

**Williamsburg County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
March 2005**

A team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Williamsburg 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, Williamsburg DSS staff, representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Guardian Ad Litem, Law Enforcement, Legal, a foster child, and a biological parent.

Period included in Case Record Review: September 1, 2004 to February 28, 2005

Period included in Outcome Measures: March 1, 2004 to February 28, 2005

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 includes an analysis of information obtained from agency clients, staff and stakeholders. Client and stakeholder information was obtained by interviews. The questions posed to clients and stakeholders are designed to illicit information about the quality of the services rendered and the effectiveness of those services.

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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

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure S1.1: Timeliness of initiating investigations on reports of child maltreatment				
Data Time Period: 03/1/04 to 02/28/05				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective $\geq 99.99\%^*$	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,536	15,460	16,534.35	(1,074.35)
Williamsburg	117	116	116.99	(.99)

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

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 1 : Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	100	0	0	8	0
Treatment	3	100	0	0	7	0
Total Cases	5	100	0	0	15	0

Explanation of Item 1

This is a strength for Williamsburg DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. The outcome report above applies the 24-hour standard to all accepted reports. Based on the outcome report 116 out of 117 (99%) of the investigations were initiated within 24 hours. All of the applicable cases reviewed on-site were initiated according to agency policy and state law.

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Stakeholder interviews confirm that Williamsburg DSS is very effective in initiating investigations in a timely manner. Workers can call a Law Enforcement officer to go out on a call with them. After hours calls go directly to Law Enforcement and the DSS on-call person is contacted. Law Enforcement is given a monthly on-call schedule.

Analysis of Safety Item 2 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

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

Indicated Report Between September 1, 2003 and August 31, 2004

	Number of Child Victims	Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Rept	Number of Children Objective >= 93.90%	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	8,833	69	8,294.19	469.81
Williamsburg	100	0	93.90	6.10

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	9	100	0	0	1	0
Total Cases	15	94	1	6	4	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is a Strength for Williamsburg DSS. According to CAPSS data none of the 100 cases (0.00%) indicated for abuse or neglect during the period under review were victims in a previous founded report. Consequently, Williamsburg DSS met the federally established standard for this item. Only 1 of the 20 cases reviewed on-site was a victim in a previously founded report.

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Section Two

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding: Partially Achieved

-Safety Item 3: Services to prevent removal.

Finding: Area Needing Improvement

-Safety Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren).

Finding: Strength

Analysis of Safety Item 3 Findings

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> 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	3	75	1	25	6	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20	0	0
Total Cases	11	79	3	21	6	0

Item 3

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Williamsburg County. This item assesses the appropriateness of the agency’s interventions to prevent the removal of children from their family. Reviewers rated 11 of the applicable 14 cases “strengths” for this item. That is because, in 79% of the cases, services to protect children in the home were appropriately applied. However, to receive an overall rating of “Strength”, at least 90% of the cases must be rated “Strength”.

In two of the applicable cases, the reviewers determined that the agency did not initiate services timely. In the third case rated as “Area Needing Improvement” it was determined that domestic violence issues were not addressed. In addition, the behavioral problems of one of the children were not assessed for possible services.

Stakeholders interviewed rated DSS as not being effective in providing services to prevent removing children from their homes. A stakeholder stated that DSS has been working with him/her for about one year. The case was opened due to drug use. This individual stated that he/she has problems obtaining drug testing. According to this individual DSS staff have informed him/her that they have a problem paying the “testers”. Subsequently, this issue has prevented him/her from completing the treatment plan.

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Analysis of Safety Item 4 Findings

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 4: Risk of harm.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	89	1	11	1	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	18	95	1	5	1	0

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 08/01/03 to 07/31/04	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective >= 91.50	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	14,225	1,110	13,015.88	99.13
Williamsburg	48	2	43.92	2.08

* This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation of “Risk of Harm” measure

This is a “Strength” for Williamsburg County DSS. The standard for the outcome report in CAPSS is that no more than 91.50 of alleged child victims have another report within 6 months of determination. Reviewers determined that this standard (95%) was also met during the on-site review.

