

**Edgefield County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
July 2006**

During the week of July 10-14, 2006 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Edgefield County. A sample of open and closed foster care and treatment cases were reviewed. Also reviewed were screened-out intakes, foster home licensing records, and unfounded investigations. (Stakeholders interviewed for this review included foster parents, DSS attorney, Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center, Family Court, Foster Parent, representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Sheriff's Office and Guardian Ad Litem.)

Period included in Case Record Review: December 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006

Period included in Outcome Measures: June 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006

Purpose

The Department of Social Services engages in a review of child welfare services in each county to:

- a) Determine to what degree services are delivered in compliance with federal and state laws and agency policy; and
- b) Assess the outcomes for children and families engaged in the child welfare system.

State law (sec 43-1-115) states, in part:

The state department shall conduct, at least once every five years, a substantive quality review of the child protective services and foster care programs in each county and each adoption office in the State. The county's performance must be assessed with reference to specific outcome measures published in advance by the department.

The information obtained by the child welfare services review process will:

- a) Give county staff feedback on the effectiveness of their interventions.
- b) Direct state office technical assistance staff to assist county staff with their areas needing improvement.
- c) Inform agency administrators of which systemic factors impair county staff's ability to achieve specific outcomes.
- d) Direct training staff to provide training for county staff specific to their needs.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

The county-specific review of child welfare services is both quantitative and qualitative.

The review is **quantitative** because it begins with an analysis of every child welfare outcome report for that county for the period under review. The outcome reports reflect the performance of the county in all areas of the child welfare program: Child Protective Services (CPS) Intake, CPS Investigations, CPS In-Home Treatment, Foster Care, Managed Treatment Services (MTS), and Adoptions.

The review is **qualitative** because it assesses the quality of the services rendered and the effectiveness of those services. The review seeks to explain why a county's performance data looks the way it does.

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Ratings

The standard that must be met for all items reviewed onsite is 90%. Each outcome report has its own standard. To be rated Strength an item 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.

<u>Summary of Findings</u>	Overall Finding: Substantially Achieved
-Safety Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations.	Finding: Strength
-Safety Item 2: Repeat maltreatment.	Finding: Strength

Analysis of Safety Item 1 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

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

Data Time Period: 06/1/05 to 05/31/06

	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective >= 99.99%*	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,349	15,723	16,347.37	-624.37
Edgefield	51	51	50.99	0.01

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

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

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

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
	Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9
Treatment	5	100	0	0	5	0
Total Cases	6	100	0	0	14	0

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Explanation of Item 1

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. All 51 investigations conducted by Edgefield DSS over the past 12 months were initiated according to state law and agency policy. Reviewers also looked at intakes rated High and Medium risk which required response times of 2 hours and 12 hours, respectively. All of those investigations were initiated timely.

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure S1.2: Recurrence of Maltreatment – Of all children who were victims of indicated reports of child abuse and/or neglect during the reporting period, the percent having another indicated report within a subsequent 6 month period.

Indicated Reports Between December 1, 2004 and November 30, 2005

	Number of Child Victims	Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Report	Number of Children Objective <= 93.90%	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	10,273	60	9646.35	566.65
Edgefield	44	1	41.32	1.68

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	6	86	1	14	3	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	16	94	1	6	3	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. CAPSS data indicates that one of 44 cases involve repeat maltreatment. This was substantiated by the onsite review. This suggests that interventions by the agency were effective.

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Section Two

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

Summary of Findings

- Safety Item 3: Services to prevent removal.
- Safety Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren).

Overall Finding: Partially Achieved

Finding: Strength

Finding: Area Needing Improvement

Analysis of Safety Item 3 Findings

Site Visit Findings

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	2	100	0	0	8	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	12	100	0	0	8	0

Explanation of Item 3

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. The onsite review indicates that the agency did a good job of assessing the needs of clients. The review also found that the agency did a good job referring clients for appropriate services. Stakeholder stated “that the awareness of substance abuse problems among DSS staff is good, and the staff is good at assessment. Also, risk factors are well-assessed, and children are protected.”

