

**Colleton County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
August 2010**

During the week of August 16 - 20, 2010, a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Colleton 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, foster child, Colleton DSS supervisor and workers, representative from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health and Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Period under Review: August 1, 2009 to July 31, 2010

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 (§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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Ratings

The standard that must be met for all items reviewed onsite is 95%. Each outcome report has its own standard. To be rated an area of **Strength** most items must met both the qualitative onsite review standard **and** the quantitative outcome report standard.

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

The county's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of two items:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1) Timeliness of initiating investigations | Strength |
| 2) Repeat Maltreatment | Strength |

Agency Data

Performance Measure 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations on Reports of Child Maltreatment - Of all reports of child maltreatment that were accepted for investigation during the reporting period, what percentage had a dictation type contact of initial contact where the action date is within 24 hours of accepting the report?

Objective: 100% in <= 24 hours (state law)

| | Number of Investigations | Number of Investigations Initiated Timely | Percent of Investigations Initiated Timely | Numbers of Investigations Above (Below) Objective |
|----------|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| State | 18,875 | 18,484 | 97.9% | (-391) |
| Colleton | 198 | 196 | 99% | (-2) |

Explanation of Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations

This is an area of **Strength** for Colleton DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. Agency data indicates that for the 12-month period under review, Colleton initiated 196 of its 198 investigations (99.0%) of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours. While onsite, reviewers determined that the two reports that appeared to have been initiated late were due to data entry errors. All of Colleton's investigations were initiated timely.

Onsite Review Findings

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 of Cases | 19 | 95% | 1 | 5% | 0 | 0 |

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Explanation of Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment

This is an area of **Strength** for Colleton DSS. This item measures the occurrence of maltreatment among children under agency supervision, or within a year of having their case closed by the agency. In 95% of the cases reviewed, there was no reoccurrence of maltreatment to children while under agency supervision.

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

The county's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of two items:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 3) Services to family to protect children & prevent removal | Area Needing Improvement |
| 4) Risk of Harm | Area Needing Improvement |

Onsite Review Findings

Safety Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Children and Prevent Removal

| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Treatment | 8 | 89 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 10 | 91 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Children and Prevent Removal

This is an **Area needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item assesses whether services were adequate to protect children in their home and prevent their removal and placement into foster care. In 100% of the foster care and the 89% of the treatment cases reviewed, appropriate services were being offered to safely maintain the children in their home. However, in one of the treatment cases, there were no services in place to address the deteriorating condition of the home. That case caused this item to fall short of the 95% compliance objective.

Onsite Review Findings

Safety Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management

| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------|----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 10 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 7 | 70% | 3 | 30% | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 17 | 85% | 3 | 15% | 0 | 0 |

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Explanation of Item 4: Risk of Harm

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item assesses whether the agency's interventions reduced risk of harm to children. In 100% of the foster care cases reviewed, risk of harm was adequately managed. Several practice issues caused 30% of the treatment cases to need improvement. In two of those cases risk of harm to children in the home could not be properly managed because the agency did not complete criminal background checks, assessments on paramours, caregivers and other people who had a role in the children's lives. In another case there was no evidence that the agency assessed the father's alleged illegal drug use prior to closing the case.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The county's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of six items:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 5) Foster care re-entries | Area Needing Improvement |
| 6) Stability of foster care placement | Area Needing Improvement |
| 7) Permanency goal for child | Area Needing Improvement |
| 8) Reunification/ permanent placement with relatives | Strength |
| 9) Adoption | Area Needing Improvement |
| 10) Permanency goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) | Strength |

Agency Data

Performance Measure 7: Foster Children Who do Not Re-Enter Care - Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification in the 12 month period prior to reporting period, what percentage did Not re-enter foster care within 12 months of the date of their discharge from the prior foster care episode.