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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
- Item 6: Stability of foster care placemt.
- Item 7: Permanency goal for child
- Item 8: Reunification, plmt w/ relatives
- Item 9: Adoption
- Item 10: Perm goal of other planned arrangmt

Partially Achieved

- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Strength**

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 5 Findings

<u>Site Visit Findings</u>		Performance Item Ratings				
Permanency Item 5: Foster care re-entries.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	100	0	0	7	0

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 03/01/04 to 02/28/05	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Fos Care Episode	Number of Children Objective >= 91.40%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,275	254	2,993.35	17.65
Williamsburg	33	0	30.16	2.84

* This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

Foster Care Re-entries is a Strength for Williamsburg DSS. According to CAPSS, none of the 33 children (0.00%) who entered care in Williamsburg County during the

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period under review had been returned home in the prior 12 months. In addition, none of the applicable cases reviewed on-site involved a child re-entering foster care.

Stakeholders rated DSS as being very effective in preventing multiple entries into foster care.

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 6 Findings

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0

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	3,770	3,107	3,268.59	(161.59)
Williamsburg	39	31	33.81	(2.81)

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

Stability of foster care placement is an “Area Needing Improvement”. The outcome report shows that 31 of the 39 children (79%) in care less than 12 months had no more than 2 foster care placements. This is below the standard of 86.7% . This objective is rated based on data from the outcome report that included the total population.

On-site reviewers rated 9 of the 10 cases reviewed as “Strengths” for this item. On-site reviewers not only counted the number of moves children in foster care experienced but looked at the reasons for those moves. Reviewers found that one child had three placement changes during the period under review

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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 7 Findings

<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 0304 –02/05	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective >= 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,619	1,610	1,918.07	(308.07)
Williamsburg	33	10	17.49	(7.49)

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

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

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Williamsburg DSS. The CAPSS report and the onsite reviewers consider related, but different information to rate this item. 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. In Williamsburg DSS 30% (10/33) of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months had a TPR petition filed.

On-site reviewers rated this item based on two criteria: 1) is the permanency goal appropriately matched to the child’s need? and 2) Is the agency acting to cause the goal to be achieved timely? Eight of the cases reviewed onsite were rated “Strengths” for this item. In one case, this item was rated as “needing improvement” because it had been a treatment case for two years with minimal goal achievement by the mother. According to

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case dictation, all of the goals had not been accomplished. The court rejected the plan of TPR/Adoption in 11/04. Adoptions rejected the case in 5/04 because the agency's plan was not TPR/Adoption. In another case where the plan was return home, the psychological evaluation assessed the mother's IQ at 56 with poor prognosis for parenting. It was the professional's opinion that no rehabilitative efforts would correct the acute and chronic deficits of the parent.

Stakeholders rated the agency as not effective in determining the appropriate permanency goals for children in a timely manner when they enter foster care. One stakeholder commented that DSS is not aggressively working with children who have a plan of adoption. It is this respondent's opinion that there are children with identified parents who DSS have not been able to contact and do not produce any documentation as to the continued search. Therefore when the case goes to court, the judge continues the case for the fifth or sixth time. Another stakeholder reported that several children have a plan of extended foster care. It is that individual's opinion that the plan should be reviewed to determine if the appropriate plan is in place. This stakeholder also stated that when this subject is discussed with DSS staff they feel that the stakeholder is asking questions not related to the child. Therefore, when the file is reviewed again, the plan has not changed.

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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 03/01/04–02/28/05	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,016	1,652	1,536.19	115.81
Williamsburg	16	13	12.19	0.81

* This is a federally established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	43	4	57	3	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” Williamsburg DSS. To meet this federally establish criteria at least 76.20% of the children returned to their parents from foster care must be returned within 12 months of their removal from home. In Williamsburg County 13/16 (81%) of the children returned home within a year of removal.

On-site reviewers considered qualitative issues. Therefore, the results of the on-site review were used in rating this objective. Reviewers determined if Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement with Relatives, was the appropriate plan and if good progress was being made toward accomplishing that plan within 12 months of entering care. Three of the applicable 7 cases were rated “Strengths”. Reviewers determined that the plans were not appropriate in two of the cases. It is not likely the parent will be able to care for the child in one case. In the other case the child had weekend visits in a foster home instead of the biological parent’s home. Documentation did not reveal what deficits the biological parent had that prevented the child from going home on weekend visits or returning home at the completion of the Georgetown Institute.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 9 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
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	366	75	117.12	(42.12)
Williamsburg	1	0	0.32	(0.32)

Note: This is a federally established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 9: Adoption.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	67	1	33	7	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Williamsburg County. According to the outcome report one adoption was completed during the period under review. The county met the standard of 32%. However, on-site reviewers rated one of the three applicable cases as “Needing Improvement”. The child has been in care 18 months. The agency’s plan is to pursue TPR and Adoption; however no home has been identified.