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure S2.2: **Risk of harm to child** – 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 12/01/04 to 11/30/05	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective $\geq 91.50\%*$	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	14,561	1,095	13,323.32	142.68
Edgefield	46	5	42.09	-1.09

* This is a DSS established objective.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 4: Risk of harm.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	100	0	0	1	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	15	79	4	21	1	0

Explanation of Item 4

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. Onsite reviewers determine how effective the county DSS office is at managing the risks of harm that necessitate continued involvement by DSS. By this criterion, the risk of harm to the children in 4 of the 10 treatment cases reviewed was not reduced as a result of the agency's intervention.

Stakeholder comment: The agency does try to provide appropriate services, but follow up is not always adequate. However, risk factors are well assessed, and children are well protected. They have no concerns about the safety or well-being of foster children.

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

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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 11/01/04 to 10/30/05	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	3,301	257	3,017.11	26.89
Edgefield	17	1	15.54	0.46

* This is a federally established objective.

Site Visit 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 Edgefield DSS. No foster care re-entries occurred in the cases reviewed during the period under review. The review found that in Edgefield County once children were in foster care they remained in care for more than 12 months. However during the period under review one out of the seventeen children was returned home or placed with a relative within 12 months from entering foster care. According to the outcome measure data (5.88%), the agency met the federal standard (8.6%).

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.2: **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	3,810	3,080	3,303.27	(223.27)
Edgefield	19	19	16.47	2.53

Note: This is a federally established objective.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0

Explanation of Item 6

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. The outcome report shows that 19 of the 19 children (100%) in care less than 12 months had no more than 2 foster care placements. This exceeds the standard of 86.7%. Onsite reviewers found that foster care placements were stable. Children who moved were due to behavioral problems they had no more than two placements within a 12 month period.

Stakeholder comment: Once children are in care, they're maintained safely. The behavior of the foster teens contributes to multiple placements.

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.5: Permanency Goal for Child – 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 02/05 –01/06	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective >= 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,601	1,662	1,908.53	(246.53)
Edgefield	11	3	5.83	(2.83)

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

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 7: Permanency goal for children.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0

Explanation of Item 7

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. To meet the criteria established in the CAPSS report 53.00% or more of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months must have a TPR petition filed. For Edgefield DSS the percentage is 40.0% (6/15). Even though Edgefield DSS did not file enough TPRs to meet the outcome report standard, onsite reviewers found that there were compelling reasons for not doing so.

Onsite reviewers rated this item based on two criteria: 1) Was the permanency goal appropriately matched to the child's need? and 2) Was the agency acting to cause the goal to be achieved timely? Staff of Edgefield DSS had no problem determining the appropriate goal for the foster children in their care. Most of the children in foster care were eventually placed in pre-adoptive placement. Those who were not place in a pre-adoptive placement receive excellent independent living services.

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 8 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.3: Length of Time to Achieve Reunification – 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 06/01/05– 05/31/06	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective $\geq 76.20\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,383	1,990	1,815.85	174.15
Edgefield	6	6	4.57	1.43

* This is a federally established objective.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Rating						
Permanency Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	100	0	0	8	0

Explanation of Item 8

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. According to the outcome data 100 % (6/6) of the children who entered care during the 12 month reporting period returned home within 12 months of entering foster care. The review found that the children with a plan of return home or with a relative were appropriate. Those children were only in foster care 12 months or less.

Analysis of Permanency Item 9 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings				
Measure P3.4: 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	404	55	129.28	(74.28)
Edgefield	0	0	0.00	0.00

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 9: Adoption.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	25	3	75	6	0

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Explanation of Item 9

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. According to the outcome report no adoptions were completed within the past 12 months. Four of the ten cases reviewed had a plan of adoption. Only one of the four cases with the plan of adoption was on track to be finalized within 24 months. The three cases with the plan of adoption not finalized were due to TPR pleadings not filed timely.

