoun	10	1	5.30	(4.30)

\* 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	6	86	1	14	0	0

**Explanation**

**Item 7 is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** 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 Calhoun DSS, 10% (1/10) of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months had a TPR petition filed. The objective for this item was not met in CAPSS.

On-site 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? One of the cases reviewed was rated “area needing improvement” for this item. The goal for the youth in this case is long term foster care with Independent Living services. This youth will be turning 21 years of age soon, with no established plan for emancipation from foster care.

One stakeholder commented that the agency uses concurrent planning. This gives the older children a sense of permanency. Sometimes getting into court timely affects the timeliness of the permanency goals.

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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 07/01/04–06/30/05	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective $\geq 76.20\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,051	1,696	1,562.86	133.14
Calhoun	3	3	2.29	0.71

\* 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	3	100	0	0	4	0

**Explanation**

**This is a “Strength” for Calhoun DSS.** To meet this federally established 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. The agency average is that 82% of the children entering foster care return home within one year. During the on-site review all of the applicable cases were rated “strength”.

Stakeholders stated DSS is very effective in helping children in foster care return safely to their families, when appropriate. The engagement of the family, to include regular visitation and counseling, helps promote timely reunification. Sometimes parents are slow to comply with the treatment plan—prolonging the reunification process. Housing and employment are also limited in the county.

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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	346	63	110.72	(47.72)
Calhoun	0	0	0	0

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	0	0	1	100	6	0

**Explanation**

**Length of time to achieve adoption is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Calhoun DSS**. According to the outcome report Calhoun did not have any finalized adoptions within the past 12 months.

Only one of the cases reviewed on-site had a plan of adoption. The reviewer determined it was not likely the adoption would be finalized within twenty-four months of the child’s February 2004 placement into foster care. The permanency planning hearing was held February 18, 2005.

Stakeholders rated DSS “not effective” in achieving timely (within 24 months or less) adoptions when that is the appropriate plan for the child. One stakeholder felt the goal was missed due to the number of children in Calhoun DSS custody with a plan of Independent Living. Another stakeholder stated the special needs of a child may be a barrier to adoption. The age of the child is another barrier to timely adoption. Obtaining timely TPR hearings is a legal barrier. The Area Adoption office helps to move the process through the system.

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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 07/01/04 – 06/30/05	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	8,103	1,054	6,887.55	161.45
Calhoun	15	6	12.75	(3.75)

\* 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	67	1	33	4	0

**Explanation**

**Item 10 is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Calhoun DSS.** The standard for this objective is that no more than 15% of the children in foster care should have this plan. The outcome data shows that 40% (6/15) of the children in Calhoun DSS custody have this plan.

Reviewers determined this was the appropriate goal for two of the three applicable cases. In the case rated “area needing improvement” appropriate independent living services were not being provided. There did not appear to be a plan for the youth once she exited from foster care at age 21. This youth received a substantial sum of money from an accident settlement. There was no documentation to suggest the case manger assisted with budgeting or an exit plan from foster care

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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:**

**Partially Achieved**

- 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

- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: 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 07/01/04 – 06/30/05	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	5,978	3,902	65.27	4,184.60	(282.60)
Calhoun	15	8	53.33	10.50	(2.50)

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	4	100	0	0	3	0

**Explanation**

**This is a “Strength” for Calhoun DSS.** To meet this objective 70%, or more, of the children in care must be placed in Calhoun County. The outcome report indicates 53% (8/15) of the children in care are placed within the county. Based on the outcome report data, Calhoun did not meet the established goal.

The results of the on-site review shows Calhoun exceeded the standard of 90%. Children in all of the applicable cases were placed within the county. On-site reviewers considered those factors that were not captured in CAPSS. If a child was placed out of county because of a need for therapeutic services the item was rated “Strength”. If maintaining a relationship with parents/relatives was not an issue the item received a rating of “Not Applicable”.

Stakeholders interviewed felt the agency was very effective in placing children close to their birth parents or their own communities. Placement within the county is explored upon entry into foster care. The agency attempts to preserve any ties the child had before coming into foster care. Calhoun DSS does not have any children placed out-of-state. Foster home recruitment has been problematic in this county. There are not any Caucasian foster homes. In addition, Calhoun County has only eight foster homes.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	1	100	6	0

**Explanation**

**Placement with siblings is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** Siblings in the one applicable case were not placed together due to a lack of a placement resource to take all of the children.

