



State of South Carolina

Department of Social Services

Policies and Procedures: Child Welfare Services

Subject:	Quality Assurance Case Review Procedures
Authority:	S.C. Code Section 43-1-115; 45 CFR Section 1355.32 through 1355.37
Standards:	Guiding Principles and Standards Casework Practice Model (GPS)
Application:	All Quality Assurance and Child Welfare Services Staff
Purpose:	
The Quality Assurance (QA) case review process provides quantitative and qualitative feedback on child welfare practice and the child welfare system so that Child Welfare Services staff can utilize the data to achieve improved safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families served by the department.	
Policy Statement:	
DSS conducts two types of periodic QA Reviews: 1. In accordance with S.C. Code Section 43-1-115, DSS conducts a QA case review, at least once every five years, in each county and each adoption office in the State. DSS prepares a written report of review findings within 90 calendar days of the QA case review and posts the report on the department's website and the Office of Communications and External Affairs is responsible to submit the report to the Governor and to each member of the county legislative delegation using the following verbiage: <i>In accordance with S.C. Code § 43-1-115, the Department of Social Services conducts periodic reviews of child protective and foster care service programs. Within 90 days following each review, a report of review findings must be disseminated to each member of the county legislative delegation and the Governor, and the report is posted to the department's website. The latest report for each County can be found here (https://dss.sc.gov/about/data-and-resources/child-welfare-data/child-welfare-services-reviews/).</i> 2. Additionally, approximately once every four years, the U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau (ACF/CB) partners with the department and its stakeholders to conduct the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The CFSR is a QA case review of safety, permanency, and well-being child welfare practice, as well as a review of performance related to seven systemic factors. The ACF/CB provides a final report of review findings. DSS must develop and implement a program improvement plan to address any areas not determined to be in substantial conformity. DSS uses the CFSR as a model for both types of QA reviews. The procedures outlined below guide reviewers in how to conduct a thorough and accurate QA case review of selected cases for the QA process.	

Policy Administration:	
The policy owner is the Director of QA and CQI. The Director of QA and CQI and the Agency QA Manager will review the policy on an annual basis and request updates as needed.	
Procedures:	
A. Prior to the Review	1. Three months prior to the QA case review, the QA administrative assistant pulls a random sample of cases to be reviewed. 2. Two months prior to the scheduled QA case review date, the QA administrative assistant sends an email to schedule a conference call with the county director, team coordinator, team leaders, and county liaison. 3. The conference call discussion shall cover the following questions: a. When is the court date? b. Are any of the children in the sample on runaway status, incarcerated, in a DJJ facility, or hospitalized the entire period under review (PUR)? c. Has both the county office and adoptions office scheduled interviews? d. Are all interviews scheduled for all case managers and team leaders that had the case throughout the entire PUR? e. Is there a need for an interpreter or any other accommodations during the interviews? f. Are there any cases in the sample that went from Family Preservation Services to Foster Care Services? 4. Four weeks prior to the QA case review, reviewers are assigned cases to ensure sufficient time to read the case and prepare interview questions. 5. Two weeks prior to the QA case review, the QA review lead works with the designated county liaison to ensure the Interview Spreadsheet is correct. The Interview Spreadsheet lists the review team members, the name of the case being reviewed, CAPSS case ID, the key case participants that will be interviewed to include their role, contact information, and time of the interview. 6. Two weeks prior to the scheduled QA case review the case assignment and team assignments are made for the Initial QA.
B. Reviewer(s) Case File Review	1. The reviewer(s) review the case documentation and related files in CAPSS. 2. The reviewer(s) take thorough notes of the case and create a list of questions that will need to be answered during the interview based on identified gaps in dictation and linked files. 3. If working as a team, the reviewers will discuss the potential rating of the items and interview questions prior to the interviews. NOTE: The review process is partner-based during federally mandated QA case reviews and can be individual during legislatively mandated reviews.
C. Reviewer(s) consults	1. The reviewer(s) consult with the Initial QA