Analysis of Permanency Item 10 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.6: **Permanency Goal of “Alternate 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 06/01/05 – 05/31/06	Number of Children In Care With Perm Plan “Other Planned Living Arrangement”	Number of Children Objective >= 85.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	8,263	1,455	7,023.55	-215.55
Edgefield	26	4	22.10	-0.10

* This is a DSS established objective.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 10: Permanency goal of alternate 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 Edgefield 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 approximately 20% of the children in Edgefield DSS custody had this plan. CAPPS is measuring a percentage of the children in care. As previously stated reports show, most children who enter foster care in Edgefield County return home within 12 months of entering care. Those that do not return home within 12 months are likely to remain in foster care until they age out of the system. Onsite reviewers looked at 100% of the foster care cases in Edgefield County. A qualitative approach was taken in assessing Item 10. Reviewers determined that the plans were appropriate for all of the children with this permanency goal.

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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:	Substantially Achieved
-Item 11: Proximity of placement	Finding: Strength
-Item 12: Placement with siblings.	Finding: Strength
-Item 13: Visiting w/ parents & siblings	Finding: Strength
-Item 14: Preserving connections	Findings: Strength
-Item 15: Relative placement	Findings: Area Needing Improvement
-Item 16: Relationship of child w/ parents	Findings: Strength

Analysis of Permanency Item 11 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P4.1: **Proximity of Foster Care Placement** – Of all children in foster care during the reporting period (excluding MTS and Adoptions children), the percent placed within their county of origin.

	Number of Children In Care 06/01/05 – 05/31/06	Number of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Percent of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Number of Children Objective >= 70.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	6,185	3,956	63.96	4,329.50	(373.50)
Edgefield	26	0	0.00	18.20	(18.20)

* This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation of Item 11

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. Edgefield DSS currently has 7 children in foster care. During the past 12 months 26 children entered foster care. None of those children were placed within the county. Edgefield DSS has 2 foster homes, which are not caring for Edgefield County children. Consequently, all of the children entering foster care are placed in foster or group care settings in adjacent counties. Onsite reviewers rated individual cases “Strength” because the children were placed in adjacent counties and were able to maintain relationships with relatives in their home communities. However, taken as a whole, this is an area needing improvement because every child placed out of the county is in a different school district; and because Edgefield has not developed the foster parent resources needed to care for its children.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	100	0	0	5	0

Explanation of Item 12

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. In 100 % of the cases reviewed, siblings were placed together in group homes and in pre-adoptive placements. Although Edgefield is a small county with only two licensed homes, the county does a great job in placing sibling groups together whenever possible. Case documentation supports reasonable justification as to why some sibling groups of Edgefield were not placed together, as it was not the best interest for each child.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	100	0	0	3	0

Explanation of Item 13

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. Reviewers determined that visits with parents and siblings in foster care occurred on a regular basis. There were also examples of the county promoting visits between siblings not placed together and other contacts with the adult siblings via emails and phone calls. The agency put forth great efforts to assist the families with maintaining contact.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	100	0	0	1	0

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Explanation of Item 14

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. This item addresses the agency’s ability to preserve a child in foster care’s connection to his/her community, family, and faith. All applicable cases reviewed were rated “Strength” for this item. Visits with extended family members were arranged by the agency. In one case, the onsite reviewer found documentation to support visitation being arranged for the child in therapeutic placement to visit with the older sibling who was placed in a group home. Those visits were occurring monthly. The review found that foster parents were also instrumental in helping to preserve family connections by assisting with transportation and telephone contact.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	86	1	14	3	0

Explanation of Item 15

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in identifying and assessing the relatives of children in foster care as possible caregivers. In 86% of the cases reviewed there was evidence that both maternal and paternal relatives were assessed as placement options for the children in foster care. In one of the seven applicable cases reviewed there was no evidence that paternal relatives were assessed. Stakeholders stated that “the county does a good job in pursuing relative placement but there is room for improvement.”