Stakeholders stated DSS is very effective in keeping brothers and sisters together in foster care. The agency looks for homes with available space to accommodate siblings. Sometimes the agency has to increase the number of slots in one home in order to keep sibling groups together. One barrier to placing siblings together is that a home may only be licensed for one sex. Two parent foster homes work well with sibling groups.

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	4	100	3	0

**Explanation**

**Item 13 is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** Reviewers determined visits with parents and siblings in foster care did not occur on a regular basis. There was no written or established visitation plan in one of the case files. Some case records contained documentation of visits with the parent (primarily the mother), but no visits with siblings. In another case visits with the parent (s) did not occur at all during the period under review.

One stakeholder commented the parents’ failure to show for visitation is a barrier to meeting the prescribed standard.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 14:</b> Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	40	3	60	2	0

**Explanation**

**This item 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 two of the applicable cases reviewed were rated “Strength” for this item. In one of the cases the foster child was placed back in the home of former foster parents. The foster parents are very supportive and involved in all aspects of the child’s life. In the other case the child is placed with a maternal aunt. An older sibling and cousin also lives in the home Telephone contact is maintained with the biological parents. In the three cases rated “needing improvement” the dictation indicates relationships with family members prior to foster care placement: siblings, grandmother, sister-in-law, etc. However there is no evidence the agency took steps to preserve the connections for these children.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 15:</b> Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	50	2	50	3	0

**Explanation**

**Relative placement 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 two of the cases the agency explored placements with other relatives, including a grandmother and an aunt. However, in the two cases rated “Needing Improvement” there was no supporting documentation to indicate that maternal or paternal relatives had been assessed for placement.



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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	33	2	67	4	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** In one foster care case the case manager provided excellent documentation of the parent/child relationship. The youth and his widowed mother attended joint counseling sessions in order to improve their relationship. In the four cases rated “Not Applicable” the agency was relieved of offering services to the parents. Reviewers determined the agency’s efforts to assist in maintaining parent/child relationships were minimal in two cases. Family counseling was recommended in one case. However, there is no indication this had been pursued by the case manager. Although parent/child visits were occurring in the other case, there is no documentation of the relationship.

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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**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents</b>						
Foster Care	7	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	14	82	3	18	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 “**Area Needing Improvement**”. Reviewers determined needs were properly assessed in 100% of the foster care cases and 70% of the treatment cases. In one treatment case the mother was assessed for services and referrals were made. However she had not received any prenatal care since moving to the state. The two year old child in the home was not assessed: immunizations, medicals, etc. The non-custodial father in another treatment case was not assessed for services. The child attempted suicide while living in his home. There was very little information regarding his involvement with the child. In another case the necessary follow-up was not conducted for a child who had been hospitalized.

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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	5	83	1	17	1	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	10	63	6	37	1	0

**Explanation**

Child and family involvement in case planning is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. Documentation in the case files shows the agency did not regularly involve fathers in case planning. The treatment plan was on file in one case; however it was not signed by the parent. In one treatment case involving a widowed father and several teenaged children there was no documentation of the children having been involved in case planning.

<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	7	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20	0	0
Total Cases	15	88	2	12	0	0

**Explanation**

Item 19 is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This rating is based on two questions: 1) is Calhoun DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) do the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? The county met the requirement in foster care. The case managers were visiting the children and focusing on overall well-being issues. In two of the treatment cases the case manager did not document monthly face-to-face visits with all of the children in the household.

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<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 20:</b> Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	3	100	4	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	6	46	7	54	4	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Calhoun DSS. Four of the foster care cases were not applicable since the agency had been relieved of providing services to the parents. Monthly contact with parents did not occur on a consistent basis. In one treatment case the mother was receiving inpatient drug treatment. The case manager had very little contact with the mother or treatment facility staff. Visits with non-custodial fathers did not occur.

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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	6	100	0	0	1	0
Treatment	6	100	0	0	4	0
Total Cases	12	100	0	0	5	0

**Explanation**

This is a “**Strength**” for Calhoun 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 standard was met in both foster care and treatment cases. The case records contained grade reports and attendance records from the school. The case managers’ dictation indicated contact with school officials and updates on school progress.

Stakeholders reported DSS is very effective in addressing the educational needs of children in foster care and those receiving services in their own homes. In addition to meeting quarterly with DSS, stakeholders are invited to team staff meetings if there are concerns about a child.

