

**Chester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2006**

During the week of May 15-19, 2006 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Chester 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, Chester DSS supervisors, and representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Guardian Ad Litem.

Period included in Case Record Review: November 1, 2005 to April 30, 2006

Period included in Outcome Measures: May 1, 2005 to April 30, 2006

Purpose

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

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

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

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

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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: 05/1/05 to 04/30/06				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective >= 99.99%*	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,360	15,720	16,358.36	-638.36
Chester	142	141	141.99	-0.99

* 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	5	100	0	0	5	0
Treatment	1	100	0	0	9	0
Total Cases	6	100	0	0	14	0

Explanation of Item 1

This is an "Area Needing Improvement" for Chester DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. CAPSS data indicates that an investigation of all but 1 of the 142 reports received during the period under review were initiated timely (within 24 hours). That 1 late investigations caused the Chester DSS office to fall short of the standard.

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Analysis of Safety Item 2 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
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 Nov 1, 2004 and Oct 31, 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	10,198	62	9575.92	560.08
Chester	68	2	63.85	2.15

Note: This is a federally established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	18	90	2	10	0	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is a “Strength” for Chester DSS. CAPSS data shows that 2 of the 68 incidents of maltreatment was a reoccurrence during the period under review. The outcome report contains data only on foster care cases. Onsite reviewers looked at both foster care and treatment cases. Reviewers found that Chester DSS was able to prevent repeat maltreatment in 90% of the cases reviewed.

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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: Not Achieved

-Safety Item 3: Services to prevent removal. **Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
 -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	1	33	2	67	7	0
Treatment	7	78	2	22	1	0
Total Cases	8	67	4	33	8	0

Explanation of Item 3

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Chester DSS. Seven of the 10 foster care cases reviewed were rated Not Applicable because the children entered care prior to the period under review. Still, reviewers found that in most cases the decision to bring the child into foster care was appropriate. In 78% of the treatment cases services were appropriate for the issues creating risk to the children in the home. However, for various reasons 4 cases were rated Area Needing Improvement. In those cases the main problem that rendered services ineffective was a failure to assess the protective capacity of the caregiver.

Stakeholder Comment:

“Chester County has a close relationship between service agencies, everyone gets along well. The county has a YouthNet grant, and the agencies involved meet twice a month. The purpose is to keep young people in their homes. The meetings are case-specific. YouthNet provides wrap services, such as big brother/ big sister, social workers for every school in the county, etc. It has helped a lot.”

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Analysis of Safety Item 4 Findings

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
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 11/01/04 to 10/31/05	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective >= 91.50%*	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	14,396	1,100	13,172.34	123.66
Chester	157	10	143.66	3.35

* This is a DSS established objective.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 4: Risk of harm.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	30	3	30	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	12	60	8	40	0	0

Explanation of Item 4

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Chester DSS. Risk of harm was adequately managed in 60 percent of the cases reviewed. Significantly, half of the treatment cases were rated Area Needing Improvement. Some treatment cases were chronic, with long histories of DSS involvement. Interventions that failed to alleviate problems in the past were tried again in most recent treatment plans. In other cases not all household members were assessed.

Stakeholder Comment:

Sometimes DSS needs to revisit treatment plans because homes really aren’t safe. Sometimes the mothers complete the plan and go back to the way they used to be.

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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: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Strength**
- 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	1	100	0	0	9	0

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Strategic Outcome Report Findings

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

	Number Children Entering Care 05/01/05 to 04/30/06	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Foster Care Episode	Number of Children Objective $\geq 91.40\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,179	241	2,905.61	32.39
Chester	30	6	27.42	-3.42

* This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

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

According to CAPSS, 6 of the 30 children (20%) who entered foster care in Chester County during the period under review had been returned home in the prior 12 months. The state average for this item is 8%. The rate of children re-entering foster care in Chester county failed to meet the federally established standard because of problems previously mentioned – workers not consistently assessing to protective capacity of caregivers, and not consistently assessing all of the people within a household.

Stakeholder Comment:

There are some cases where the judge overrides, and sends kids back. Kids are sent back too early by the judge, sometimes

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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	10	100	0	0	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	3,682	2,962	3,192.29	-230.29
Chester	30	26	26.01	-0.01

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Explanation

Stability of foster care placement is a “Strength”. The outcome report shows that 4 of the 30 children in care less than 12 months had more than 2 foster care placements. This rate of placement change fell short of the federally established standard by 0.01. Onsite reviewers found that foster care placements were very stable. The few children who had more than two moves within a year were usually moved for reasons other than disrupted placements.

