

**Abbeville County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
May 2005**

During the week of May 16-20, 2005 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Abbeville County. A sample of open and closed foster care and treatment cases was reviewed. Also reviewed were screened-out intakes, foster home licensing records, and unfounded investigations. Stakeholders interviewed for this review included foster parents, Abbeville DSS supervisor, representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Guardian Ad Litem, law enforcement, legal representatives, foster children, and biological parents.

Period included in Case Record Review: November 1, 2004 to April 30, 2005

Period included in Outcome Measures: May 1, 2004 to April 30, 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 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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Section One

Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding

Partially Achieved

-Safety Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations.

Finding: Area Needing Improvement

-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: 05/01/04 to 04/30/05				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective $\geq 99.99\%*$	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,372	15,356	16,370.36	(1,014.36)
Abbeville	48	47	48.0	(1.00)

* 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	4	100	0	0	6	0
Treatment	0	0	0	0	10	0
Total Cases	4	100	0	0	16	0

Explanation of Item 1

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Abbeville DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. The outcome report indicates that for the 12-month period under review Abbeville initiated 98% (47/48) of the investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24-hours. The objective for this item is 99.99%. Based on CAPSS the county missed the established objective by a very narrow percentage. The on-site review indicates that all of the applicable cases met the objective. However, the outcome report accounts for all of the cases during a 12-month period whereas the on-site review focused only on the 6-month period under review.

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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 November 1, 2003 and October 31, 2004

	Number of Child Victims	Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Rept	Number of Children Objective $\geq 93.90\%$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	9,474	77	8,896.09	500.91
Abbeville	33	0	30.99	2.01

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	9	100	0	0	1	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	19	100	0	0	1	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is a “Strength” for Abbeville DSS. According to CAPSS data none of the 33 cases indicated for abuse or neglect during the period under review were victims in a previously founded report. None of the applicable cases reviewed on-site involved repeat maltreatment. Abbeville DSS met the federally established objective for this item.

Stakeholders interviewed stated DSS is very effective in preventing the recurrence of maltreatment. The relationship between DSS staff and clients is one that encourages the individuals to seek assistance to prevent a crisis.

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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: Strength

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

Finding: Area Needing Improvement

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	5	100	0	0	5	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	15	100	0	0	5	0

Item 3

Item 3 is a “Strength” for Abbeville DSS. This item assesses the appropriateness of the agency’s interventions to prevent the removal of children from their family. Reviewers rated all of the applicable cases “Strength” for this item. In all of the cases, services to protect children in the home were appropriately rendered.

Stakeholders rated Abbeville as being very effective in providing services, when appropriate, to prevent removing children from their homes. One stakeholder commented that even with budget cuts, DSS has been able to provide services for the children and assist with whatever problems that may arise.

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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	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	15	79	4	21	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 11/01/03 to 10/31/04	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective >= 91.50%*	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	13,935	1,163	12,750.53	21.48
Abbeville	44	1	40.26	2.74

*This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation of “Risk of Harm” measure

This item is an “Area Needing Improvement”. The standard for the outcome report in CAPSS is that no more than 8.5% of alleged child victims have another report within six months of the initial report. According to CAPSS, Abbeville DSS met the objective for this item. It must be understood that “subsequent reports of abuse” is a proxy measure for “risk of harm” since additional unsubstantiated reports of abuse do not always mean that a child remains at risk.

On-site reviewers are able to assess what CAPSS cannot. On-site reviewers determine how effective the county DSS office is at managing the risks of harm that necessitate continued involvement by DSS. By these criteria, risk of harm was reduced in 89% of the foster care cases. However the risk was reduced in only 70% of the treatment cases. In two treatment cases parents were not assessed for services. Although the children were placed with a relative in one of the treatment cases, the biological mother was in and out of the home and did not follow through with recommended drug treatment.

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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

Substantially Achieved

- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: 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	4	100	0	0	6	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 05/01/04 to 04/30/05	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	3,255	243	2,975.07	36.93
Abbeville	33	5	30.16	(2.16)

* This is a federally established objective.

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Explanation

Foster Care Re-entries is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Abbeville DSS.

According to CAPSS, 87% (5/33) of the children who entered care in Abbeville County during the period under review had been returned home in the prior 12 months. This percentage is below the federally established objective of 91.40%.

Although on-site reviewers determined none of the four applicable foster care cases was a re-entry, the sample size is smaller than what is reported in CAPSS. The CAPSS data captures the total foster care population for a 12-month period of time. The cases rated not applicable were opened prior to the period under review.