Objective: 90.1% (Federal Standard)

| | Number of Foster Children Reunified during Reporting Period | Number of Children Who Did Not Re-enter Foster Care Within 12 Months | Percent of Children Who Did Not Re-Enter Foster Care Within 12 Months | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
|----------|---|--|---|--|
| State | 2,879 | 2,658 | 92.3% | 64.0 |
| Colleton | 62 | 54 | 87.1% | (1.9) |

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Explanation of Item 5: Foster Care Re-entries

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item measures the frequency of children re-entering foster care within a year of discharge. To meet the objective for this item, 90.1% of children must not re-enter foster care within a year of discharge. Agency data shows that 87.1% of the children did not re-enter foster care within 12-months of the date of their discharge from the previous foster care episode.

| Agency Data | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Performance Measure 6: Stability of Foster Care Placements – Of all children who had been in foster care at least 8 days but less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home, the percentage that had no more than two placement settings. | | | | |
| Objective: >= 86.0% (federal standard) | | | | |
| | FC Services Open >7 days and < 12 months | Number with No More than 2 placements | Percent with No More than 2 placements | Number Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 3,686 | 2,781 | 75.4% | (-389.0) |
| Colleton | 49 | 38 | 77.6% | (-4.1) |

Explanation of Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item measures the frequency of placement changes for children in foster care, and assesses the reasons for those changes. The objective is that at least 86% of the children in care have two or fewer placements within 12 months. Agency data shows that 77.6% of Colleton county children had two or more placements.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 8 | 80% | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 7: Permanency Goal for Children

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness of permanency goals for children in foster care and the timeliness of those permanency decisions. Reviewers determined that in 80% of the foster care cases, the agency identified the appropriate goal. This area needed improvement because in 20% of the cases reviewed the agency's permanency goal was unrealistic based on the parents' histories of non-compliance with their treatment plan requirements.

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| Agency Data | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Performance Measure 8: Time to Achieve Reunification - Of all children under the age of 18 who were reunified with their parent(s) or caretaker(s) at the time of discharge from foster care and had been in care for 8 days or more, what percentage were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of their latest removal from home? | | | | |
| Objective: 75.2% (Federal Standard) | | | | |
| | Number of Children Reunified with Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) or Relatives | Number of Children Reunified in <12 months | Percent of Children Reunified in <12 Months | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 2,538 | 1,912 | 75.3% | (-3.4) |
| Colleton | 40 | 30 | 75.0% | 0.1 |

Explanation of Item 8: Reunification or Permanent Placement with Relatives

This is an area of **Strength** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the activities and processes necessary to accomplish the goal of reunification with parents or placement relatives. Agency data shows that 75% of the children entering foster care during the period under review were reunited with their family within one year. That level of performance meets the federal standard for this item.

| Agency Data | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Performance Measure 9: Time to Finalized Adoption – Of all children who left foster care due to finalized adoption during the reporting year, what percentage left foster care within 24 months from the date of their latest removal from home? | | | | |
| Objective: >= 36.6% (National 75 th percentile) | | | | |
| | Number of Adoptions Finalized | Number of Adoptions Finalized in < 24 months | Percent of Adoptions Finalized in < 24 Months | Number of Adoptions Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 549 | 100 | 18.2% | (-100.9) |
| Colleton | 1 | 0 | 0.0% | (-0.4) |

Explanation of Item 9: Adoption

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the process within the child welfare system to achieve timely adoptions for children in foster care. Agency data shows that Colleton DSS completed only three adoptions in the past two years. Data also shows that Colleton completed only one Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) action in the past two years. With 87 children in foster care, that rate of TPR and adoptions results in permanency delays. The onsite review determined that two of the three children with the plan of adoption had already been in care for more than 24 months.