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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 05/2005 –04/2006	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective >= 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,587	1,673	1,901.11	-228.11
Chester	26	19	13.78	5.22

* 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	9	90	1	10	0	0

Explanation of Item 7

This is a “Strength” for Chester 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 Chester DSS the percentage is 73.0 (19/26). Onsite reviewers found that Chester DSS did an excellent job of quickly determining the most appropriate treatment plan for the children in its care.

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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 05/01/05–04/30/06	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,378	1,992	1,812.04	179.96
Chester	16	16	12.19	3.81

* 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	60	2	40	5	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Chester 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 Chester County all 16 of the children who returned home in the past year had been in care less than a year. That outcome report focuses on closed foster care cases. Onsite reviewers examined open foster care cases with the plan of Return Home and found something different than what the outcome report indicates.

One of the cases rated Area Needing Improvement was managed by Managed Treatment Services. That child had been in care 22 months with a plan of “Return Home” yet the there was very little chance that the child could safely be returned home. Part of the problem lies with the refusal of the agency’s adoptions unit to properly assess the case, even though MTS had referred the case to adoptions twice.

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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	384	50	122.88	-72.88
Chester	5	1	1.60	-0.60

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	1	50	1	50	8	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. It should be noted that 5 finalized adoptions within the past 12 months is a remarkable accomplishment for a county with 23 children in foster care. However, all but one of those adoptions took more than 24 months to complete.

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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 05/01/05 – 04/30/06	Number of Children In Care With Perm Plan “Other Planned Living Arrangement”	Number of Children Objective >= 85.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	8,139	1,466	6,918.15	-245.15
Chester	35	4	29.75	1.25

* 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	100	0	0	7	0

Explanation-*

This is a “Strength” for Chester 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 11% of the children in Chester DSS custody have this plan. This means that foster children are not being given this plan too soon, and are only given this plan when all other options have been appropriately ruled out. The three youth with the plan of APPLA were receiving appropriate independent living services.

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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 05/01/05 – 04/30/06	Number of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Percent of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Number of Children Objective >= 70.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	6,045	3,877	64.14	4,231.50	-354.50
Chester	37	20	54.05	25.90	-5.90

* 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	100	0	0	2	0

Explanation

This is a “Strength” for Chester DSS. To meet this objective 70%, or more, of the children in care must be placed in Chester County. The outcome report indicates that 54% (20/37) of the children in care were placed in the county. At the time of the onsite review the county had 14 foster homes to serve the 23 children in care. Children were placed out of county in therapeutic facilities or in pre-adoptive placements. Reviewers did not identify any children placed out of county because there were no available foster homes.

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	80	1	20	5	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. It was apparent that the agency attempted to place siblings together when resources and circumstances made that possible. Four of the 5 sibling groups reviewed were placed together. However, in one sibling group, all three children were in different placements with insufficient justification for their separation.

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<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	67	2	33	4	0

Explanation

This is an “Area Needing Improvement”. In most (67%) instances the agency did an excellent job of arranging for visits between children in foster care and their parents and with siblings placed in another setting. However, in a third of the cases reviewed required visits did not consistently occur.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	29	5	71	3	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 the people, places and things that are important to him. Only 2 of the applicable 7 cases reviewed were rated “Strength” for this item. Two of the cases in the sample were managed by MTS. MTS did not document efforts to help those children maintain relationships with the important people in their lives. The other 3 cases rated Area Needing Improvement were managed by the county.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	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 effectiveness in identifying and assessing the relatives of children in foster care as possible caregivers. In 63% of the cases reviewed there was evidence that both maternal and paternal relatives were assessed as placement options for the children in foster care.

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	50	2	50	6	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. Half of the relevant cases showed parental involvement based on the needs of the child rather than merely meeting the minimum visitation requirement. One MTS-managed case involved a court order requiring visits between the child and parents. That same case contained notes from the child’s counselor indicating that contact with the parents was not in the child’s best interest. Instead of resolving this conflict one way or the other, the result was infrequent visits.

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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**
- 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	8	80	2	20	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	13	65	7	35	0	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Chester DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) Were the needs of the child, parents, and caregivers assessed, and 2) Did the agency take steps to meet the identified needs? Assessments in most (80%) of the foster care cases were thorough, covering all members of the household. Half of the treatment cases reviewed were strong in this area and half were rated “Area Needing Improvement”. The deficiency in treatment cases usually involved children who had been removed from their parents and placed with a relative. However, relatives were not consistently assessed as to their needs or protective capacity.