Stakeholders interviewed stated that DSS is not effective in achieving timely (within 24 months or less) adoptions when that is the appropriate for the child. One stakeholder stated that DSS is not aggressively working with children who have a plan of adoption. There are children with identified parent that DSS has not been able to contact and the agency does not produce any documentation as to continued searches; therefore when the case goes to court the judge continues the case for the fifth or sixth time.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 10 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.6: Permanency Goal of “Other Planned 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 03/01/04 – 02/28/05	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	8,121	1,139	6,902.85	79.15
Williamsburg	66	8	56.10	1.90

* This is a DSS established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Williamsburg DSS. The standard for this objective is that no more than 15% of the children in foster care should have this plan. Approximately 12% of the children in Williamsburg DSS custody have this plan.

Stakeholders responded that DSS is very effective in establishing planned permanent living arrangements for children in foster care who do not have the goal of reunification, adoption, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.

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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:

- Item 11: Proximity of placement
- Item 12: Placement with siblings.
- Item 13: Visiting w/ parents & siblings
- Item 14: Preserving connections
- Item 15: Relative placement
- Item 16: Relationship of child w/ parents

Partially Achieved

- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**

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 03/01/04 – 02/28/05	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	6,051	3,966	65.54	4,235.70	(269.70)
Williamsburg	66	54	81.82	46.20	7.80

* This is a DSS established objective.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	100	0	0	1	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Williamsburg DSS. To meet this objective 70%, or more, of the children in care must be placed in Williamsburg County. The outcome report indicates that 82% (54/66) of the children in care are placed in the county. Onsite reviewers rated this item by different criteria. If a child was placed in an adjacent county, but close to his/her home this item was rated “strength”. If a child was placed out of county to receive medical or behavioral treatment this item was rated “strength”. Onsite reviewers rated all applicable cases “strength”. In addition, stakeholders stated that DSS is very effective in placing children close to their birth parents or their own communities or counties.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	75	1	25	6	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. Three of the applicable cases were rated as “strengths”. In the case rated as “Needing Improvement” there are four siblings placed in two different foster homes. These children are very young which could account for them not being placed together. In the other applicable cases reviewed, it appears as though the agency took necessary steps to place siblings together. It was apparent that the agency attempted to place siblings together when resources and circumstances made that possible.

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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	2	22	7	78	1	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. Only 2 of the 9 applicable cases were rated as strengths. In the majority of cases visits were arranged with other siblings and children’s mothers. However there was little documentation of visits with absent fathers. In some instances addresses were available on absent fathers through Child Support Enforcement documents on file. Efforts to locate absent fathers through diligent search were not documented in the case records.

Stakeholders interviewed stated that DSS is not effective in planning and facilitating visitation of children in foster care with their parents and siblings placed separately. A stakeholder stated that he/she has had to call the DSS office and ask them to schedule a visit with his/her parent. Another stakeholder stated that he/she has had to remind the worker about some visits.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	44	5	56	1	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. This item addresses the agency’s ability to preserve a child in foster care’s connection to his/her community, family, and faith. In The reviewers determined that efforts to preserve the foster child’s connections were not consistently documented. In one case the transportation was provided for the mother to visit with the child in foster care, however the agency did not document any effort to maintain/preserve the relationship between the child and his sibling that remained in the home. One child lived with paternal aunts prior to coming in foster care. There was no documentation of efforts to preserve the connections with these paternal relatives. One area needing attention is the effort made to preserve the connections between children in foster care and the family of their non-custodial (usually the father) parent.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	10	100	0	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in identifying and assessing the relatives of children in foster care as possible caregivers. Reviewers determined that all of the 10 cases reviewed needed improvement in this area. A maternal grandmother was identified as a possible placement for one child. Despite being court ordered to evaluate this home on 2/2/04 the agency had not determined the suitability for placement at the time of the on-site review. The agency failed to assess paternal relatives for placement. In one case the child’s father recommended a relative, however there was no documentation of follow-up by the agency. The agency did not document efforts to locate relative placements in the majority of the cases reviewed.

<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	25	6	75	2	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in promoting or maintaining a strong emotionally supportive relationship between children in care and their parents. Case documentation indicates that efforts to strengthen the relationship between children and their fathers were not documented. Reviewers could not determine whether the fathers no longer involved or could not be located. In one case where the father was involved, visits were sporadic. One child’s psychological evaluation revealed that there was a lack of bonding with the adoptive mother.