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| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|------|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 10: Permanency Goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 3 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 10: Permanency Goal of APPLA

This is an area of **Strength** for Colleton County DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of services provided to children with the permanency plan of APPLA. Reviewers also rate whether the agency attempted to locate and reassess relatives or non-relatives that were willing to commit to the youth's long-term care every six months. Reviewers found that in 100% of the cases youths with the plan of APPLA were receiving the appropriate Independent Living services and were connect to a committed adult.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

The county's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of six items:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 11) Proximity of foster care placement | Strength |
| 12) Placement with siblings in foster care | Area Needing Improvement |
| 13) Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care | Area Needing Improvement |
| 14) Preserving connections | Area Needing Improvement |
| 15) Relative placement | Area Needing Improvement |
| 16) Relationship of child in care with parents | Area Needing Improvement |

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| Agency Data | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Performance Measure 13: Foster Children Placed Within county of Origin – Of all children in foster care during the reporting period (excluding MTS and Adoptions children), what percentage are placed within the county of origin? | | | | |
| Objective: >= 70% (Agency established objective) | | | | |
| | Number of Children in Foster Care | Number of Children Placed Within County of Origin | Percent of Children Placed Within County of Origin | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 5,783 | 3,885 | 67.2% | (-163.1) |
| Colleton | 87 | 68 | 78.2% | 7.1 |

Explanation of Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement

This is an area of **Strength** for Colleton County DSS. This item evaluates the agency’s efforts to keep children close enough to their families so that essential relationships can be maintained. One measure used to evaluate this item is the percentage of children who are placed within the county. The objective is that at least 70% of the children in care be placed within the county. Agency data shows that 78.2 % of Colleton DSS children were placed within the county.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 12: Placement with Siblings | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 4 | 80% | 1 | 20% | 5 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 12: Placement with Siblings in Foster Care

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency’s efforts to keep siblings together when it is appropriate to do so. One of the five cases reviewed needed improvement because a sibling group was separated and placed in different foster and group homes because no foster home was available to take all of the children.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 13: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 29% | 5 | 71% | 3 | 0 |

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Explanation of Item 13: Visiting with Siblings in Foster Care and with Parents

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to ensure that visits occur between children in foster care and their siblings and parents. Seventy-one percent of the cases needed improvement because the agency failed to include non-custodial fathers in visitation plans, and failed to communicate with fathers to determine if such visits were possible or appropriate. In one case, the father requested in writing for visitation with the child, but there was no evidence that the agency followed up to provide visits to the father.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 14: Preserving Connections | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 6 | 67% | 3 | 33% | 1 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 14: Preserving Connections

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to preserve children's connections to the people, places and things that are important to them. In 67% of the cases reviewed, agency efforts were present to help children maintain their relationships with family and friends. Three of the cases reviewed needed improvement because the agency identified people in the children's lives but failed to maintain the relationships, or failed to assess this need.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 15: Relative Placement | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 3 | 33% | 6 | 67% | 1 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 15: Relative Placement

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to identify and assess relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. This was an area needing improvement in 67% of the cases reviewed because the agency failed to consistently assess maternal and paternal relatives as placement options.

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| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 40% | 3 | 60% | 6 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to promote a supportive relationship between children in care and their parents. In 60% of the cases reviewed the agency failed to establish contact between children in care and their parents based on the needs of the child.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

The agency's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of four items:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 17) Needs and services of child, parents and caregivers | Area Needing Improvement |
| 18) Child and family involvement in case planning | Area Needing Improvement |
| 19) Worker visits with child | Area Needing Improvement |
| 20) Worker visits with parents | Area Needing Improvement |

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents and Caregivers | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 7 | 70% | 3 | 30% | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 6 | 60% | 4 | 40% | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 13 | 65% | 7 | 35% | 0 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents and Caregivers

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton 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? Thirty-five percent of the cases needed improvement due to the agency's lack of assessment of the fathers and caregivers, age appropriate children and non custodial parent's needs. Case records indicate that the agency failed followed-up with the fathers even when the agency had the ability to communicate with them.

