

**Lee County DSS  
Child Welfare Services Review  
July 2007**

During the week of June 25 - 29, 2007, a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Lee County. A sample of foster care and treatment cases, screened out intakes, foster home licensing records, and unfounded investigations were reviewed. Stakeholders interviewed for this review included foster parents, Lee DSS supervisors, representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health and Guardian Ad Litem Program

**Period included in Case Record Review and Outcome Measures: June 1, 2006 to May 31, 2007.**

**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 (§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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**Ratings**

The standard that must be met for all items reviewed onsite is 90%. Each outcome report has its own standard. To be rated a **Strength** most items must meet both the qualitative onsite review standard **and** the quantitative outcome report standard.

**Section One**

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

**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

**Measure S1.1: Timeliness of initiating investigations** on reports of child maltreatment

Data Time Period: June 1, 2006 to May 31, 2007

|     | Number of Reports Accepted | Number of Investigations Initiated Timely | Number of Investigations Objective 100%* | Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective |
|-----|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Lee | 66                         | 66  | 66                                       | 0  |

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

**Onsite Review Findings** Performance Item Ratings

**Safety Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.**

|             | Strength |     | Area Needing Improvement |   | Not Applicable |   |
|-------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
|             | #        | %   | #                        | % | #              | % |
| Foster Care | 7        | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 3              | 0 |
| Treatment   | 9        | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 1              | 0 |
| Total Cases | 16       | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 4              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 1**

This is an area of **Strength** for Lee DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. The outcome report indicates that for the 12 month period under review, Lee initiated all of the investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours. The onsite review confirmed that this is a strength for Lee County.

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**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 June 1, 2006 to May 31, 2007

|       | Number of Child Victims | Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Report | Number of Children Objective <= 6.1% | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
|-------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| State | 10,489                  | 84  | 9,849.17                             | 555.8                                      |
| Lee   | 50                      | 0   | 3.05                                 | 3.05                                       |

\*This is a federally established objective.

**Onsite Review Findings** Performance Item Ratings

**Safety Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment.**

|             | Strength |     | Area Needing Improvement |   | Not Applicable |   |
|-------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
|             | #        | %   | #                        | % | #              | % |
| Foster Care | 8        | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 2              | 0 |
| Treatment   | 10       | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 0              | 0 |
| Total Cases | 18       | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 2              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 2**

This is an area of **Strength** for Lee DSS. This item measures the frequency with which children under agency supervision experience additional maltreatment. The outcome report counts cases with additional indicated reports within the period under review. However, onsite reviewers use information documented in the case file to determine if the children under agency care are experiencing additional abuse or neglect, whether that additional abuse results in another indicated report or not. Onsite reviewers found that in all of the foster care and treatment cases, there was no additional maltreatment.

**Section Two**

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

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| <b>Onsite Review Findings</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   | 0        | 0  | 1                        | 100 | 9              | 0 |
| Treatment   | 8        | 80 | 2                        | 20  | 0              | 0 |
| Total Cases   | 8        | 73 | 3                        | 27  | 9              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 3**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item measures whether services were adequate to protect children (in the home) and prevent their removal from the home. This rating is based on the findings of the onsite review (no CAPSS data to track this item). Onsite reviewers determined that 20% of the treatment cases needed improvement. As an example, in one treatment case, a child was placed with an alternate caregiver and there was no documentation of a safety plan having been developed. The majority of the foster cases were excluded because the children entered care prior to the period under review. However, the decision to remove the children from their homes and place them in foster care was consistently correct.

| <b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Measure S2.2: 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 Report 6/1/06 to 5/31/07 | Number With Another Report Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination | Number of Cases Met Objective >= 91.50%* | Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective |
| State   | 14,116  | 1,155   | 12,916                                   | 44.9                                    |
| Lee   | 49  | 3   | 44.83                                    | 1.2                                     |

\*This is a DSS established objective.

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| <b>Onsite Review Findings</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  | 0        | 0  | 10                       | 100 | 0              | 0 |
| Total Cases  | 8        | 40 | 12                       | 60  | 0              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 4**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item measures if the agency's interventions reduced risk of harm to children and is determined by outcome data and findings from the onsite review. The outcome report only measures additional indicated reports of abuse and neglect and by that standard the county met this objective. Onsite reviewers determined that in 80% of the foster care cases, risk of harm was adequately reduced. However, in all of the treatment cases, risk of harm was not reduced. In many treatment cases children were being placed with alternative caregivers with no background checks being conducted to ensure safety of the placement. The needs of fathers, other adults or caregivers were consistently overlooked in the majority of treatment cases. For example, in one treatment case, a mother's live-in paramour admitted to using illegal drugs however treatment services were not offered to him.

