South Carolina Department of Social Services
Child Welfare Quality Assurance Review Report
Dorchester County 2026

This report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) Dorchester County Quality Assurance Review. The period under review was January 1, 2026, to the date the case was reviewed. Case reviews were conducted from September 21 - 24, 2026. The following report provides a description of the items, the results for the outcomes and items, and a summary of the county's performance on the items. For more information on the quality assurance process, please visit (www.dss.sc.gov).

SCDSS Child Welfare Quality Assurance Reviews are conducted using the federal Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI). The revised OSRI was finalized by the Administration for Children & Families in February 2025. The instrument is used to review foster care and family preservation cases. Ten cases were reviewed including four foster care cases and six family preservation cases.

The OSRI is divided into three sections: safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. There are two safety outcomes, two permanency outcomes, and three well-being outcomes. Reviewers collect information on items related to each of the outcomes using the Child and Adult Protective Services System (CAPSS) and case related interviews. CAPSS is South Carolina's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), which contains all case related information. This information is used to rate each item on the OSRI.

The ratings for each item are combined to determine the rating for the outcome. The items are rated as *strength*, *area needing improvement*, or *not applicable*. Outcomes are rated as being *substantially achieved*, *partially achieved*, *not achieved*, or *not applicable*. Blue circle graphs are used when an item is rated as 70% or higher percentage strengths, yellow circle graphs are for 40 – 69% percentage strengths, and grey circle graphs are items receiving 39% and lower percentage strengths.

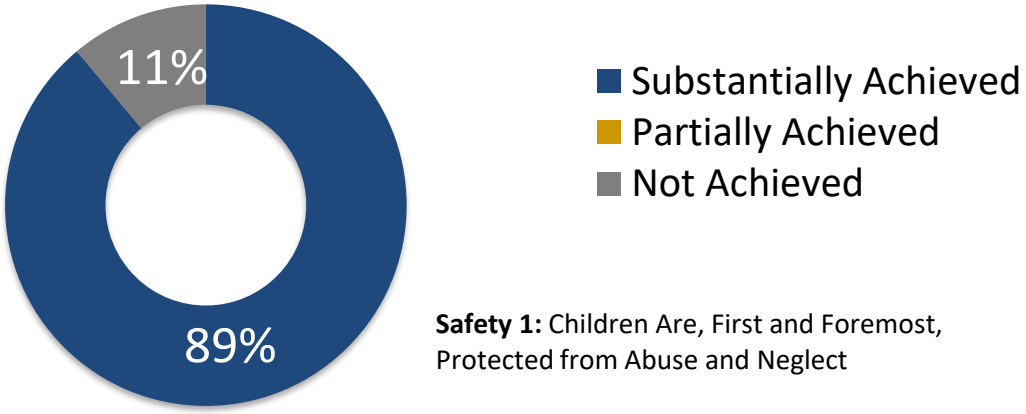
Child Welfare Quality Assurance Review – Outcome Ratings

Results for outcomes and items are reported by the number of cases and the percentage of total cases given each rating. In addition, the percentage of strengths is calculated for each item. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of strengths and the number of areas needing improvement. The number of strengths is divided into this total to determine the percentage of strengths. The percentage of strengths for each item as well as a summary of what the agency did to achieve that rating for those cases is provided in Section I.

Section I: Item Ratings

Safety Outcome 1: Children Are, First and Foremost, Protected from Abuse and Neglect

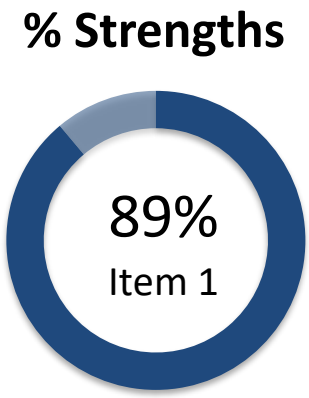
One item is included under Safety Outcome 1.



