

**South Carolina Department of Social Services**  
**Child Welfare Quality Assurance Review: Darlington County**  
**Summary Report**

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This summary report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) Darlington County Quality Assurance Review, conducted November 3-7, 2014. The period under review was November 1, 2013 to October 31, 2014.

DSS Child Welfare Quality Assurance Reviews are conducted using the *Onsite Review Instrument* (OSRI) finalized by the federal Administration for Children & Families (ACF) in July 2008. This instrument is used to review foster care and family preservation services cases. Twenty cases were reviewed including 10 foster care and 10 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 a number of *items* related to each of the outcomes through case file review, the use of 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 detailed on the OSRI as support for rating selection.

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. Ratings for each of the outcomes are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Child Welfare QA Onsite Reviews – Ratings by Outcome**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Substantially Achieved</b>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved</b>
<b>Safety 1</b> CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	62% (8)	38% (5)	0% (0)
<b>Safety 2</b> CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE	45% (9)	20% (4)	35% (7)
<b>Permanency 1</b> CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS	20% (2)	60% (6)	20% (2)
<b>Permanency 2</b> THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN	30% (3)	60% (6)	10% (1)
<b>Well-Being 1</b> FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S NEEDS	20% (4)	55% (11)	25% (5)
<b>Well-Being 2</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	75% (9)	0% (0)	25% (3)
<b>Well-Being 3</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS	37% (7)	37% (7)	26% (5)

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*. Appendix 1 provides more detailed analysis of issues impacting the ANI ratings.

**SECTION I: REVIEW FINDINGS**

***SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT***

Two *items* are included under Safety Outcome 1. Ratings for the two *items* are shown in Table 2.

**Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations**

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 made, within the timeframes established by agency policies or State statute.

**Table 2.**

Rating	Item 1	Item 2
<i>Strength</i>	45% (9)	60% (12)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	20% (4)	5% (1)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	35% (7)	35% (7)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>69.2% (9)</b>	<b>92.3% (12)</b>

**Item 2: Repeat maltreatment**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if any child in the family experienced repeat maltreatment within a 6-month period.

***SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE***

Two *items* are included under Safety Outcome 2. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 3.

**Item 3: Services to family**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children’s entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

**Table 3.**

Rating	Item 3	Item 4
<i>Strength</i>	40% (8)	45% (9)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	35% (7)	55% (11)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	25% (5)	0% (0)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>53.3% (8)</b>	<b>45% (9)</b>

**Item 4: Risk assessment and safety 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.

***PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS***

Six *items* are included under Permanency Outcome 1. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 4.

**Item 5: Foster Care reentries**

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether children who entered foster care during the period under review were re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

**Item 6: Stability of foster care placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if 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 interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s).

**Item 7: Permanency goal for child**

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

**Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review, to achieve reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner.

**Item 9: Adoption**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made, or are being made, to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner.

**Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA)**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure:

- That the child is adequately prepared to make the transition from foster care to independent living (if it is expected that the child will remain in foster care until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated).
- That the child, even though remaining in foster care, is in a “permanent” living arrangement with a foster parent or relative caregiver and that there is a commitment on the part of all parties involved that the child remain in that placement until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated.
- That the child is in a long-term care facility and will remain in that facility until transition to an adult care facility.

Table 4.

Rating	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
Strength	25% (5)	20% (4)	20% (4)	10% (2)	10% (2)	5% (1)
Area needing improvement	0% (0)	30% (6)	30% (6)	10% (2)	20% (4)	5% (1)
Not Applicable	75% (15)	50% (10)	50% (10)	80% (16)	70% (14)	90% (18)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	<b>100% (5)</b>	<b>40% (4)</b>	<b>40% (4)</b>	<b>50% (2)</b>	<b>33.3% (2)</b>	<b>50% (1)</b>

**PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN**

Six items are included under Permanency Outcome 2. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 5.

**Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that the child’s foster care placement was close enough to the parent(s) to facilitate face-to-face contact between the child and the parent(s) while the child was in foster care.