**Stakeholder Comment:** "In terms of reducing risk of harm, DSS is more reactive than preventive. They respond after harm is detected and they do react with the right services."

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**Section Three**

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| Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. |
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**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

Measure P1.1: **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 6/01/06 to 5/31/07 | Number That Were returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Foster Care Episode | Number of Children Objective $\geq 91.40\%^*$ | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
|-------|--|--|---|--|
| State | 3,670  | 253  | 3,354   | 62.6                                       |
| Lee   | 16   | 1  | 14.6  | .4   |

\*This is a federally established objective.

**Onsite Review Findings** Performance Item Ratings

**Permanency Item 5:** Foster care re-entries.

|             | Strength |     | Area Needing Improvement |   | Not Applicable |   |
|-------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
|             | #        | %   | #                        | % | #              | % |
| Foster Care | 1        | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 9              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 5**

This is an area of **Strength** for Lee DSS. This item tracks whether children re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. Based on findings from the onsite review and the outcome report foster children are not re-entering foster care within a year of discharge.

**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

Measure P1.2: **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 | 4,260  | 3,418   | 3,693   | (275.4)                                    |
| Lee   | 16   | 11  | 13.8  | (2.8)                                      |

Note: This is a federally established objective.

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| <b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| <b>Permanency Item 6:</b> Stability of foster care placement. |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|   | Strength |    | Area Needing Improvement |    | Not Applicable |   |
|   | #        | %  | #                        | %  | #              | % |
| Foster Care   | 7        | 70 | 3                        | 30 | 0              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 6**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. The federal standard for stability of foster care placement is at least 86.7% of the children in care have less than two placements in the past year. The outcome report shows that 68.75% of children in foster care in Lee County had less than two placements. Findings from the onsite review concur with the outcome data. Thirty percent of the children in foster care had more than two placements in a 12 month period. A contributing factor for difficulties with this outcome could be attributed to the lack of recruitment efforts to attract additional foster parents. There are 15 Lee County foster homes for 22 children in foster care.

| <b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>   |  |                                    |  |  |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--|--|
| (Measure P1.5) <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<br>6/1/06/06 to 5/31/07 | Number Children With TPR Complaint | Number of Children Objective<br>>= 53.00%* | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
| State   | 3,620  | 1,646                              | 1918.1                                     | (272.6)                                    |
| Lee   | 17   | 11                                 | 9  | (2)  |

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

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

**Explanation of Item 7**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. To meet the criteria for this item, children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months must have a TPR petition filed. Onsite reviewers determined that Lee County was very prompt in securing TPR's for children when it was obvious that reunification was not viable. However, in one case, adoption was ruled out as a viable option for a child in 2005 and the agency has not revisited this permanency option for over two years. The agency's policy is to review adoption as a plan annually because children and circumstances change.

| <b><u>Onsite Review 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   | 2        | 67 | 1                        | 33 | 7              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 8**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. To meet the federally established outcome 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. Reviewers looked at the activities and processes used by caseworkers to accomplish the goal of reunification or placement with relatives. Based on findings from the onsite review, in 67% of the cases, the county's actions were appropriate and were contributing towards the plan of reunification. In one case, a child's stated goal was reunification; however, there was conflicting information to determine if this was the appropriate plan for the child because the parents were not visiting the child regularly.



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**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

Measure P1.4: **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 | 387  | 60  | 123.84  | (63.8)                                     |
| Lee   | 12   | 1   | 3.84  | (2.8)                                      |

Note: This is a federally established objective.

**Onsite Review Findings** Performance Item Ratings

**Permanency Item 9:** Adoption.

|             | Strength |     | Area Needing Improvement |   | Not Applicable |   |
|-------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
|             | #        | %   | #                        | % | #              | % |
| Foster Care | 4        | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 6              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 9**

This is an area of **Strength** for Lee DSS. This item measures whether or not adoptions were completed within 24 months of the most recent entry into foster care. Based on the outcome report and findings from the onsite review, the county was in compliance with the agency standard. Onsite reviewers determined that in 100% of the cases, Lee County was very prompt and expeditious in following through with TPR's.

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**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

Measure P1.6: **Permanency Goal of “Another Planned Permanent 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<br>11/01/05 –<br>10/31/06 | Number of Children In Care With Permanent Plan<br>“Other Planned Living Arrangement” | Number of Children Objective<br>>= 85.00%* | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
|-------|---|--|--|--|
| State | 8,747   | 1,521  | 7,434                                      | (209)                                      |
| Lee   | 30  | 6  | 25.5                                       | 1.5  |

\*This is a DSS established objective.