Safety 1: Children Are, First and Foremost, Protected from Abuse and Neglect

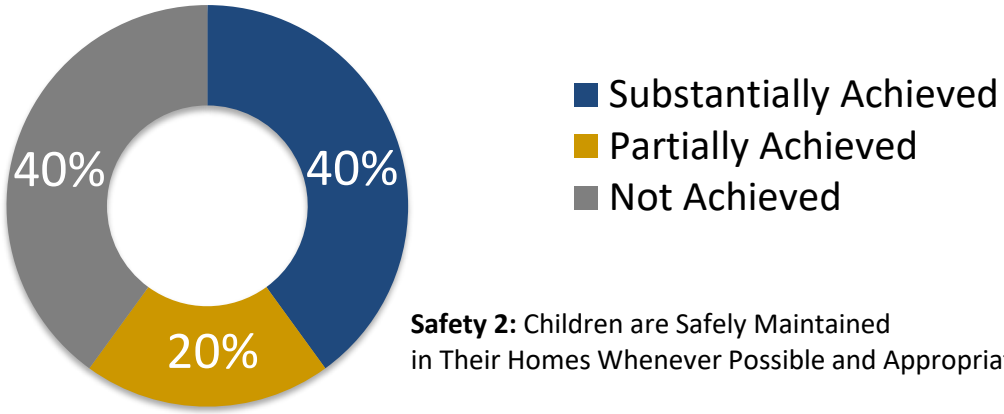
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the timeframes established by agency policies or State statute.

Eight of the nine applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 1, meaning that investigations were initiated in a timely manner, and face-to-face contact was made within the established time frame.



Safety Outcome 2: Children are Safely Maintained in Their Homes Whenever Possible and Appropriate

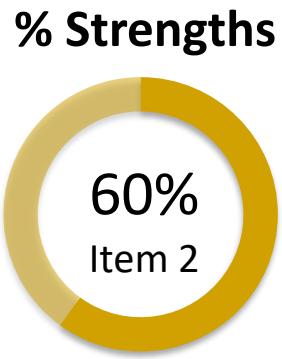
Two items are included under Safety Outcome 2.

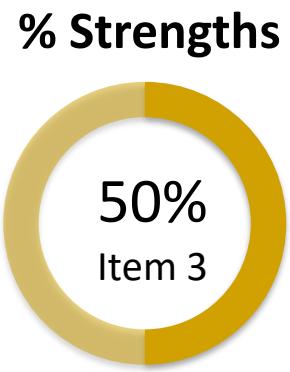


Safety 2: Children are Safely Maintained in Their Homes Whenever Possible and Appropriate

Item 2: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care. Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent child(ren)'s entry into foster care or re-entry after reunification.

Three of the five applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 2 indicating that the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.



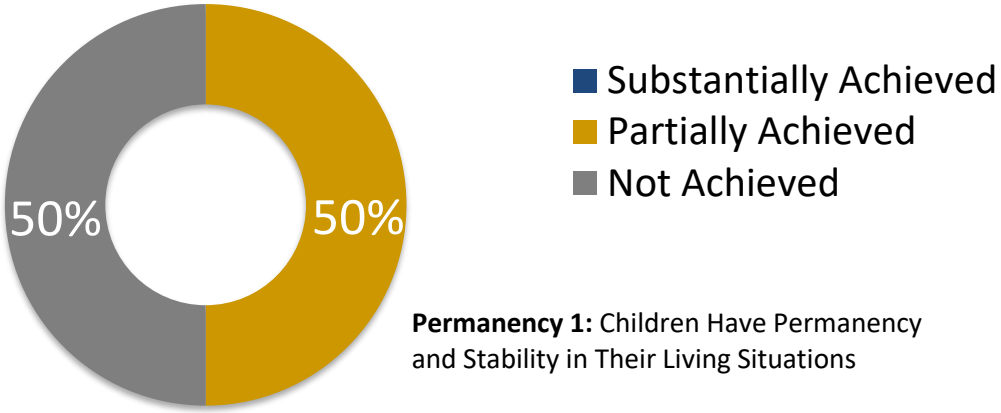


Item 3: Risk and safety assessment and management Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

Five of the 10 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 3 because the agency properly assessed all applicable individuals for risk and safety and appropriately addressed all identified concerns.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children Have Permanency and Stability in Their Living Situations

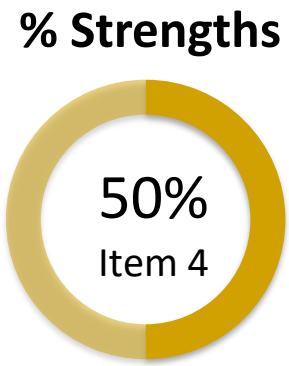
Three items are included under Permanency Outcome 1.