**Item 12: Placement with siblings**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if, 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.

**Item 13: Visiting with parents & siblings in foster care**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if, 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.

**Item 14: 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.

**Item 15: 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.

**Item 16: 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.

Table 5.

Rating	Item 11	Item 12	Item 13	Item 14	Item 15	Item 16
Strength	10% (2)	30% (6)	15% (3)	25% (5)	40% (8)	10% (2)
Area needing improvement	15% (3)	5% (1)	30% (6)	25% (5)	10% (2)	25% (5)
Not Applicable	75% (15)	65% (13)	55% (11)	50% (10)	50% (10)	65% (13)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	<b>40% (2)</b>	<b>85.7% (6)</b>	<b>33.3% (3)</b>	<b>50% (5)</b>	<b>80% (8)</b>	<b>28.6% (2)</b>

**WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S NEEDS**

Four items are included under Well-Being Outcome 1. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 6.

**Item 17: 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 children, parents, and foster parents (both at the child’s entry into foster care [if the child entered during the period under review] or on an ongoing basis) 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.

**Item 18: 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.

**Item 19: 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 and promote achievement of case goals.

**Item 20: 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 children are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children and promote achievement of case goals.

**Table 6.**

Rating	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20
Strength	25% (5)	35% (7)	65% (13)	10% (2)
Area needing improvement	75% (15)	65% (13)	35% (7)	70% (14)
Not Applicable	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20% (4)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	<b>25% (5)</b>	<b>35% (7)</b>	<b>65% (13)</b>	<b>12.5% (2)</b>

**WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

One item is included under Well-Being Outcome 2. Ratings for the item are shown in Table 7.

**Item 21: Educational needs of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children’s educational needs at the initial contact with the child (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.

**Table 7.**

Rating	Item 21
Strength	45% (9)
Area needing improvement	10% (2)
Not Applicable	45% (9)
Total	100% (20)
% Strengths	<b>81.8% (9)</b>

**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. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 8.

**Item 22: 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, including dental health needs.

**Item 23: 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).

**Table 8.**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Item 22</b>	<b>Item 23</b>
<i>Strength</i>	25% (5)	50% (10)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	55% (11)	5% (1)
Not Applicable	20% (4)	45% (9)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>31.3% (5)</b>	<b>90.9% (10)</b>

**Table 9. Darlington County *Percentage of Strengths* on 23 Quality Assurance Items Across 2 Reviews**

Item	Sept. 2013 (PUR 9-1-2012 to 8-30-2013)	Nov. 2014 (PUR 11-1-2013 to 10-31-2014)
1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations	88.9%	69.2%
2. Reoccurrence of Maltreatment	100%	92.3%
3. Services to Family	57.1%	53.3%
4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	50%	45%
5. Foster Care Re-Entries	100%	100%
6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	60%	40%
7. Permanency Goal for Child	80%	40%
8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Perm. Placement with Relatives	60%	50%
9. Adoption	100%	33.3%
10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	100%	50%
11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	77.8%	40%
12. Placement with Siblings	75%	85.7%
13. Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	66.7%	33.3%
14. Preserving Connections	70%	50%
15. Relative Placement	50%	80%
16. Relationship of Child in Care with Parent	33.3%	28.6%
17. Needs and Services for Child, Parents, and Caregivers	45%	25%
18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	47.4%	35%
19. Worker Visits with Child	80%	65%
20. Worker Visits with Parents	18.8%	12.5%
21. Educational Needs of the Child	85.7%	81.8%
22. Physical Health of the Child	62.5%	31.3%
23. Mental Health of the Child	75%	90.9%

## SECTION II: FOSTER HOME LICENSE REVIEW

As part of the Quality Assurance Review Process in Darlington County, ten Foster Home Licenses were randomly selected from the list of all licenses issued for the county during the period under review. These licenses are reviewed using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Foster Home License Review Instruments*. There is one instrument for issuance of initial licenses and another instrument for the renewal of licenses. Each instrument contains a section of deficiencies, namely agency oversight, data entry, and qualitative issues. Deficiencies noted in this section may not invalidate the license but still require attention and correction by county management. Each instrument includes the appropriate agency, state, and federal requirements.

