

Clarendon County DSS Child Welfare Services Review November 2005

During the week of November 14-18, 2005 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Clarendon 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, Clarendon DSS supervisors, and representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, and Guardian Ad Litem.

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

Period included in Outcome Measures: October 1, 2005 to Sept 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.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

Section One

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

Summary of Findings

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: 11/1/04 to 10/31/05				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective >= 99.99%*	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,328	15,784	16,326.37	(542.37)
Clarendon	147	147	146.99	0.01

* 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	3	100	0	0	7	0
Treatment	3	100	0	0	7	0
Total Cases	6	100	0	0	14	0

Explanation of Item 1

This is a “Strength” for Clarendon DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. All 147 investigations conducted by Clarendon DSS over the past 12 months initiated according to state law and agency policy.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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 Reports Between May 1, 2004 and April 30, 2005

	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	9,787	92	9,189.99	505.01
Clarendon	101	1	94.84	5.16

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	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	19	95	1	5	0	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is a “Strength” for Clarendon DSS. According to CAPSS data 1 of the 101 cases indicated for abuse or neglect during the period under review was a victim in a previously founded report within the past 12 months. Stakeholders explain that Clarendon DSS is good at “triaging with the other agencies” via multi-agency staffings. This allows the agency to quickly connect needy families with available services. Those services can continue after DSS closes its case.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

Section Two

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

Summary of Findings **Overall Finding: Substantially Achieved**
 -Safety Item 3: Services to prevent removal. **Finding: Strength**
 -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	100	0	0	2	0
Total Cases	11	92	1	8	8	0

Item 3

This is a “Strength” for Clarendon DSS. Drug abuse is a contributing factor for most of the clients served by Clarendon DSS. The agency frequently refers clients to the Intensive Family Services program. DAODAS is often able to treat clients without the need to remove the children from the home.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	7	100	0	0	3	0
Total Cases	16	94	1	6	3	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 $\geq 91.50\%^*$	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	13,612	1,177	12,454.98	(19.98)
Clarendon	117	8	107.06	1.94

* This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation of “Risk of Harm” measure

This is a “Strength” for Clarendon DSS. The standard for the outcome report in CAPSS is that no more than 8.5% of alleged child victims have another report within 6 months of the initial report. According to CAPSS 8 of the 117 (6.8%) child victims were reported again to DSS within 6 months of an unfounded determination. It must be understood that “Subsequent reports of abuse” is a proxy measure for “Risk of harm” because additional, unsubstantiated reports of abuse do not conclusively mean that risk has or has not been reduced.

Onsite reviewers are able to assess what CAPSS cannot. Onsite reviewers determine how effective the county DSS office is at managing the risks of harm that necessitate continued involvement by DSS. By this criterion, only 1 of the applicable 17 cases reviewed was rated “Area Needing Improvement”.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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: Area Needing Improvement**
- 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	75	1	25	6	0

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.1: **Foster Care Re-entries** – Of all children who entered care during the year under review, the percent that re-entered foster care Within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

	Number Children Entering Care 11/01/04 to 10/30/05	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Fos Care Episode	Number of Children Objective $\geq 91.40\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,941	215	2,688.07	37.93
Clarendon	50	15	45.70	10.70

* This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

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

According to CAPSS, 15 of the 50 children (30%) who entered foster care in Clarendon County during the period under review had been returned home in the prior 12 months. Consequently, Clarendon DSS did not meet the federal standard for foster care re-entries. Stakeholders explain that many of the children re-entering foster care were placed with relatives. The agency often moved children out of foster care by placing them with relatives. Those relatives often did not receive the assistance they needed (financial, mental health, medical, legal, etc.) to maintain those children in their homes.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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	7	70	3	30	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	3,429	2,755	2,97.943	(217.94)
Clarendon	68	55	58.96	(3.96)

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

Stability of foster care placement is an “Area Needing Improvement”. The outcome report shows that 55 of the 68 children (81%) in care less than 12 months had no more than 2 foster care placements. This falls short of the standard of 86.7%. In the sample of 10 foster care cases reviewed onsite, three involved a child who had moved more than twice within the past 12 months. All three were teenager boys with aggressive to violent behaviors. Two of the three boys were managed by the Managed Treatment Services (MTS) division. The child who was managed by the county disrupted 7 placements within a six-month period.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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 11/04 –10/05	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective ≥ 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,566	1,625	1,889.98	(264.98)
Clarendon	34	14	18.02	(4.02)

* 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	7	70	3	30	0	0

Explanation of Item 7

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Clarendon DSS. To meet the criteria established in the CAPSS report 53.00% or more of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months must have a TPR petition filed. For Clarendon DSS the percentage is 41.2 (14/34). If DSS does not pursue TPR for a child in foster care for 15 of the past 22 months, there should be compelling reason for not doing so.