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| Onsite Review Findings | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 22% | 7 | 78% | 1 | 0 |
| Treatment | 5 | 50% | 5 | 50% | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 7 | 37% | 12 | 63% | 1 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to involve parents and children in the case planning process. Reviewers found that in 78% of the foster care and 50% of the treatment cases, the agency did not give parents and age-appropriate children the opportunity to be involved in the development of their case plan. This rating was affected by the agency's failure to diligently look for and engage the fathers of children in care.

| Agency Data | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Performance Measure 14: Face-to-Face Visits With Children | | | | |
| Objective: >= 100% (Agency Policy) | | | | |
| | Number of Children Under Agency Supervision at Least One Complete Calendar Month | Number of Children Visited Every Month | Percent of Children Visited Every Month | Number of Children Above or (Below) Standard |
| Foster Care | 83 | 79 | 95.2% | (-4) |
| Treatment | 207 | 140 | 67.6% | (-67) |

Explanation of Item 19: Worker Visits with Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with children under agency supervision, and evaluates the quality of those visits. State law and agency policy require that children under agency supervision be seen each month. Agency data indicates that Colleton DSS made monthly visits with all but four of its foster children. However, the agency failed to make monthly visits with 67 of the children in in-home treatment cases.

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| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 20: Worker Visit with Parents | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 1 | 14% | 6 | 86% | 3 | 0 |
| Treatment | 3 | 30% | 7 | 70% | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 4 | 24% | 13 | 76% | 3 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 20: Worker Visits with Parents

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with parents, and evaluates the quality of those visits. Seventy-six percent of the cases reviewed needed improvement because the agency failed to diligently search for and assess parents to determine an appropriate level of involvement or contact.

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

The agency's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of one item:

- 21) Educational needs of the child **Area Needing Improvement**

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 21: Educational Needs of the 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 of Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and address the educational needs of children under agency supervision. In 29% of the cases reviewed, workers assessed the children's educational performance by asking the children or their caregivers how the children were doing in school. In those cases, workers failed to verify the information they were given by making direct contact with schools or by obtaining copies of grade reports and attendance records.

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Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The agency's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of two items:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 22) Physical health of the child | Area Needing Improvement |
| 23) Mental health of the child | Area Needing Improvement |

Onsite Review Findings

Well Being Item 22: Physical Health of the Child

| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------|----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 5 | 50% | 5 | 50% | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 7 | 70% | 3 | 30% | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 12 | 60% | 8 | 40% | 0 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 22: Physical Health of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and meet the medical needs of children under agency supervision. This was an area needing improvement in 40% of the cases reviewed because the agency failed to ensure that children received medical examinations, or failed to determine if identified medical needs were being met.

Onsite Review Findings

Well Being Item 23: Mental Health of the Child

| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
|--------------------|----------|------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------|----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 6 | 75% | 2 | 25% | 2 | 0 |
| Treatment | 3 | 33% | 6 | 67% | 1 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 9 | 53% | 8 | 47% | 3 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 23: Mental Health of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and meet the mental health needs of children under agency supervision. In 47% of the cases reviewed, children's mental health needs were either not assessed, or were identified but not dealt with. In the foster care cases needing improvement there were no progress reports or direct contact with the provider to assess the mental health needs of the children.

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| |
|--------------------------|
| Unfounded Investigations |
|--------------------------|

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Was the investigation initiated timely? | 5 | 0 |
| Was the assessment adequate? | 3 | 2 |
| Was the decision appropriate? | 5 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 24: Unfounded Investigations

This is an area of **Strength** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the agency’s investigative process and determines if decisions were supported by the facts of the cases. All five investigations were initiated in a timely manner, and the decision to unfound the cases was appropriate. However, in two of the three cases reviewed, workers identified risk of harm issues that did not meet the legal definition of abuse or neglect, yet the workers closed those cases without making referrals to providers who could address those critical family needs.