Initial License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Information related to firearms and ammunition in the house
- Pet vaccination information
- Background checks
- Convictions
- Required trainings
- Medical reports
- Fire inspections/re-inspections
- DHEC/Lead inspections
- Central registry check on alternative caregiver, if applicable
- A review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS
- Completion and issuance of the 1513 prior to the license being issued
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools

Renewal License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Convictions
- Training hours
- Medical reports if a new household member has been added or if there is a change in foster parent's medical status
- Fire inspections
- FBI checks, if applicable
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools
- 1513 completed prior to issuance of the license
- Any amendments to the license, if applicable
- Documentation regarding if there are more than five children in the home
- Annual firearms location update
- Safety checks of alternative caregivers
- A review of child protective service allegations
- Pet vaccination information
- A review of any regulatory infractions
- A review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS

Possible *deficiencies* found in Initial and Renewal cases include:

- Updated home studies
- Discipline Agreements
- Fire drills
- Quarterly home visits
- Disaster Preparedness Plans
- Information concerning the alternative caregivers
- Alternative caregiver forms
- Applications
- Autobiography information
- Financial information
- Child factor's checklists
- Initial home assessment studies
- References



Areas noted as having occurred as required on the assessment are rated as *strengths*. Those *items* that were not met are rated as *area needing improvement (ANI)*. If the issue is not applicable, it is rated N/A.

Additionally, the percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Results of the review are noted in Table 10.

### Foster Home Licensing Findings for Darlington County

**Initial License Cases.** Four foster home issuances for initial/standard license were reviewed. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. One of the cases reviewed was rated as *ANI* because some pieces of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license issuance.

- Documentation verifying remediation of the deficiency outlined in the DHEC report was not located in the case file. (1 case)

**Renewal License Cases.** Six foster home renewal licenses were reviewed. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Six cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* because some pieces of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license renewal. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* for six cases include:

**Table 10. Summary of Ratings for Initial and Renewal Cases**

Rating	Initial	Renewal
<i>Strength</i>	3 (75%)	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	1 (25%)	6 (100%)
Total	4 (100%)	6 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>3 (75%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

- There was not documentation in the case file to verify that central registry, SLED, sex offender registry, and/or FBI checks for all applicable individuals were completed in a timely manner, or were completed at all. (6 cases)
- There was no documentation to verify whether or not the home had firearms and/or if the ammunition was stored separately. (2 cases)
- Documentation indicated that the foster family moved into the grandparent’s home, but CAPSS and the case documentation did not confirm whether the grandparents physically lived in the household during the PUR. (1 case)
- Medical statement documentation for all family members was not located in the file. (1 case)
- Documentation confirming that pet vaccinations were up-to-date was not located in the case file. (1 case)

**Deficiencies found in Initial and Renewal Cases.** Deficiencies were noted for eight files reviewed. Issues identified by the reviewers include:

### **Initial Case Deficiencies**

#### **Documentation**

- Documentation did not include identification of an alternative caregiver/ babysitter. (1 case)
- The home was closed voluntarily while a foster child was still placed in the home. The child is 18 years old, in college in North Carolina, and is listed as a New York ICPC foster child. The agency is working to resolve the CAPSS related discrepancies regarding this placement. (1 case)

### **Renewal Case Deficiencies**

#### **Fire Drills:**

- Documentation verifying that fire drills were conducted within 24 hours of a child's placement was not located in the case file. (6 cases)
- Documentation verifying that quarterly fire drills were conducted while children were placed in foster homes was not located in the case file. (3 cases)

#### **Home Visits:**

- Documentation did not provide verification that quarterly home visits were either timely or completed at all. (1 case)
- The quarterly home visit guide documented the home was licensed for more children than should be allowed in the home. The home should have only been licensed for three children, instead of four, as the home had two biological children. This would reach the total of five maximum children in the home. The home, however, at the time of the review had less in the home than the optimal license level. (1 case)

#### **Safety:**

- All discipline agreements were not located in the case file. (1 case)
- All disaster plans were not located in the case file. (1 case)

### SECTION III: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE NO ACTION REPORTS REVIEW

A review of ten no action reports was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed. The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports on which no action was taken by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review No Action Reports Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and fourteen questions regarding the no action decisions and processes (see Table 11).