Stakeholders stated that DSS is not effective in promoting or helping to maintain the parent/child relationship for children in foster care. One stated that DSS has several children placed out of county. Some of the parents are out of state and this has caused a strain on the children when trying to arrange visitation.

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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	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	13	65	7	35	0	0

Explanation

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? This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Williamsburg DSS.

In 9 of the 10 applicable foster care cases reviewed, it was determined that Williamsburg DSS was thorough in assessing the needs of the children, parents and foster parents. The agency did not do as well in assessing the needs and providing services to treatment families. Some volatile issues such as domestic violence and drug use were not assessed. In one case the court information sheet indicated that the family members would be referred for psychological evaluations. There was no documentation of follow-up on that case.

A stakeholder commented that DSS is not effective in assessing the needs of children, parents, and foster parents and providing needed services to children in foster care. This

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individual stated that he/she understands that there have been budget cuts, but they still have to contact DSS to remind them of medical appointments, visitation issues, etc. This individual stated that a response is received once DSS is contacted, however he/she has to make the first contact.

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	1	11	8	89	1	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	6	32	13	68	1	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. Only 32% of the cases involved parents and age-appropriate children in the case planning process. Documentation that plans were developed with parents was missing in many of the files. In one case, the worker documented that the client was informed that her plan was completed and the worker wanted to discuss the plan with her. There appears to be a pattern of the worker developing the plan and then submitting to the parent (child when applicable) for signature. There were no discussions of the family/parent’s strengths or weaknesses or active participation in the development of the plan.

Stakeholders rate DSS as not effective in involving parents and children in the case planning process. Another stakeholder stated that he/she has not talked with anyone about his/her plan. Yet another stakeholder stated that cases have been continued because parties who are supposed to be involved in the planning come to court and acknowledge that they have not seen the plan.

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	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	16	80	4	40	0	0

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Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This rating is based on two questions: 1) is Williamsburg DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) do the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan?

In the cases that were rated as “strengths” reviewers determined that the workers visited children at least monthly during the period under review. The workers discussed case plan goals as applicable and assessed the well being of the children. In cases rated as “Area Needing Improvement” visits did not occur each month during the period under review.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	13	7	87	2	0
Treatment	2	20	8	80	0	0
Total Cases	3	17	15	83	2	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Williamsburg DSS. The overall rating in this area is very low for treatment and foster care. Both parents were not seen on a monthly basis during the period under review even when they lived together. Workers did not document attempts to schedule visits with absent parents or attempts to locate absent parents.

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Section Six**

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding: Not Achieved

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 21: Educational needs of child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	100	0	0	2	0
Treatment	4	44	5	56	1	0
Total Cases	12	71	5	29	3	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This item asks two questions: 1) Did DSS assess the educational needs of the children under their supervision, and 2) Were identified educational needs addressed? With 100% of the applicable foster care cases rated “Strength” the educational needs of children in foster care are being appropriately assessed and attended to. However, based on the on-site review only 44% of the educational needs of children in treatment cases are being met. In the cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” the educational needs of the children in those homes were not consistently addressed. In some cases the worker did not obtain school information on all children in the home. In some cases the worker visited the child at school but never spoke with a teacher or guidance counselor to obtain an assessment on the child. School records were missing in many of the files.

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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	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	13	65	7	35	0	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. The physical health needs of 9 of the 10 foster care children reviewed (90%) were properly attended to. Case records contained immunization records, health assessments, dental and other health information. Referrals and follow-up occurred as needed. The physical health needs of children in treatment cases were not met. The cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” for physical health received that rating because the case records contained no indication that the physical health needs of the children had been assessed. In one treatment case three of the older children had seen a doctor; however there were no medical records on the two younger children. One of the children was out of medication for ADHD for several weeks

Stakeholders commented that DSS is not effective in identifying and addressing the physical health and medical needs, including dental needs, of children receiving in home and foster care services. One stakeholder commented that DSS has to be reminded about medical and dental appointments. Another stakeholder stated that service provider reports are routinely missing from files.

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<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	100	0	0	3	0
Treatment	3	33	6	67	1	0
Total Cases	10	63	6	37	4	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. Documentation in the case records indicated that 100% of the children in applicable foster care cases were assessed for Mental Health services and received counseling as needed. Children in 33% of the applicable treatment cases reviewed had their mental health needs met. Mental health records were not filed in treatment cases. Some progress reports were almost a year old. In several of the files there was not documentation of mental health assessments on school age children. In one treatment case the children was referred for school-based counseling. The mother would not let them participate. There is no documentation of the worker addressing this issue with the parent.