with Initial QA	2. The reviewer(s) discuss the nuances of item ratings, known case details, and potential interview questions. The Initial QA then provides immediate feedback on that assessment of the case.
D. Reviewer(s) Conducts Interviews	The QA case review team conducts interviews with key case participants on the scheduled day utilizing the Case-Related Interview Guides and Instructions. Key case participants are the following: • The child, if school age and developmentally appropriate; • The child's parent(s); • The child's foster parent(s), pre-adoptive parent(s), or other caregiver(s), such as a kin or fictive kin caregiver, if the child is in foster care; • The child's current case manager and team leader; and • Other individuals who have relevant information about the case may also be interviewed such as the child's guardian ad litem, a parent's significant other, or other family members.
E. Reviewer(s) Completes ORSI in OMS	1. The reviewer(s) rates the items, based on case file findings and interviews, in the OMS system. 2. After rating the items, the reviewer evaluates the work using reviewer briefs and FAQs included in the OMS. 3. The reviewer submits the case for the Initial QA in the OMS.
F. Initial QA Reviews OSRI and Makes Case QA Notes in OMS	1. The Initial QA reviews the case in the OMS to ensure the rationales support the item ratings. 2. The Initial QA creates necessary Case QA Notes, which can include questions and items that need to be corrected or clarified. 3. The Initial QA returns the case to the QA review leads and the reviewer(s).
G. Reviewer(s) Make Necessary Corrections	1. The reviewer(s) respond to each Case QA Note. 2. The reviewer(s) update the Case Tracking Matrix in the QA Team SharePoint to alert the QA review lead and Initial QA that changes in the OMS have been made. 3. The Initial QA ensures all Case QA Notes are addressed and cleared, asking for further information, if needed. NOTE: The reviewer(s) and Initial QA repeats all steps until all Case QA Notes are resolved.
H. Second Level QA Reviews OSRI and Make QA	1. The Second Level QA reviews the case in the OMS to ensure accuracy in the item ratings. 2. The Second Level QA creates necessary Case QA Notes, which can include questions and items that need to be corrected or clarified.

Notes in OMS	3. The Second Level QA returns the case to the QA review lead and the reviewer(s).
I. Reviewer(s) Make Corrections	1. The reviewer(s) make corrections in OMS, if necessary. 2. The Second Level QA ensures the Case Notes are addressed and cleared.
J. Initial QA Marks Case as Complete	1. The Initial QA or Second Level QA reviews all Case QA Notes to ensure the notes are all resolved. 2. The Initial QA or Second Level QA changes the case status to Case Complete (federally mandated reviews) or Approved and Final (State mandated reviews). 3. The Initial QA or Second Level QA updates SharePoint to alert the QA Review Lead and Reviewer(s) that the case is marked Case Complete/Approved and Final. Note: Reviewer(s), Initial QA, and Second Level QA repeat steps F-H until all Case QA Notes are resolved.
K. Approved and Final Status	1. After the review, the QA administrative assistant will save all data and case files on SharePoint. 2. The QA administrative assistant will work with the county staff to schedule the debrief. This process is detailed in Child Welfare Quality Assurance Debrief Work Aid.

Forms:	N/A
Related Management Reports:	N/A

Glossary:
Child and Family Services Review (CFSR): the Federal process of analyzing a case using a federally constructed, 18-item instrument that assesses for compliance in the outcome areas of safety, permanency, and well-being, as well as 7 systemic factors. QA reviewers: ensure program quality in child welfare practice through the assessment of the case file and conducting case related interviews. QA reviewers may review cases in pairs or singly. QA Administrative Assistant: connects the Office of QA and CQI to the County and/or Regional Office staff. QA Review Lead: monitors all review-related activities to ensure an efficient review process. Initial QA: conducts the first review of the team's case prior to interviewing to discuss item ratings and interview questions. The Initial QA role is assigned during each CFSR. The individual assigned shall have the necessary QA training to conduct the first review.

Second Level QA: conducts the second review of the case to ensure the ratings are accurate. The Second Level QA role is assigned during each QA case review . The individual assigned shall have the necessary QA training to conduct the second review.

Online Management System (OMS): the web-based application in which the data from the reviews are entered and reports are downloaded with the results.

State Mandated Reviews: County-based reviews legislatively mandated to occur at least once every five years. These reviews can be done in a pair or with a single reviewer. These are referred to as CQI reviews.