**Table 11. Summary of Item Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	1	9	0	10
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	7	3	0	10
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	10	0	0	10
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	1	0	9	10
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	9	1	0	10
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	0	0	10	10
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	0	0	10	10
5. Safety factors documented on Intake Assessment not discovered by intake worker	1	8	1	10
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	9	0	1	10
7a. Risk Matrix results included statements contradictory to allegation	8	1	1	10
7b. Risk Matrix results failed to include all statements that support allegation	8	1	1	10
8. Contact with necessary collaterals prior to screen-out decision	3	3	4	10
9. Another intake referral on same perpetrator and/or child within 12 months	5	5	0	10
10. Intake Supervisor ensured consultation with another supervisory-level authority	0	5	5	10

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 12.

**Table 12. Summary of Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	1 (10%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	9 (90%)
Total	10 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>1 (10%)</b>

In nine cases, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (8 cases)
- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (7 cases)
- There was no documentation to verify that the agency made, or attempted to make, any direct contact with all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts. (3 cases)

- The allegation indicated that there was a sexually abusive caregiver that had unsupervised assesses to the child, but the agency did not document this safety factor in the intake documentation. The agency contacted law enforcement after declaring the case no action and found that the sexual abuse allegation was an error and not a safety concern. (1 case)

### SECTION III: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES UNFOUNDED REPORTS REVIEW

Five unfounded reports were reviewed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed. The five unfounded reports were randomly selected from the list of all reports unfounded by the county during the period under review. The review was conducted using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Unfounded Report Instrument*. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and items regarding three primary areas (see Table 13):

- Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment,
- Repeat maltreatment, and
- Risk assessment and safety management.

**Table 13. Summary of Item Ratings for Unfounded Review**

1A. Investigation not initiated in accordance with timeframes and requirements. Total cases issue was present: 0				
1B. Face-to-face contact not made in accordance with timeframes and requirements. Total cases issue was present: 2				
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Total</b>
1C. Delays in investigation initiation or face-to-face contact beyond control of agency	2	0	3	5
2A. At least one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report	2	3	0	5
2B. One substantiated or indicated maltreatment report within six months before or after	0	2	3	5
2C. Repeat maltreatment involving the same or similar circumstances	0	0	5	5
3A. Initial assessment of risk to the children and family in the home	5	0	0	5
3B. Ongoing assessment(s) of risk to the children and family in the home	3	2	0	5
3C. Safety concerns that were not adequately or appropriately addressed by the agency	1	4	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each decision to unfound. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 14.

**Table 14. Summary of Ratings for Unfounded Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	3 (60%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	2 (40%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>3 (60%)</b>

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Reasons that two unfounded cases reviewed violated pieces of agency policy and procedures include:

- Documentation did not provide sufficient initial, ongoing, and final risk and safety assessments with children. (2 cases)
- There was no documentation verifying that the agency assessed the mother’s drug use prior to the decision to unfound the case. (1 case)
- Documentation did not verify that all appropriate referrals for services were made. (1 case)

**SECTION IV: FAMILY STRENGTHENING SERVICES REVIEW**

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for reports referred to Family Strengthening Services (FSS). The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Community-Based Prevention Services Assessment Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and sixteen questions regarding the referral to the (FSS) Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 15).

**Table 15. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	5	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	5	0	0	5
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	0	0	5	5
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	4	1	0	5
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	1	0	4	5
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	0	1	4	5
5. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	0	5	0	5
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	5	0	0	5
7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	2	3	0	5
7b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter	4	1	0	5
8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	1	2	2	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	2	3	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	1	1	3	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	4	0	1	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 16.