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	100	0	0	8	0

Explanation of Item 16

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in promoting or maintaining a strong emotionally supportive relationship between children in care and their parents. Reviewers determined in the two applicable cases that visitation was occurring frequently and the children were bonded with the parent. One parent was attending counseling with the child. In the cases rated not applicable the parents whereabouts were not known, the agency was relieved of providing services to the parent, the child had been in care for five years or longer, or the parent was deceased.

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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:

Not Achieved

-Item 17: Needs & services

Finding: Area Needing Improvement

-Item 18: Involvement in case planning

Finding: Area Needing Improvement

-Item 19: Worker visits with child

Finding: Area Needing Improvement

-Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)

Findings: Area Needing Improvement

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	70	3	30	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	12	60	8	40	0	0

Explanation of Item 17

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. 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? Assessments of CPS treatment cases were significantly weaker than those of foster care cases for three reasons.

1. Workers did not assess or address the needs of the fathers or the caretakers who are usually the grandparents. The reviewer found very little documentation to support the agency efforts on following up on the needs of the grandparents.
2. Fathers were generally ignored, even when the agency knew how to contact the fathers. For instance, one case where the absent father was in attendance at the court hearing but was not included in the family's assessment or treatment plan.
3. In another case, the onsite reviewer found no assessments to validate that the children and mother's needs were assessed; case history of drug abuse and other maltreatment issues of neglect are the primary conditions that contributed to the family's dysfunction.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	70	3	30	0	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	11	55	9	45	0	0

Explanation of Item 18

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. Workers were more likely to involve children and parents in foster care cases in case planning than children and parents in treatment cases. In most treatment cases, the treatment plan was developed without the parents input. In one case it was evident that the mother was involved in the development of the treatment plan but not the father. The review found that most records did not contain copies of letters mailed to non-custodial fathers or caretakers, inviting and encouraging them to participate in the planning for their children and grandchildren. Workers were more likely to involve age-appropriate children in foster care in the case planning than children in treatment cases.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	3	30	7	70	0	0
Total Cases	12	80	8	20	0	0

Explanation of Item 19

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. This rating is based on two questions: 1) Were Edgefield DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) Did the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? Nine of the ten applicable cases in foster care rated "Strength" because the majority of the children were seen monthly and the focus of those visits were on treatment-related issues. Only 3 of the 10 treatment cases were rated "Strength." Those cases involved young siblings. In the 7 treatment cases rated "Area Needing Improvement" visits were very sporadic, in some cases the children were not seen for 4 months. The fact that the agency was staffed at 40% during the period under review maybe a contributing factor to the disparity in the monthly visits for treatment cases. According to agency data, the county was staffed at 40% below the capacity of the authorized and filled positions for Edgefield.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	60	2	40	5	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	7	47	8	53	4	0

Explanation of Item 20

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. The review found that this item is a weak area for both treatment and foster care cases in Edgefield County. In 40% of the foster care cases and 60% of the treatment cases reviewed, visitation between the worker and the parents was made less than monthly. In half of the treatment cases there were contacts made with the family. In those cases, the documentation does not support whether the fathers were seen any attempts to engage them or could not be located, etc. In another treatment case with the alternative caregiver arrangement, the record indicates no contacts made with the caregiver for the last three months during the period under review. The foster care and adoption cases rated an Area Needing Improvement because the records indicated no contacts were made with the pre-adoptive and foster parent during the period under review. As previously mentioned staff shortages likely impacted this item as well.

Section Six

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding: **Partially Achieved**

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 21: Educational needs of child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	89	1	11	1	0
Treatment	6	86	1	14	3	0
Total Cases	14	87	2	13	4	0

Explanation of Item 21

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. The county missed the 90% approval threshold by only three percentage points. Documentation of the assessment of educational needs of children was found in 87% of the treatment and foster care cases reviewed. The deficiencies in one CPS treatment case where absenteeism for school aged children continued to be chronic since the agency's initial involvement with the family and through out the period under review. In the foster care case, the child's educational need was assessed initially; current documentation does not support the ongoing assessment of the child's educational needs.