| |
|----------------------|
| Screened Out Intakes |
|----------------------|

| | Yes | No | Cannot Determine |
|--|-----|----|-----------------------|
| Was the Intake Appropriately Screened Out? | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| | | | Not Applicable |
| Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted? | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Were Appropriate Referrals Made? | 1 | 2 | 7 |

Explanation of Item 25: Screened Out Intakes

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Colleton DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency screens out reports of abuse and/or neglect to determine if the intakes were appropriately screened out. Reviewers could not determine whether or not two reports were screened appropriately due to insufficient documentation and the lack of information that should have been obtained from collaterals. Four of the intakes that were screened out should have been accepted for investigation. In those intakes, the county practice is to screen out intakes without specific information gathered through collaterals to determine if the intakes should have been screened out or accepted.

| |
|----------------------|
| Foster Home Licenses |
|----------------------|

Explanation of Item 26: Foster Home Licenses

This is an area of **Strength** for Colleton County DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency ensures that all foster homes comply with licensing requirements. All of the foster home licenses reviewed were valid and issued prior to the renewal of the current license.

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| Colleton County DSS Summary Sheet | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| | | Performance Item Ratings | | |
| | | Strength | Area Needing Improvement | N/A* |
| Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect. | | | | |
| Item 1: STR | Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment | 9/9 = 100% | 0 | 11 |
| Item 2: STR | Repeat maltreatment | 19/20= 95% | 1/20= 5% | 0 |
| Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. | | | | |
| Item 3: ANI | Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal | 10/11 = 91% | 1/11 = 9% | 9 |
| Item 4: ANI | Risk of harm to child (ren) | 17/20= 85% | 3/17= 15% | 0 |
| Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. | | | | |
| Item 5: ANI | Foster care re-entries | 2/3=67% | 1/3 = 33% | 7 |
| Item 6: *ANI | Stability of foster care placement | 10/10= 100% | 0 | 0 |
| Item 7: ANI | Permanency goal for child | 8/10=80% | 2/10=20% | 0 |
| Item 8: *STR | Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives | 3/4 = 75% | 1/4 = 25% | 6 |
| Item 9: ANI | Adoption | 1/3 = 33% | 2/3 = 67% | 7 |
| Item 10: STR | Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) | 3/3 = 100% | 0 | 7 |
| Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children. | | | | |
| Item 11: STR | Proximity of foster care placement | 10/10=100% | 0 | 0 |
| Item 12: ANI | Placement with siblings | 4/5= 80% | 1/5 = 20% | 5 |
| Item 13: ANI | Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care | 2/7 = 29% | 5/7 = 71% | 3 |
| Item 14: ANI | Preserving connections | 6/9 = 67% | 3/9 = 33% | 1 |
| Item 15: ANI | Relative placement | 3/9 = 33% | 6/9 = 67% | 1 |
| Item 16: ANI | Relationship of child in care with parents | 2/ 5 = 40% | 3/5 = 60% | 6 |
| Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. | | | | |
| Item 17: ANI | Needs and services of child, parents, caregiver | 13/20=65% | 7/20=35% | 0 |
| Item 18: ANI | Child and family involvement in case planning | 7/19=37% | 12/19= 63% | 1 |
| Item 19: ANI | Worker visits with child | 10/20=50% | 10/20= 50% | 0 |
| Item 20: ANI | Worker visits with parent(s) | 4/17 = 24% | 13/17 =76% | 3 |
| Item 21: ANI | Educational needs of the child | 12/17 = 71% | 5/17 = 29% | 3 |
| Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. | | | | |
| Item 22: ANI | Physical health of the child | 12/20= 60% | 8/20=40% | 0 |
| Item 23: ANI | Mental health of the child | 9/17 = 53 % | 8/17 = 47 % | 3 |

The objective is that 95% of cases be rated "Strength."

Str = Strength

ANI = Area Needing Improvement

* = Rating based on agency data, not onsite review findings