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Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	50	4	50	2	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	11	55	7	45	2	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. The two MTS-managed cases clearly showed that the parents and age-appropriate children were involved in case planning. The county managed cases were less likely to show such involvement. There was not clear understanding of the difference between a worker developing a case plan then going over that plan with the parent, and actually involving the parent in the development of the plan.

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	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	13	65	7	35	0	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**”. This rating is based on two questions: 1) were Chester DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) did the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? The case records and conversations with Chester DSS staff clearly indicated that clients were not being seen each month by staff as policy required. The explanation offered included staff shortages and the time it took to hire new staff and get those staff trained and certified so that they could be assigned cases.

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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	50	3	50	4	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	10	63	6	37	4	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Chester DSS. Parents were not seen monthly for the same reason the children were not seen monthly. The conditions described in Item 19 above apply equally to this item.

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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	6	75	2	25	2	0
Treatment	6	67	3	33	1	0
Total Cases	12	71	5	29	3	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Chester 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 71% of the cases reviewed. Cases were rated Area Needing Improvement for one main reason – a failure to address identified educational problems.

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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	3	30	7	70	0	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	10	50	10	50	0	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Chester DSS. The medical needs of half of the cases reviewed were handled properly. Several foster care cases showed very little activity during 4 of the 6 month period under review. The cases assigned to the previous worker did not appear to have been reassigned after her departure from the agency. Most treatment cases were assessed properly. However, the physical health needs of siblings identified by the treatment worker were not consistently followed up on. In those instances the focus was on the victim child rather than on the entire family.

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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	7	78	1	22	2	0
Treatment	5	56	4	44	1	0
Total Cases	12	71	5	29	3	0

Explanation

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Chester DSS. The mental health needs of most (71%) children reviewed were appropriately attended to. There were significant lapses in nearly half of the treatment cases reviewed. In those cases the worker clearly documented the mental health needs of the child but failed to ensure that the child received appropriate treatment. In one case a teenaged child was fighting her crack-addicted mother. In another case a child was hearing voices.

Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

Foster Home Licenses

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Chester DSS. The agency appears to have an adequate number of foster homes for the children in care. The foster parents appear to be well supported by staff.

Strengths

1. All licenses up-to-date in CAPSS
2. Most records contained minor deficiencies
3. Training hours well documented in most records
4. All inspections completed timely

Areas Needing Improvement

1. Quarterly visits in 7 of 10 records reviewed done late.
2. No evidence of supervisory review of cases

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Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

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

This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Chester County DSS. Assessments were not thorough. School, medical professionals and other appropriate collaterals were not consistently contacted as part of the assessments even when the assessment worker was instructed to do so in supervisory staffings. Two of the unfounded investigations were unfounded because the family moved. However, there were no attempts to determine if the child was still in school or if the medical provider, who made the report, knew where the family might be – no diligent search.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

Screened Out Intakes

	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	6	1	0
	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	1	1	5
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	0	0	7

This is an area needing improvement for Chester County DSS. Seven intakes were screened out during the period under review. Six of the seven were screened out appropriately. The inappropriate reason given for screening out one intake was “Address not valid”. However, the child was school aged, enrolled in school and could easily be found. Subsequent to that screened out report, someone else called in to report that the child was being abused. This time the agency contacted the child at school.

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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.				18 (90%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	5 (100%)		15				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	18 (90%)	2 (10%)					
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				12 (60%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	
Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	8 (67%)	4 (33%)	8				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren)	12 (60%)	8 (40%)					
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				7 (70%)	3 (30%)		
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	1 (100%)		9				
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	10 (100%)						
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	9 (90%)	1 (10%)					
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5				
Item 9: Adoption	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	8				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	3 (100%)		7				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				6 (60%)	4 (40%)		
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	8 (100%)		2				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	4				
Item 14: Preserving connections	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	3				
Item 15: Relative placement	5 (63%)	3 (37%)	2				
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	6				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				12 (60%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	13 (65%)	7 (35%)					
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	11 (55%)	7 (45%)	2				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	13 (65%)	7 (35%)					
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	10 (63%)	6 (37%)	4				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				12 (71%)	4 (24%)	1 (5%)	3
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	12 (71%)	5 (29%)	3				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				10 (50%)	4 (20%)	6 (30%)	
Item 22: Physical health of the child	10 (50%)	10 (50%)					
Item 23: Mental health of the child	12 (71%)	5 (29%)	3				

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