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 6 Findings

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80	2	20	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	3,790	3,106	3,285.93	(179.93)
Abbeville	41	38	35.55	2.45

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

Stability of foster care placement is a “Strength”. The outcome report shows 38 of the 41 children (93%) in care less than 12 months had no more than two foster care placements. This surpassed the standard of 86.70%.

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On-site reviewers not only counted the number of moves children in foster care experienced, but also looked at the reasons for those moves. Reviewers determined two children had three placements within 12 months of the end of the period under review. One of these placements was to a therapeutic setting.

Stakeholders commented DSS is very effective in providing placement stability for children in foster care (minimizing placement changes for children). One foster child stated he/she has been in the same placement for one year.

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 7 Findings

Strategic Outcome Report Findings				
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 05/04 –04/05	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective >= 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,541	1,657	1,876.73	(219.73)
Abbeville	13	3	6.89	(3.89)

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

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

Item 7 is a “Strength”. 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 Abbeville DSS, 23% (3/13) of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months had a TPR petition filed. Consequently, the objective for this item was not met in CAPSS.

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? All of the cases were rated “Strength” for this item. Therefore, an overall rating of “strength” is being assigned based on the results of the on-site review.

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According to Abbeville DSS staff the agency uses concurrent planning which has been effective in helping to obtain permanency. Stakeholders reported DSS is very effective in determining the appropriate permanency goals for children on a timely basis when they enter foster care. Another stakeholder indicated their agency has a very good working relationship with DSS. DSS packets are well prepared and they consistently have few citations during the hearings.

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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 05/01/04–04/30/05	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,075	1,712	1,581.15	130.85
Abbeville	27	22	20.57	1.43

* 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	7	88	1	12	2	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Abbeville 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 Abbeville County 81% (22/27) of the children returned home within a year of removal. The agency average is that 82% of the children entering foster care return home within one year. During the on-site review seven of the eight applicable cases were rated as “strength”. In reference to the case rated “Area Needing Improvement”, the plan is to place the child with a grandmother upon discharge from MTS. There was no documentation regarding an evaluation of the relative’s home or a treatment plan that included the relative.

DSS staff stated the engagement of the family, to include regular visitation and counseling, helps promote timely reunification. The timeliness of court hearings can be a barrier to timely reunification.

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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	364	73	116.48	(43.48)
Abbeville	0	0	0	0

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	2	100	0	0	8	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength for Abbeville DSS”. According to the outcome report Abbeville did not have any finalized adoptions within the past 12 months.

Only two of the cases reviewed on-site had a plan of adoption. The plans were appropriate and the necessary procedures were in place to accomplish the goal of adoption within the allowable time frame.

One stakeholder commented that obtaining timely TPR hearings is a legal barrier to achieving timely adoptions. The Area Adoption office helps to move the process through the system. Another stakeholder stated although this is one of the few citations DSS receives, it is truly a court related concern and cannot be attributed to DSS.

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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 05/01/04 – 04/30/05	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	8.129	1,089	6,963.20	144.80
Abbeville	53	0	45.05	7.95

* 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	0	0	0	0	10	0

Explanation

Item 10 is a “Strength” for Abbeville 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 as well as the on-site review show that none of the children in Abbeville DSS custody have this plan.

One stakeholder responded the agency does not use this plan as a permanency goal. Other stakeholders rated DSS as being very effective in establishing 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:

Not Achieved

- 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

- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: 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 05/01/04 – 04/30/05	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	6,114	4,021	65.77	4,279.80	(258.80)
Abbeville	53	10	18.87	37.10	(27.10)

* This is a DSS established objective.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	89	1	11	1	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Abbeville DSS. To meet this objective 70%, or more, of the children in care must be placed in Abbeville County. The outcome report indicates 19% (10/53) of the children in care are placed within the county.

The results of the on-site review shows Abbeville did not meet the standard of 90%. Only 89% of the children were placed within the county. On-site reviewers considered those factors that were not captured in CAPSS. If a child was placed out of county because of a need for therapeutic services the item was rated “Strength”. If maintaining a relationship with parents/relatives was not an issue the item received a rating of “Not Applicable”. In addition, Abbeville frequently uses the McCormick Children’s Home and Bowers Rogers Shelter to place children upon initial entry into foster care.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	67	1	33	7	0

Explanation

Placement with siblings is an “Area Needing Improvement”. Siblings in two of the applicable cases were placed together. Children in one sibling group were not placed together due to a lack of placement resources.