**Onsite Review Findings** Performance Item Ratings

**Permanency Item 10:** Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.

|             | Strength |     | Area Needing Improvement |   | Not Applicable |   |
|-------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
|             | #        | %   | #                        | % | #              | % |
| Foster Care | 5        | 100 | 0                        | 0 | 5              | 0 |

**Explanation of Item 10**

This is an area of **Strength** for Lee DSS. The standard for this objective is no more than 15% of children in foster care should have this plan, Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). The rating is based on findings from the onsite review and from the agency’s outcome measures. This measure determines whether the activities planned for the alternative permanent plan of APPLA are appropriate. All of the applicable cases reviewed onsite were given a rating of strength.

**Section Four**

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

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**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

Measure P2.1: **Proximity to Home 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 6/1/06 – 5/31/07 | Number of Children Placed Within County of Origin | Percent of Children Placed Within County of Origin | Number of Children Objective $\geq 70.00\%$ * | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
|-------|---|---|--|---|--|
| State | 6,683                                       | 4,149   | 62.1   | 4,678.1                                       | (529.1)                                    |
| Lee   | 30  | 6   | 20   | 21  | (15)                                       |

\*This is a DSS established objective.

**Explanation Item 11**

This is an area of **Strength** for Lee DSS. To meet this standard at least 70% of the children in care must be placed within the county. The outcome report shows that 73% of Lee County children are placed within the county. The onsite review confirmed this is as an area of strength.

**Onsite Review Findings** Performance Item Ratings

**Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings**

|             | Strength |    | Area Needing Improvement |    | Not Applicable |   |
|-------------|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
|             | #        | %  | #                        | %  | #              | % |
| Foster Care | 4        | 80 | 1                        | 20 | 5              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 12**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item addresses the agency's ability to keep siblings together when it is in their best interest to be placed together. Reviewers determined that in 80% of the cases, the county did an excellent job of placing siblings together whenever appropriate. In one case, a sibling was placed in another home, however there was no documentation to indicate the rationale for not placing the children together.

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| <b>Onsite Review 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  | 3        | 75 | 1                        | 25 | 6              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 13**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item assesses whether visits were made to the parents and siblings in foster care. Reviewers found that in one case, some visitation was provided but the lack of consistency of visits and lack of documentation to determine why a visit was not provided made this an area needing improvement.

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

**Explanation Item 14**

This is rated an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item measures the agency's ability to preserve a child's connection to the people, places and things that are important to them, while the child is in foster care. In 75% of the cases, there were demonstrated efforts to help the child maintain those significant relationships. In one case, there was documentation to indicate that a child had a relationship with a relative; however, there were no demonstrated efforts to help maintain or preserve that relationship.

| <b>Onsite Review Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|--|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| <b>Permanency Item 15: Relative placement</b>          |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|  | Strength |    | Area Needing Improvement |    | Not Applicable |   |
|  | #        | %  | #                        | %  | #              | % |
| Foster Care  | 3        | 33 | 6                        | 67 | 1              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 15**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item addresses the agency's effectiveness in identifying and assessing relatives of children in foster as possible caregivers. In

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67% of the cases reviewed, assessment of relatives as potential placement resources was not evident. Even when relatives expressed an interest in caring for children, there was no documentation to determine if the relatives were assessed. Reviewers also found that maternal relatives were assessed but there was no mention of paternal relatives being considered as potential placement resources.

| <b>Onsite Review 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        | 25 | 3                        | 75 | 6              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 16**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item addresses the agency's effectiveness in promoting or maintaining a strong emotionally supportive relationship between children and their parents (beyond the twice minimum visitation requirement). Agency policy encourages this additional contact when appropriate. In 75% of the cases, this item needed improvement. In several cases, additional contact was not made despite the child having a permanent plan of reunification with a parent. Agency policy encourages this additional contact when appropriate.