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	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	14	70	6	30	0	0

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Explanation of Item 22

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. The medical needs of 90% of the cases reviewed were handled properly in foster care. The one adoption case rated “Area Needing Improvement” contained no follow up assessment for a neurological evaluation. The child’s last neurological evaluation was in 2001. In 50 % of the treatment cases reviewed rated “Area Needing Improvement” contained no documentation to support the physical health needs of the children assessed. This deficiency was particularly a problem in cases involving severe physical neglect and abuse.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	78	2	22	1	0
Treatment	4	50	4	50	2	0
Total Cases	11	85	2	15	3	0

Explanation of Item 23

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. The review found that initial screenings and psychological evaluations were provided to 78% of the foster children and that the children’s mental health services appropriately addressed their needs. In the treatment cases, the review found that there was a general lack of mental health services for children. In 50% of the cases reviewed, no referrals for assessment or screening were completed. The treatment cases with deficiencies involved parents and children with multiple medical, developmental, and psychological conditions that reduced the family’s ability to function on its own. Those complex cases were rated “Area Needing Improvement” because the mental health needs of all family members were not adequately assessed and appropriate referrals not made to address their needs.

Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. As mentioned previously, none of the children entering foster care in the past 12 months was placed within the county. The two licensed foster homes are not adequate to meet the needs of the number of children entering care. At the time of the onsite review the county had two licensed foster homes. Both of those foster home records were reviewed. A stakeholder stated “because Edgefield is a small county, there are few foster homes. If a child comes into care in Edgefield they can go to McCormick and go back and forth easily.”

Strengths

- All of the foster home licenses reviewed were current/CAPSS system is updated.
- Rabies vaccinations good.

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Areas Needing Improvement

- Dictation in the licensing records was not thorough. Issues that were discussed during quarterly visits were not clearly documented. Summaries of placements were not clearly documented.
- The Health Inspection in the record does not address lead.
- Quarterly review visits did not review areas as outlined by policy.
- Supervisory reviews of the case files not current.
- Firearm policy was not being discussed and reviewed with the foster parent and documented in the case in the file.
- Disaster plans were not in the case record.
- Plans for a babysitter and central registry check for alternate child care arrangements were not in the record.

Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

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

This is an area of **Strength** for Edgefield DSS. The decisions to unfound the reviewed investigations were supported by the available evidence and thorough assessments. Appropriate collateral contacts were consistently made.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	1	1	0
	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	0	0	2
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	1	0	1

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Edgefield DSS. Of the two referrals reviewed the reviewer determined that one referral was not appropriately screened-out. In that intake the alleged perpetrator was the caretaker of the child and there were specific allegations of abuse or neglect that should have been investigated.

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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.				15 (94%)	1(6%)		3
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	6 (100%)	0	14				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	16 (94%)	1 (6%)	3				
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				15 (79%)	4 (21%)		0
Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	12 (100%)	0	8				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren)	15 (79%)	4 (21%)	1				
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				7 (70%)	3 (30%)	0	0
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	1 (100%)	0	9				
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	10 (100%)	0	0				
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	10 (100%)	0	0				
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	2 (100%)	0	8				
Item 9: Adoption	1(25%)	3 (75%)	6				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	5 (100%)	0	0				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				10 (100%)	0	0	0
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	8 (100%)	0	2				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	5 (100%)	0	5				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	7 (100%)	0	3				
Item 14: Preserving connections	9 (100%)	0	1				
Item 15: Relative placement	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	3				
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	2 (100%)	0	8				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				8 (40%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	0
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	12 (6%)	8(40%)	0				
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	0				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	12 (60%)	8 (40%)	4				
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	4				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				14 (87%)	1 (6.5%)	1 (6.5%)	4
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	14 (87%)	2 (13%)	4				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				13 (65%)	1 (5%)	6 (30%)	0
Item 22: Physical health of the child	14 (70%)	6 (30%)	0				
Item 23: Mental health of the child	11 (65%)	6 (35%)	3				

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