Onsite reviewers rated this item based on two criteria: 1) Was the permanency goal appropriately matched to the child’s need? and 2) Was the agency acting to cause the goal to be achieved timely? Reviewers noted three cases with deficiencies in the case planning process. One case record did not contain a planning document. The other two cases had unrealistic plans (“Return Home”). It is likely that the agency was pursuing an alternate or concurrent plan in those two cases. However, concurrent plans were not documented.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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 11/01/04–10/30/05	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	1,905	1,588	1,451.61	136.39
Clarendon	35	23	26.67	(3.67)

* 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	2	50	2	50	6	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Clarendon 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 Clarendon County 66% of the children returned home within a year of removal. One factor affecting Clarendon DSS is the lack of consistent legal representation. At the time of the onsite review, the agency was without legal counsel. An agency administrator described the difficulty in attracting and retaining competent legal counsel.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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	363	53	116.16	(63.16)
Clarendon	1	1	0.32	0.68

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	0	0	2	100	8	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. To meet this federally established objective 32% of the adoptions in a county must be completed within 24 months of the children entering care. The outcome report shows that 1 of the 2 adoptions (20%) completed during the 12-month period under review were completed within 24 months of the children entering care. Adoptive families had been identified for both of the cases reviewed that were being managed by the Adoptions unit. Both children had been in care more than 24 months and TPR’s completed. The delay appeared to be in the adoptive parents’ failure to petition the court to adopt the children.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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 11/01/04 – 10/31/05	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	7,817	1,045	6,644.45	127.55
Clarendon	93	12	79.05	1.95

* 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	3	75	1	25	6	0

Explanation-*

This is a “Strength” for Clarendon DSS. The standard for this objective is that no more than 15% of the children in foster care should have this plan (APPLA – Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement). Approximately 13% of the children in Clarendon DSS custody have this plan. Of the four cases evaluated by onsite, three were receiving appropriate independent living services.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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: Strength**
- 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 11/01/04 – 10/31/05	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	5,768	3,729	64.65	4,037.60	(308.60)
Clarendon	95	68	71.58	66.50	1.50

* This is a DSS established objective.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	100	0	0	3	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Clarendon DSS. To meet this objective 70%, or more, of the children in care must be placed in Clarendon County. The outcome report indicates that 72% (68/95) of the children in care were placed in the county. Stakeholders talked about the agency’s efforts to place children within the county and close to their biological family. Most stakeholders said that this was a strength for Clarendon DSS. All applicable cases reviewed onsite were rated “Strength” for this item.

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

Explanation

This is a “Strength”. It was apparent that the agency attempted to place siblings together when resources and circumstances made that possible. Each of the applicable cases reviewed onsite was rated “Strength”. Reviewers found that siblings who were not placed together had been placed together originally, but were separated because of the disruptive behavior of one or more of the children.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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	3	50	3	50	4	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. The cases rated Area Needing Improvement involved sibling groups not placed together because one or more sibling was placed out of county in a therapeutic placement. When those situations occurred, visiting between siblings was not planned, and often did not occur. The other situation that caused cases to be rated Area Needing Improvement involved the lack of planned visits between children in foster care and their non-custodial fathers.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	63	3	37	2	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. Five of the applicable 8 cases reviewed were rated “Strength” for this item. Those five children were placed within the county and were able to maintain their relationships with the people and places that were important to them. The 3 cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” were children placed out of county. No formal provision was made for those children to remain connected to important people in their lives beyond visitation with their mothers.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	75	2	25	2	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. In 75% of the cases reviewed there was evidence that both maternal and paternal relatives were assessed as placement options for the children in foster care. In two of the cases reviewed there was no evidence that those assessments occurred. Stakeholders stated that Clarendon DSS was very effective in this area. It is likely that the problem is a failure to document those assessments of relatives, rather than a failure to assess relatives.

<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	4	67	2	33	4	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. Four of the applicable 6 cases were rated “Strength” because in those cases provisions were made for parents to be involved in their children’s lives beyond the minimum visitation required by policy. The cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” showed no evidence of the agency’s attempts to work with the fathers of children.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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**
- 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	6	60	4	40	0	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	10	50	10	50	0	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Clarendon DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) Were the needs of the child, parents, and foster parents assessed, and 2) Did the agency take steps to meet the identified needs? Half of the cases reviewed were strong in this area, and half were rated “Area Needing Improvement”. Although foster care cases were more likely to be strong in this area than treatment cases, both programmatic areas need attention.

Reviewers noted that Clarendon DSS managed an unusually large number of large sibling groups, with 5, 6, or more children in a group. This created special case management challenges. 1) The children in those sibling groups often had several fathers who should either have been assessed and involved in case planning or ruled out. 2) In treatment cases, those children were often cared for by different relatives (ex.: 3 with a grandparent, two with an aunt). Half of all cases reviewed were rated “Area Needing Improvement” for this item because a) not all fathers were assessed or involved, and 2) the needs of relative caregivers were often ignored.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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	5	50	5	50	0	0
Treatment	3	30	7	70	0	0
Total Cases	8	40	12	60	0	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. Although the county conducts family meetings with both foster care and treatment cases, there were glaring deficiencies. The cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” had one or more of the following deficiencies:

- 1) At least 4 of the 10 treatment cases should have been closed, or never opened. In such instances parents invited to a planning meeting were in a powerless position. Their “involvement” was nominal.
- 2) In treatment cases fathers were generally not involved in case planning even when the father lived in the home, or when the caseworker had the name and address of a non-custodial father.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	60	4	40	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	11	55	9	45	0	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This rating is based on two questions: 1) were Clarendon DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) did the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? Each of the 4 foster care cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” had one month without a face-to-face visit with the child. Some of that was due to the unexpected death of a Clarendon DSS caseworker. The treatment cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” involved separated sibling groups, some of whom were seen and some were not.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	43	4	57	3	0
Treatment	1	10	9	90	0	0
Total Cases	4	24	13	76	3	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Clarendon DSS. Face-to-Face visits with parents were sporadic. The mothers would be seen some months, but not others. Fathers were often not seen at all. This problem was more prevalent in treatment cases than in foster care cases. Both parents were seen monthly, according to policy in 24% of the cases reviewed.

One of the foster care cases involved a Hispanic family. The mother spoke English well, but the father did not speak or read English well. Interpreter services were not used by the agency. Spanish language agency forms were not used.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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	7	100	0	0	3	0
Treatment	5	63	3	37	2	0
Total Cases	12	80	3	20	5	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Clarendon 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 answer to both questions was “Yes” for all the reviewed foster care cases. Even though 63% of the reviewed treatment cases were rated “Strength”, deficiencies were noted in a failure of the worker to assess the needs of all of the children involved in each case. Follow-up on education-related problems identified by the worker was inconsistent.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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	8	80	2	20	0	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20	0	0
Total Cases	16	80	4	20	0	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Clarendon DSS. The medical needs of 80% of the cases reviewed were handled properly. Three of the cases rated “Area Needing Improvement” contained no assessment or medical information of any kind on the children. The fourth case contained a supervisory staffing instructing the worker that the child’s medical exam was overdue. There was no documented follow-up.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

<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	6	86	1	14	3	0
Treatment	3	43	4	57	3	0
Total Cases	9	60	5	40	6	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Clarendon DSS. The mental health needs of most (86%) of the foster children reviewed were appropriately attended to. The mental health needs of most (57%) of the children in treatment cases were not appropriately attended to. Within sibling groups some, but not all of the children were assessed. When mental health issues were identified, they were not consistently followed-up on. The agency’s failure to follow up on the needs of children in treatment cases with mental health issues who were placed with relatives created risks of disrupting those placements.

Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

This is an area needing improvement. Licensing records were reviewed for 10 of the 24 foster homes.

1. Quarterly visits were conducted but did not address the areas that are the purpose of a quarterly visit. Each quarterly visit was documented with the exact same language – not individualized. This problem would be solved if the Quarterly Review Form was used.
2. Sex offender checks not done on children ages 12 and older.
3. Most records had no CPS checks.
4. Some deficiency (policy non-compliance) identified in each of the records reviewed.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Investigation initiated timely?	5	0
Was assessment adequate?	3	2
Was decision appropriate?	5	0

This is a “Strength” for Clarendon County DSS. The decisions to unfind the reviewed investigations were supported by the available evidence. Appropriate collateral contacts were not consistently made. The assessment of one case was not adequate because the perpetrator (mother’s boyfriend) was not named or interviewed, though the name could have been obtained.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	8	1	1
	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?		2	8
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?		1	9

Explanation: Not all calls to the Dept. of Social Services alleging abuse or neglect meet the legal definition of abuse or neglect. Those calls are screened out, and not investigated. The table above contains the findings of a reviewer who examined 10 screened out intakes.

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Clarendon DSS. Eighty percent of the reviewed referrals were screened out appropriately. Two were not. One allegation of a live-in boyfriend “abusing” the mother’s five year old daughter needing clarification before being either screened out of accepted for investigation. Another allegation of a mother choking her 8 year old daughter causing the child to have headaches should have been accepted for investigation immediately. After additional reports that case was accepted. A third intake was not handled properly in that, although the allegation was not of abuse or neglect, the apparent poverty and poor parenting skills of the mother placed the 4 month old infant at risk. That case should at least have been referred for Family Independence (FI) services.

**Clarendon County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2005**

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 (95%)		1 (5%)	
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	6 (100%)		14				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	19 (95%)	1 (5%)					
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				16 (89%)	2 (11%)		2
Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	11 (92%)	1 (8%)	8				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren)	16 (94%)	1 (6%)	3				
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	6				
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	0				
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	0				
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	6				
Item 9: Adoption	0	2 (100)	8				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	6				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				6 (67%)	2 (22%)	1 (11%)	1
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	7 (100%)		3				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	5 (100%)	0	5				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	4				
Item 14: Preserving connections	5 (63%)	3 (37%)	2				
Item 15: Relative placement	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	2				
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	4				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				6 (30%)	9(45%)	5 (25%)	
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	10 (50%)	10 (50%)					
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	8 (40%)	12 (60%)	0				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	0				
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	4 (24%)	13 (76%)	3				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				12 (80%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	5
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	5				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				14 (70%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	0
Item 22: Physical health of the child	16 (80%)	4 (20%)	0				
Item 23: Mental health of the child	9 (60%)	5 (40%)	6				