**Table 16. Summary of Ratings for FSS Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	1 (20%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	4 (80%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>1 (20%)</b>

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. In four cases reviewed, there were pieces of agency policy and procedures that were not followed. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (4 cases)
- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (2 cases)
- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (2 cases)
- The agency's No response in the Maltreatment Tab in CAPSS, indicating that the case did not meet the legal definition of Maltreatment, did not correspond to the information in the Intake referral and the allegations that the child was found to be dirty, hungry, and thirsty in the mornings each day and lethargic, with no reconciliation of the facts documented. (1 case)

## SECTION V: VOLUNTARY CASE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for reports referred to Voluntary Case Management (VCM). The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Community-Based Prevention Services Assessment Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and sixteen questions regarding the referral to the VCM Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 17).

**Table 17. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	1	4	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	5	0	0	5
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	0	0	5	5
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	4	1	0	5
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	1	0	4	5
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	2	0	3	5
5. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	0	5	0	5
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	4	0	1	5
7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	4	0	1	5
7b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter	5	0	0	5
8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	3	1	1	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	0	5	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	0	0	5	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	4	0	1	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 18.

**Table 18. Summary of Ratings for VCM Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5 (100%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. In five cases reviewed, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:



- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (5 cases)
- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (4 cases)
- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (1 case)
- Documentation indicated that the collateral contact provided the agency with information that would have caused the allegation to meet the legal definition of maltreatment, but the agency stated that the case did not meet the legal definition of maltreatment, with no reconciliation of the facts documented. (1 case)

## **APPENDIX 1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES CAUSING AN AREA NEEDING IMPROVEMENT (ANI) RATING FOR APPLICABLE CASES**

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses that were found in the cases for Darlington County conducted November 3-7, 2014. The period under review was November 1, 2013 to October 31, 2014.

### **Positives:**

*Item 5 (Foster Care reentries)* was identified as a *strength* of the agency; all applicable cases reviewed were rated as *strength* with no *area needing improvement* (ANI).

### **Concerns:**

The following examines the *items* that had the highest ANI ratings.

- *Item 4 (Risk assessment and safety management)* - 11 of 20 (55%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not complete assessments for the following individuals. (8 cases)
    - Father (6 cases)
    - Child(ren) (4 cases)
    - Mother (2 cases)
  - The agency did not complete assessments of the family home. (5 cases)
  - The agency did not conduct a background check on a member of the family living in the household. (1 case)
  - Safety concerns existed that were not addressed by the agency. (2 cases)  
Specific examples provided include the following:
    - The family had an exposed well in the backyard. (1 case)
    - The child spent the night with the father who was a known drug-dealer. (1 case)
  - The agency did not provide appropriate services to the parents. (1 case)
- *Item 6 (Stability of foster care cases)* – 6 of 10 (60%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The child had more than one placement change during the period under review. (6 cases)
- *Item 7 (Permanency goal for child)* – 6 of 10 (60%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The permanency goal was not appropriate for the child. (5 cases) Specific reasoning provided detailed the following:

- The agency prepared the child for OPPLA through provision of independent living skills, but there was no legal documentation in the case file or confirmation in the case-related interview that OPPLA was a concurrent plan for the child. (1 case)
    - The agency did not file a TPR for the father, making the child not legally free for adoption. (1 case)
    - The parents were noncompliant to the treatment plan during the PUR, but reunification continued to be the sole plan for the target child. (1 case)
    - Reunification, which is no longer the child’s goal, was not appropriate during the portion of the PUR in which it was in place for the target child because the agency had been relieved of providing services to the parents at the onset of the case due to the parents having an excessive CPS history with the agency. (1 case)
      - The goal of reunification was determined because it was typically the goal at the start of the case.
    - The child was near 18 years of age and struggled with previous attempts at adoption, but the agency did not attempt the goal of OPPLA and maintained the goal of adoption. (1 case)
  - The permanency goal was not established in a timely manner. (4 cases)
    - The goal was established after the child had been in care for three years. (1case)
- *Item 8 (Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives) – 2 of 4 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the permanency goal in a timely manner. (1 case)
    - The child had been in foster care for seven months, but the agency had not yet requested that custody be granted to the available relative, making it unlikely the goal would be achieved within 12 months. (1 case)
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to assist the parents in remedying safety hazards in the home and addressing barriers in the delay of the father participating in services. (1 case)
- *Item 9 (Adoption) – 4 of 6 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of adoption in a timely manner. (3 cases)