**Section Five**

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

| <b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings                             |          |    |                          |     |                |   |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| <b>Well Being Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents</b> |          |    |                          |     |                |   |
|   | Strength |    | Area Needing Improvement |     | Not Applicable |   |
|   | #        | %  | #                        | %   | #              | % |
| Foster Care   | 8        | 80 | 2                        | 20  | 0              | 0 |
| Treatment   | 0        | 0  | 10                       | 100 | 0              | 0 |
| Total Cases   | 8        | 40 | 12                       | 60  | 0              | 0 |

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**Explanation Item 17**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee 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? In 80% of foster care cases, this item was rated an area of strength. In all of the treatment cases, this item needed improvement. There were numerous problems identified which include: failing to provide services for an identified need, not addressing the needs of all relevant parties – particularly non-custodial parents and alternative caregivers. Other cases focused on the mother and victim child, but failed to assess the father and/or other children in the home. Several cases did not have treatment plans and it was difficult to determine what services the agency was providing.

| <b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></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  | 4        | 57 | 3                        | 43 | 3              | 0 |
| Treatment  | 1        | 10 | 9                        | 90 | 0              | 0 |
| Total Cases  | 5        | 29 | 12                       | 71 | 3              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 18:**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item measures whether parents and children were actively involved in the case planning process. In 43% of the foster care cases and 90% of the treatment cases, this was an area needing improvement. Most of the records contained treatment plans, but reviewers consistently could not identify documentation to determine that all involved parties were actively involved in helping develop the treatment plan. Another consistent issue was the lack of involvement of the fathers. In one case, there was documentation of a family meeting but reviewers were unable to consistently locate documentation that such meetings were taking place.

| <b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| <b>Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child</b>           |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|   | Strength |    | Area Needing Improvement |    | Not Applicable |   |
|   | #        | %  | #                        | %  | #              | % |
| Foster Care   | 8        | 80 | 2                        | 20 | 0              | 0 |
| Treatment   | 5        | 50 | 5                        | 50 | 0              | 0 |
| Total Cases   | 13       | 65 | 7                        | 35 | 0              | 0 |

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**Explanation Item 19**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This rating is based on two questions: 1) Were DSS staff visiting children according to policy; and 2) Did the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? According to May statistics from CAPSS, 80% of children in Lee County were visited in May 2007 (100% of children must be seen – State Law). Onsite reviewers rated 80% of the foster care cases as an area of strength because the visits were timely and relevant to the child’s needs. However, 50% of the treatment cases needed improvement because visits were inconsistent and dictation did not adequately assess for risk and safety. In one treatment case, the worker made a face-to-face contact at locations other than their place of residence for several months.

| <b><u>Onsite Review Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| <b>Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)</b>       |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|   | Strength |    | Area Needing Improvement |    | Not Applicable |   |
|   | #        | %  | #                        | %  | #              | % |
| Foster Care   | 2        | 40 | 3                        | 60 | 5              | 0 |
| Treatment   | 1        | 10 | 9                        | 90 | 0              | 0 |
| Total Cases   | 3        | 20 | 12                       | 80 | 5              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 20**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item determines if workers are visiting with the parents of children under agency supervision. Reviewers determined that in 60% of foster care cases and in 90% of treatment cases, this needed improvement due to the lack of documentation, the content of the visits failed to assess risk and safety issues and because contacts were being made sporadically. In several cases, contacts were not made with biological fathers.

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**Section Six**

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| Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs. |
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| <b>Onsite Review Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings |          |     |                          |    |                |   |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| <b>Well Being Item 21:</b> Educational needs of child  |          |     |                          |    |                |   |
|  | Strength |     | Area Needing Improvement |    | Not Applicable |   |
|  | #        | %   | #                        | %  | #              | % |
| Foster Care  | 7        | 100 | 0                        | 0  | 3              | 0 |
| Treatment  | 2        | 29  | 5                        | 71 | 3              | 0 |
| Total Cases  | 9        | 64  | 5                        | 36 | 6              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 21**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) Did DSS assess the educational needs of the children under their supervision; and 2) Were the identified educational needs addressed? The educational needs of children in all the foster care cases were appropriately met. In 71% of treatment cases, this area needed improvement because the lack of dictation and the lack of paperwork to verify that school issues were being monitored.

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**Section Seven**

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| Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. |
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| <b>Onsite Review Findings</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   | 1        | 10  | 9                        | 90 | 0              | 0 |
| Total Cases   | 11       | 55  | 9                        | 45 | 0              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 22**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item determines if the physical and dental health needs of children are being assessed and appropriately met. Children from birth to age seven should have annual physical examinations conducted. For older children, physicals examinations are to be conducted at least one time every two years. In all of the foster care cases this was rated an area of strength. In 90% of the treatment cases, this area needed improvement due to the lack of documentation to verify that a child's medical needs and dental needs were assessed.