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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	1	13	7	87	2	0

Explanation

Item 13 is an “Area Needing Improvement”. Reviewers determined visits with parents and siblings in foster care occurred on a regular basis in only one of the eight applicable cases. Documentation of visitation with parents and siblings was missing in all of the cases rated “area needing improvement”. In two cases only one visit was documented during the period under review. Reviewers could not locate any documentation of visits in the other five cases

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	78	2	22	1	0

Explanation

This item 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. All but two of the applicable cases reviewed were rated “Strength” for this item. In one case a newborn was placed into foster care due to the mother’s drug addiction. The mother is incarcerated and case dictation indicates she is interested in being reunited with the infant. However, the agency is not working with the mother or pursuing this as a permanency goal for the infant. The mother has relatives in Abbeville County. There is no documentation of contact with maternal relatives to assess the possibility of placement. In the other case the plan is to place a child with her paternal grandparents, with whom her biological father resides. Although a favorable home study was completed there is no documentation of visitation with the father or paternal grandparents.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	50	5	50	0	0

Explanation

Relative placement 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. In five of the cases the agency explored placements with other relatives, including grandmothers and an aunt. However, in the five cases rated as “Needing Improvement” there was no supporting documentation to indicate that maternal or paternal relatives had been assessed for placement.

Site Visit Findings 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”. Only two of the eight applicable cases had sufficient documentation to indicate the relationship of children with their parents. In one of the inapplicable cases, the parents were deceased and in the other there was no relationship to maintain. In the cases rated “area needing improvement” the documentation was not sufficient to determine the parent/child relationship. Attending counseling sessions with the child was one treatment plan objective in a case, however there was no indication the mother was involved in the sessions. In several of the cases visits with parents were not documented. Therefore, relationship could not be evaluated.

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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:

- Item 17: Needs & services
- Item 18: Involvement in case planning
- Item 19: Worker visits with child
- Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)

Not Achieved

- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: 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	4	40	6	60	0	0
Treatment	3	30	7	70	0	0
Total Cases	7	35	13	65	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 Abbeville DSS. Reviewers determined needs were properly assessed in only 35% of the foster care and treatment cases. In the few cases where assessments were completed, services were not put in place or there was no appropriate follow-up by the case manager to determine the effectiveness of the interventions. In one case the foster parents reported a need for assistance with meeting the child's needs. The documentation did not indicate any type of follow-up. A child in another case had identified medical and mental health needs (ADHD, depression, language difficulty), however there was no documentation that services were implemented. In a treatment case the children were placed with the maternal great-grandmother. The dictation indicated she stated an inability to care for the children--her needs were not addressed. It appeared as though fathers' needs were not being adequately assessed, even when the fathers were in the home or involved with the family.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> 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

Child and family involvement in case planning is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for **Abbeville County**. Documentation in the case files shows the agency did not regularly involve the child and family in case planning. Some of the plans were not comprehensive enough to address the issues that caused the agency to become involved with the family. Fathers were not involved in the treatment planning.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> 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	20	0	0

Explanation

Item 19 is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This rating is based on two questions: 1) is Abbeville DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) do the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? The county met the requirement in foster care. The case managers were visiting the children and focusing on overall well-being issues. Only 70% of the children in treatment cases received the mandatory monthly face-to-face visits. Based upon the available documentation, it appeared as though the case manager never interviewed the child in one treatment case.

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<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	3	38	5	62	2	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	9	50	9	50	2	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Abbeville DSS. Two of the cases were not applicable due to Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) and the death of parents. The agency consistently failed to document visits with parents. Although one father had objectives listed on the treatment plan there are no documented visits with him. This is another area where fathers were not involved. The documentation indicated an incarcerated mother wrote letters to the case manager asking for visitation with the infant. However, it appears as though the requested visits never occurred. In addition, there was no documentation to indicate visits were not in the best interests of the child.

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Section Six

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

Summary of Findings

Overall Finding

Partially 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	5	71	2	29	3	0
Total Cases	13	87	2	13	5	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Abbeville DSS. 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? The standard was met in foster care. The case records contained grade reports from the school. The case managers’ dictation indicated contact with school officials and updates on school progress. Although many of the visits with the child occurred at school, in one of the treatment cases the case manager did not make contact with school officials to obtain documentation of the child’s educational needs. In another treatment case a kindergarten child had many unsatisfactory performance ratings and attention problems in the classroom. There was no follow-up to conduct a needs assessment.