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to find a placement for adoption outside of pre-adoptive placements for a child. (1 case)
- *Item 10 (Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) – 1 of 2 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of OPPLA in a timely manner. (1 case)
    - The agency did not identify a person that would allow the target child to remain with them upon exit from foster care.
- *Item 11 (Proximity of foster care placement) – 3 of 5 (60%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The child was not placed in the same county as their biological parents due to capacity issues. (3 cases)
- *Item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) – 6 of 9 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The frequency of the visits with the following family members was not sufficient: (4 cases)
    - Mother (3 cases)
    - Siblings (2 cases)
    - Father (1 case)
    - Parents (1 case)
  - The quality of the visits with the following family members was not sufficient: (3 cases)
    - Parents (2 cases)
    - Sibling (2 cases)
    - Father (1 case)
    - Mother (1 case)
  - Even though the prison did not allow the child to visit the father, the agency did not make concerted efforts to help foster the relationship between the incarcerated father and child via alternative means. (1 case)
- *Item 14 (Preserving connections) – 5 of 10 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - Concerted efforts were not made to preserve the child’s connections with the following individuals: (5 cases)
    - Extended family (2 cases)
    - Grandmother (2 cases)
    - Brother (2 cases)

- Friends (1 case)
- *Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents)* – 5 of 7 (71.4%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote, support, and maintain positive relationships between the child and family. (5 cases)  
Specific relationships affected include:
    - Child and mother (4 cases)
    - Child and father (2 cases)
    - Child and stepmother (1 case)
    - Child and foster parents (1 case)
  - Events that family members were not invited to include the following: (5 cases)
    - School-related activities (2 cases)
    - Medical appointments (2 cases)
    - Counseling sessions (1 case)
    - Dental appointments (1 case)
- *Item 17 (Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents)* – 15 of 20 (75%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - Assessments were not conducted for the following individuals: (11 cases)
    - Father (10 cases)
    - Mother (4 cases)
    - Foster parents (2 cases)
    - Paramour (1 case)
    - Children (1 case)
  - Concerted efforts were not made to provide services for the following individuals: (9 cases)
    - Mother (7 cases)
    - Father (4 cases)
    - Foster mother (1 case)
  - Diligent searches were not conducted for missing parents, which prohibited proper assessment of needs and provision of services. (1 case)
- *Item 18 (Child & family involvement in case planning)* – 13 of 20 (65%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to involve the following individuals in the case planning process: (13 cases)
    - Father (11 cases)

- Mother (8 cases)
  - A diligent search was not conducted to allow for the parent to be included in the case planning process. (2 cases)
- *Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parents)* – 14 of 16 (87.5%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The frequency of the visitation was insufficient with the following family members: (12 cases)
    - Father (9 cases)
    - Mother (9 cases)
    - Paramour (1 case)
  - The quality of visitation was insufficient between the agency and the following individuals: (6 cases)
    - Mother (5 cases)
    - Father (1 case)
    - Paramour (1 case)
  - Diligent searches were not conducted for missing parents, which prevented the required visits with the caseworker. (2 cases)
- *Item 22 (Physical health of child)* – 11 of 16 (68.7) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency did not address the physical health needs of the child. (4 cases)
    - There were not medical records in the case file or direct contact with the medical provider. (1 case)
  - The agency did not address the dental health needs of the child. (3 cases)
  - There were no dental records in the foster care case file. (3 cases)
  - There were no medical records in the foster care case file. (2 cases)
  - The agency did not complete a Babynet referral. (1 case)
  - The agency failed to complete a thorough assessment by following-up with the mother's report that a well-child check-up was done and to note any results. (1 case)