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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	7	100	0	0	1	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	13	76	4	24	1	0

**Explanation**

**Item 22 is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** Children’s physical health was well documented in foster care case records. Medical information was found in only 60% of the treatment records. The agency opened a treatment case due to allegations of physical neglect of a child. There is no indication the children received physical exams. In another treatment case the teenager reported during a psychological exam that she had not seen a doctor in “a while”. There was no documentation of a medical assessment on file.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 23:</b> Mental health of the child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	86	2	14	1	0
Treatment	4	100	0	0	6	0
Total Cases	8	80	2	20	7	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement”.** The cases rated “Strength” contained adequate documentation to support the child’s mental health needs were being addressed. The dictation reflected contact with the mental health counselor or therapist. This type of documentation was found in only 80% of the cases reviewed. The dictation in one record indicated a child had behavior problems in school and at the foster home. A referral for a Mental Health assessment was not on file. In another case an older foster youth was injured in a serious automobile accident. She will age out of the foster care system soon. In the reviewer’s opinion, she should have been referred for a Mental Health assessment due to the trauma of the accident.

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Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

All of the open foster home records were reviewed. The review of these records revealed they are licensed with the correct age range, number and sex of the children and that CAPSS was current. The foster home licensing worker knows the families. Contact is maintained through memorandums which contain information regarding events, training and other requirements.

**FINDINGS:**

1. Quarterly visits are to be documented using the “Quarterly Review Guide (Sect. 929.01).
2. All families are to have agency approved discipline agreement form (30219).
3. Training hours should be monitored at quarterly visits to avoid home closure or removal of children. Training is a safety issue.
4. Quarterly visits are to include a documented contact with foster care worker and address care being provided.
5. Sexual offender registry checks must be completed on all household members age 12 and above. FBI and Sexual Offender checks must be completed on foster children turning age 18.
6. References must have known applicant at least three years and not be related.
7. Foster parents who are employed outside the home must have an alternate caregiver. Agency must conduct an interview with caregiver.
8. Background checks, including Child Protective Services, Sexual Offender and SLED must be completed every two years.
9. Fire inspections are done annually.
10. Records are not well organized. The reviewer encountered difficulty in locating forms. Quarterly visits are not filed together.

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**Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Investigation Initiated Timely?	5	0
Assessment Adequate?	5	0
Case Decision Appropriate?	5	0

**This is a “Strength”.**

**Analysis:** All investigations were conducted within the required time frame. The assessments were adequate to support the decisions. Collaterals were contacted as appropriate.



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Section Ten – Screened-Out Intakes

**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. Two screened-out intakes were reviewed. Screened-out intakes are evaluated solely on the information contained in the agency database CAPSS

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Cannot Determine</b>
Screen-Out Decision Appropriate?	2	0	0
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	1	0	1
Appropriate Referrals Made?	2	0	0

**Analysis**

This area is a “**Strength**” for Calhoun County. Both of the intakes were appropriately screened-out. There was extensive dictation in the case records to validate the decisions. Collaterals were contacted as necessary and referrals were made.

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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.					16 (100%)	0	0	1
Item 1:	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	5 (100%)	0	12				
Item 2:	Repeat maltreatment	16 (100%)	0	1				
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.					15 (88%)	1 (12%)	0	1
Item 3:	Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	12 (92%)	1(8%)	4				
Item 4:	Risk of harm to child (ren)	15 (88%)	2 (12%)	0				
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.					5 (71%)	2(29%)	0	0
Item 5:	Foster care re-entries	3 (100%)	0	4				
Item 6:	Stability of foster care placement	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	0				
Item 7:	Permanency goal for child	6(86%)	1(14%)	0				
Item 8:	Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	3(100%)	0	4				
Item 9:	Adoption	0	1 (100%)	6				
Item 10:	Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	4				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.					2 (33%)	4 (67%)	0	1
Item 11:	Proximity of foster care placement	4 (100%)	0	3				
Item 12:	Placement with siblings	0	1 (100%)	6				
Item 13:	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	0	4 (100%)	3				
Item 14:	Preserving connections	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	2				
Item 15:	Relative placement	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	3				
Item 16:	Relationship of child in care with parents	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	4				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.					11 (65%)	6 (35%)	0	0
Item 17:	Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	14 (82%)	3 (18%)	0				
Item 18:	Child and family involvement in case planning	10 (63%)	6 (37%)	1				
Item 19:	Worker visits with child	15 (88%)	2 (12%)	0				
Item 20:	Worker visits with parent(s)	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	4				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.					12 (100%)	0	0	5
Item 21:	Educational needs of the child	12 (100%)	0	5				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.					11 (65%)	4 (24%)	2 (11%)	0
Item 22:	Physical health of the child	13 (76%)	4 (24%)	0				
Item 23:	Mental health of the child	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	7				