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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	7	78	2	22	1	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	13	68	6	32	1	0

Explanation

Item 22 is an “Area Needing Improvement”. Medical information was not filed in the case records. In many of the records there was no documentation of the initial health screenings or ongoing health assessments. The initial placement for many of the children in this county is one of the children’s shelters. Although initial health screenings are routine at the shelters, copies of medical assessments were not on file.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	86	1	14	3	0
Treatment	3	75	1	25	6	0
Total Cases	9	82	2	18	9	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. The cases rated “Strength” contained adequate documentation to support the child’s mental health needs were being addressed. The dictation reflected contact with the mental health counselor or therapist. This type of documentation was found in only 82% of the cases reviewed. Although a mental health worker is stationed at DSS, documentation of services was missing from two of the cases. A psychological was completed on one child with recommendations for treatment of ADHD counseling, severe depression and remedial work for language processing disorder. There was no documentation of any of these services being provided. In one sexual abuse treatment case there was no mental health evaluation or reports from the sexual trauma center.

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Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

Ten of the seventeen open foster home records were reviewed. The review of these records revealed they are licensed with the correct age range, number and sex of the children and that CAPSS was current. There were no Child Protective Services (CPS) reports on any of the families. The homes appeared to be of good quality with no concerns regarding parenting styles or practices. Several of the foster mothers are homemakers, which allows more time for the children. There was diversity within the foster home population with good representation of both African American and Caucasian homes. Abbeville has an active foster parent association.

FINDINGS:

1. More training opportunities are needed to keep up with the new training hours requirements.
2. The Sexual Offender registry is not documented in most files. This needs to be checked for each person in the foster family home 12 years old and older. All extended relatives need safety checks: sex offender, Central Registry, SLED, and FBI. SLED and FBI are also needed on all foster children turning 18 years of age.
3. Quarterly visits need to have more substance. The case manager should add comments obtained from the foster child about the quality of the home.
4. Licensing dates need to be kept consistent. Gaps need to be prevented during periods when the home is unlicensed.
5. The IV-E unit needs to be contacted if any of the eligibility information cannot be obtained. The child may need to be removed from IV-E funding.
6. Fire inspections need to be completed in the “off” year.
7. Waivers should be requested for additional time to add requirements.

Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

	Yes	No
Investigation Initiated Timely?	4	1
Assessment Adequate?	0	5
Case Decision Appropriate?	2	3

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”

Analysis: The initial contact in one case occurred over 19 hours after intake. The risk level assigned was medium and contact should have been made within 2-12 hours. In three of the cases reviewers could not determine whether the assessments were adequate from the information available in the record. In one case there was no face-to-face contact with the children. In several other cases, professional collaterals were not contacted.

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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. Five screened out intakes were reviewed. Screened out intakes are evaluated solely on the information contained in the agency database CAPSS

	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
Screen-Out Decision Appropriate?	3	0	2
	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	3	1	1
Appropriate Referrals Made?	1	2	2

Analysis

This is an **“Area Needing Improvement”**. The lack of documentation in these cases caused difficulty in adequately assessing the county’s capacity to screen out CPS referrals. Only one of the five cases contained enough information to complete the review instrument. The reviewer determined a referral had been received and accepted on the same family approximately one year ago with an allegation of physical abuse due to excessive corporal punishment by the father. The recent allegation was physical abuse by the babysitter, who is also a relative. This relative was keeping the child while the parent was out-of-town. It appeared this person was acting in “Loco Parentis” and the report may have been screened-out in error. There was no dictation to indicate what follow-up was made or collaterals contacted.

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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.				19 (100%)	0	0	1
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	4 (100%)	0	16				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	19 (100%)	0	1				
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	15 (100%)	0	5				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren)	15 (79%)	4 (21%)	1				
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				10 (100%)	0	0	0
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	4 (100%)	0	6				
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0				
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	10(100%)	0	0				
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	7 (88%)	1 (12%)	2				
Item 9: Adoption	2 (100%)	0	8				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	0	0	10				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)	0
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	8 (89%)	1 (11%)	1				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	7				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	1 (13%)	7 (87%)	2				
Item 14: Preserving connections	7 (78%)	2 (22%)	1				
Item 15: Relative placement	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	0				
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%)	13 (65%)	1 (5%)	0
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	7 (35%)	13 (65%)	0				
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	0				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	16 (80%)	4 (20%)	0				
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	9 (50%)	9 (50%)	2				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				13 (87%)	0	2 (13%)	5
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	5				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				14 (70%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	0
Item 22: Physical health of the child	13 (68%)	6 (32%)	1				
Item 23: Mental health of the child	9 (82%)	2 (18%)	9				