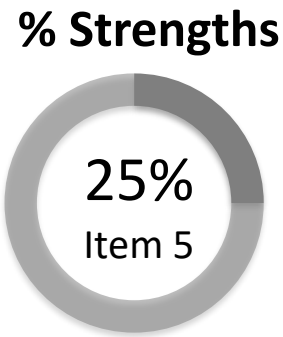


Permanency 1: Children Have Permanency and Stability in Their Living Situations

Item 4: Stability of foster care placement
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goals.

Two of the four applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 4 indicating that the child remained in a stable placement during the period under review or had another placement, which better met their case goals.



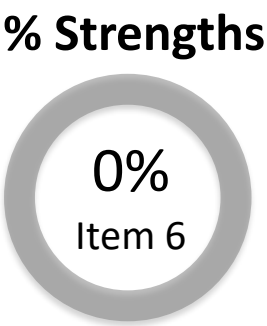


Item 5: Permanency goal for child
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

One of the four applicable cases was rated as a strength for Item 5 indicating that the permanency goal was appropriate for the child and was established in a timely manner.

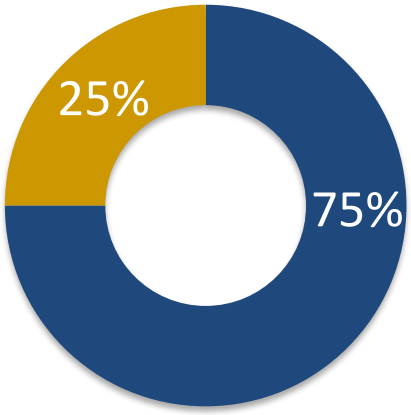
Item 6: Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

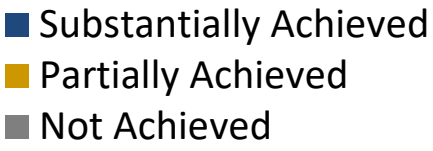
None of the four applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 6.



Permanency Outcome 2: The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections is Preserved for Children

Five items are included under Permanency Outcome 2.





Permanency 2: The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections is Preserved for Children

Item 7: Placement with siblings
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

One applicable case was rated as a strength for Item 7 because the agency made concerted efforts to place siblings together or separated the siblings due to the specific needs of one of the children.

% Strengths

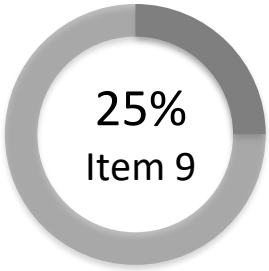
Item 8: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

One of the two applicable cases was rated as a strength for Item 8 meaning that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure the sufficient frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and family members to promote continuity of family relationships.

Item 9: Preserving connections
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

One of the four applicable cases was rated as a strength for Item 9 because the agency made concerted efforts to maintain the child's prior connections.

% Strengths



% Strengths

Item 10: Relative placement
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

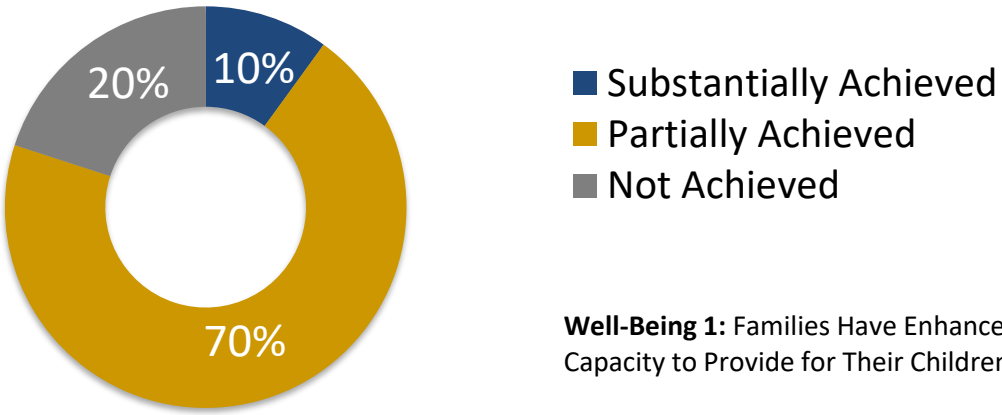
Two of the four applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 10 indicating that the agency made concerted efforts to identify and place the child with appropriate relatives.