Stakeholders stated that DSS is not effective in identifying and addressing the emotional and mental health needs of children receiving in home and foster care services. One stakeholder said they are making referrals and requesting mental health evaluations but not getting them. Another stakeholder commented that client referrals are made by telephone and DSS will follow-up in writing, but due to a staffing problem it takes a little longer to get reports to DSS.

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Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

At the time of the onsite review there were 22 foster homes licensed by DSS in Williamsburg County. . The licensing records are organized and county uses the Foster Child Acceptance Profile. The files contain directions to the foster home that are very useful for workers in placing children. Ten of those licensing records were reviewed. Of the 10 records reviewed, 6 had inconsistent information in CAPSS as compared to the licensing file.

1. In one case, children placed in a licensed relative's home were removed due to physical abuse. This home needs to be closed. No evidence that foster parents received required training to have their licenses renewed.
2. The Quarterly Home Visit guide needs to be completely filled out. The caseworker is not addressing mandated questions such as: childcare arrangements, interactions between foster child and foster family.
3. Training hours need to be recorded.
4. Foster fathers are not receiving the mandated 28 hours of training. This seems to be problematic.
5. All of the licensing files, with the exception of one, need recorded documentation that Central Registry checks have been completed. Sexual Offender Registry is being checked, however some of the copies in the files do not have dates to indicate when this task was completed.
6. Fire inspections must be completed annually. A copy of the records needs to be in every file.
7. The license files do not show that supervisory review is being completed prior to license approval or changes.
8. The Quarterly Home Visit Guide is a good instrument, however none of the licensing files indicate what issues the caseworker was discussing with the foster family at the time of the visit. Nor is there indication of when a foster child was removed from the foster family home.

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Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

	Yes	No
Investigation Initiated Timely?	5	0
Assessment Adequate?	5	0
Case Decision Appropriate?	5	0

Investigated cases of abuse or neglect are unfounded when the evidence indicates that abuse or neglect more likely did not occur, and when there is insufficient evidence to substantiate the abuse or neglect. The decision to unfound an investigation is only as good as the quality of the assessment/investigation. All of the five cases reviewed received adequate assessments that supported the decision to unfound the case.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

Explanation

Not all calls made to DSS meet the legal definition of child abuse or neglect. Each DSS office must have an intake process that accurately determines which calls should be accepted for investigation and which should be screened out. Ten screened out intakes were reviewed.

Total screened-out intakes reviewed	10
Total screened out appropriately	8
Documented Referrals	2
Documented Collateral Contacts	0

Screened out intakes are evaluated solely on the information contained in the agency database CAPSS. Eight of the 10 screened-out intakes reviewed were deemed appropriate. The reviewer stated that the appropriateness of the screen-out decision could not be determined in two cases. In one case the intake decision is not clear as to the reason the report was screened out. In the other case the family has a history of intakes and allegations of sexual abuse involving the same perpetrator and victim. According to the dictation, the alleged perpetrator has access to the child.

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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%)	0	4
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	5 (100%)	0	15				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	15 (94%)	1 (6%)	4				
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				15 (79%)	4 (21%)	0	1
Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	11 (79%)	3 (21%)	6				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren)	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	1				
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				5 (50%)	5 (50%)	0	0
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	3 (100%)	0	7				
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	0				
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0				
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	3 (43%)	4 (57%)	3				
Item 9: Adoption	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	7				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	1 (100%)	0	9				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				1 (10%)	9 (90%)	0	0
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	9 (100%)	0	1				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	6				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	1				
Item 14: Preserving connections	0 (0%)	10 (100%)	0				
Item 15: Relative placement	0 (0)	10 (100%)	1				
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	2				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				6 (30%)	12 (60%)	2 (10%)	0
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	0				
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	6 (32%)	13 (68%)	1				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	16 (80%)	4 (20%)	0				
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	3 (17%)	15 (83%)	2				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				12 (71%)	1 (6%)	4 (23%)	2
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	11 (69%)	5 (31%)	4				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				12 (60%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	0
Item 22: Physical health of the child	13 (69%)	7 (35%)	0				
Item 23: Mental health of the child	10 (63%)	6 (37%)	4				

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