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| <b>Onsite Review Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|--|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| <b>Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child</b>  |          |    |                          |    |                |   |
|  | Strength |    | Area Needing Improvement |    | Not Applicable |   |
|  | #        | %  | #                        | %  | #              | % |
| Foster Care  | 3        | 60 | 2                        | 40 | 5              | 0 |
| Treatment  | 1        | 17 | 5                        | 83 | 4              | 0 |
| Total Cases  | 4        | 37 | 7                        | 63 | 9              | 0 |

**Explanation Item 23**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. This item determines if the mental health needs of children are regularly being assessed and addressed as appropriate. In 60% of the foster care cases, this item was rated strength. In 83% of the treatment cases, this item needed improvement again due to the lack of adequate documentation. The lack of adequate documentation was a consistent problem. Reviewers had difficulty finding documentation to confirm if a child had been referred to counseling. Even when staff identified significant mental health needs of children within their cases, those needs sometimes went unmet.

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**Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses**

This is an area of **Strength** for Lee DSS. This item determines if all licensing requirements are documented and in compliance with established procedures. Reviewers found that all licenses were current and up-to-date. Dictation was entered timely into CAPSS.

**General observations:**

- Many of the case files had numerous duplicate licenses (some signed by the director and some blank) those need to be purged from the file.
- Some licenses had applicant signature dates that were missing or unstated
- All files were labeled appropriately but had many sections without the said documentation.
- Some foster families had attained multiple training hours before application being processed.

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**Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations**

|   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Was the investigation initiated timely? | 4          | 1         |
| Was the assessment adequate?            | 3          | 2         |
| Was the decision appropriate?           | 4          | 1         |

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Lee DSS. Onsite reviewers utilize information on file to determine if the decisions being made to unfound cases are appropriate. In one case, the documentation failed to indicate whether the perpetrator (registered sex offender) in the report was interviewed or law enforcement was notified.

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**Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes**

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

This is an area of **Strength** for Lee County DSS. Reviewers use information collected at intake to determine if referrals were appropriately screened out for investigation. All intakes were appropriately screened out.

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| <b>Lee County DSS<br/>Combined Foster Care &amp; Treatment Tally</b>  |                                 |                                 |             |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Performance Item or Outcome</b>  | <b>Performance Item Ratings</b> |                                 |             |
|   | <b>Strength</b>                 | <b>Area Needing Improvement</b> | <b>N/A*</b> |
| <b>Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.</b>                    |                                 |                                 |             |
| Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment                                | 16/16= 100%                     | 0                               | 4           |
| Item 2: Repeat maltreatment   | 11/11=100%                      | 0                               | 9           |
| <b>Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.</b>       |                                 |                                 |             |
| Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal                                    | 8/11=73%                        | 3/11=27%                        | 9           |
| Item 4: Risk of harm to child(ren)  | 8/20=40%                        | 12/20 = 60%                     | 0           |
| <b>Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</b>                 |                                 |                                 |             |
| Item 5: Foster care re-entries  | 0                               | 0                               | 10          |
| Item 6: Stability of foster care placement  | 7/10 = 70%                      | 3/10=30%                        | 0           |
| Item 7: Permanency goal for child   | 8/10 =80%                       | 2/10 = 20%                      | 0           |
| Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives                                      | 2/3=67%                         | 1/3 = 33%                       | 7           |
| Item 9: Adoption  | 4/4=100%                        | 0                               | 6           |
| Item 10: Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)                              | 5/5=100%                        | 0                               | 5           |
| <b>Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.</b>  |                                 |                                 |             |
| Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement   | 5/5=100%                        | 0                               | 5           |
| Item 12: Placement with siblings  | 4/5=80%                         | 1/5=20%                         | 5           |
| Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care  | ¾=75%                           | 1/4=25% %                       | 6           |
| Item 14: Preserving connections   | 3/7 = 43%                       | 4/7=57%                         | 3           |
| Item 15: Relative placement   | 3/9 = 33%                       | 6/9=67%                         | 1           |
| Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents   | 1/4=25%                         | 3/4= 75%                        | 6           |
| <b>Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.</b>             |                                 |                                 |             |
| Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, caregiver  | 8/20 = 40%                      | 12/20 = 60%                     | 0           |
| Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning  | 5/17=29%                        | 12/17 = 71%                     | 3           |
| Item 19: Worker visits with child   | 13/20 = 65%                     | 7/20 = 35%                      | 0           |
| Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)   | 3/15= 20%                       | 12/15= 80%                      | 5           |
| <b>Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.</b>             |                                 |                                 |             |
| Item 21: Educational needs of the child   | 9/14=64%                        | 5/14=36%                        | 6           |
| <b>Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.</b> |                                 |                                 |             |
| Item 22: Physical health of the child   | 11/20 = 55%                     | 9/20 = 45%                      | 0           |
| Item 23: Mental health of the child   | 4/11= 36%                       | 7/11 = 64%                      | 9           |