Item 11: Relationship of child in care with parents
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

Two applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 11 because the agency invited the parents to other activities for the child outside of the regularly scheduled visits.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families Have Enhanced Capacity to Provide for Their Children's Needs

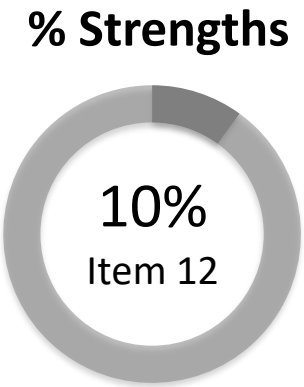
Four items are included under Well-Being Outcome 1.

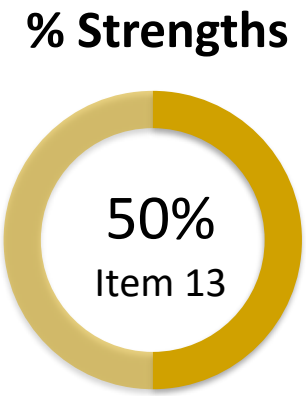


Well-Being 1: Families Have Enhanced Capacity to Provide for Their Children's Needs

Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess the needs of child(ren), parents, and foster parents to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family and provided the appropriate services.

One of the 10 applicable cases was rated as a strength for Item 12, meaning the agency effectively assessed needs and provided services to achieve case goals and adequately addressed the reasons for the agency's involvement with the family.



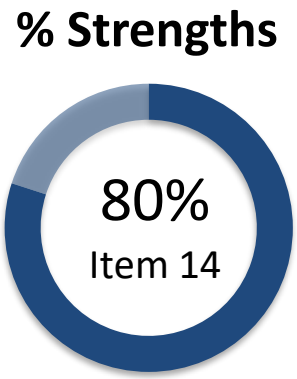


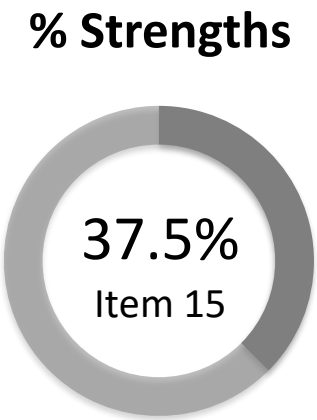
Item 13: Child & family involvement in case planning
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

Five of the 10 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 13 indicating that the agency adequately involved all parents and/or age-appropriate children in the case planning process.

Item 14: Caseworker visits with the child
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

Eight of the 10 applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 14. In each of these cases, the caseworker had visits with the child(ren) that were of sufficient frequency and quality to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and to promote the achievement of case goals.



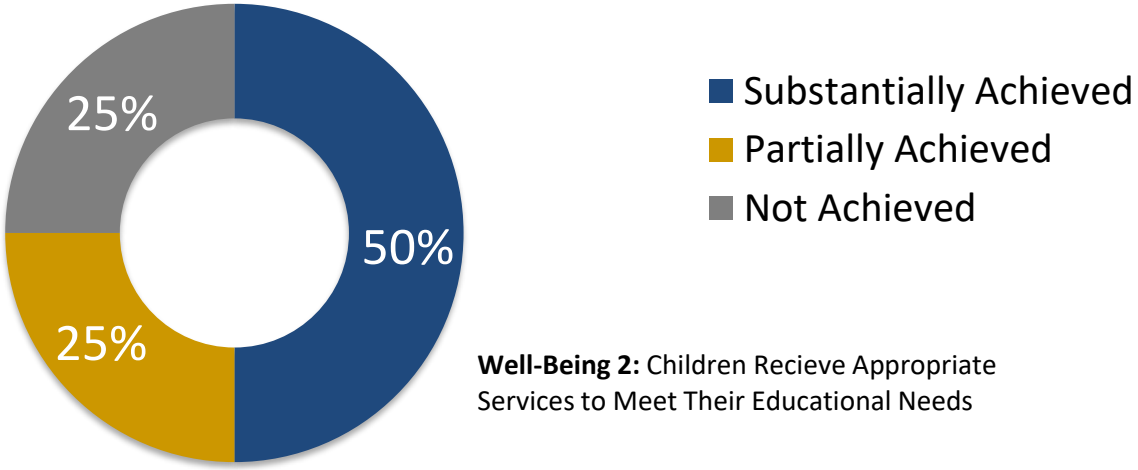


Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and to promote the achievement of case goals.

Three of the eight applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 15 because the agency conducted visits with the parents that were of sufficient frequency and quality to promote the achievement of case goals and ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren).

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children Receive Appropriate Services to Meet Their Educational Needs

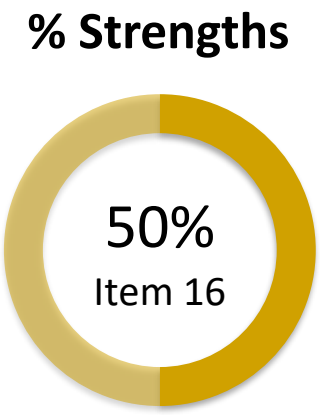
One item is included under Well-Being Outcome 2.



Well-Being 2: Children Recieve Appropriate Services to Meet Their Educational Needs

Item 16: Educational needs of child

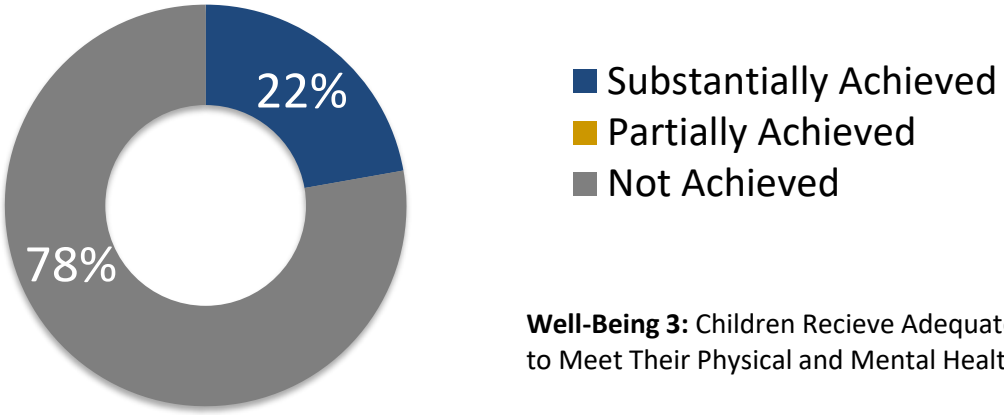
Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess child(ren)'s educational needs at the initial contact with the child(ren) (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.



Two of the four applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 16 because the agency assessed and provided the appropriate services to meet the educational needs of the child(ren).

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children Receive Adequate Services to Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs

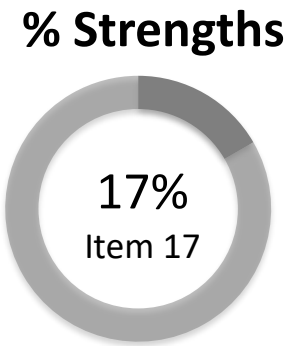
Two items are included under Well-Being Outcome 3.

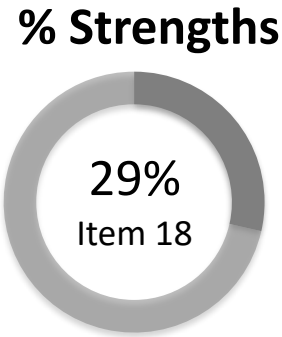


Well-Being 3: Children Recieve Adequate Services to Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs

Item 17: Physical health of child
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the child(ren), including dental health needs.

One of the six applicable cases was rated as a strength for Item 17 indicating that the agency assessed and provided the appropriate services to meet the physical health and dental health needs of the child(ren).





Item 18: Mental/behavioral health of child
Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the child(ren).

Two of the seven applicable cases were rated as a strength for Item 18 because the agency assessed and provided the appropriate services to meet the mental and behavioral needs of the child(ren).