

Kershaw County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
June 2008

During the week of June 16 - 20, 2008, a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Kershaw County. A sample of 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, Kershaw DSS supervisors, representatives from schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health and Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Period under Review: June 1, 2007 to May 31, 2008

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. Agency data 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 90%. Each outcome report has its own standard. To be rated an area of **Strength** most items must meet 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 | Area Needing Improvement |
| 2) Repeat Maltreatment | Strength |

| Agency Data | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| Performance Measure 1: Initiating CPS Investigations | | | | |
| Objective: 100% in <= 24 hours (state law) | | | | |
| | Number of Investigations | Number of Investigations Initiated Timely | Percent of Investigations Initiated Timely | Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 18,671 | 17,854 | 95.6 | (817) |
| Kershaw | 258 | 257 | 99.6 | (1) |

Explanation of Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw 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, Kershaw initiated 257 of its 258 investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours. The county missed this objective by one case.

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| Agency Data | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Performance Measure 3: Treatment Cases With No New Indicated Reports – Of all treatment cases that were closed during the year reporting period, what percentage did NOT have a new founded intake within 12 months of the treatment case being closed? | | | | |
| Objective: $\geq 87.73\%$ Agency Average | | | | |
| | Number of Treatment Cases Closed | Number of Treatment Cases with no founded intake within 12 months | Percent of Treatment Cases that did not have a new founded intake within 12 months | Number of Cases Above (Below) State Average |
| State | 5,060 | 4,439 | 87.73 | N/A |
| Kershaw | 57 | 53 | 92.9 | 3.1 |

Explanation of Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment

This is an area of **Strength** for Kershaw 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. Agency data indicates that 92.9 % of the treatment cases that were closed during the year did not have a new founded intake within 12 months. For this item, Kershaw County's rating exceeded the state average. The onsite review confirmed that this is an area of strength for the county.

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 and prevent removal **Area Needing Improvement**
- 4) Risk of Harm **Area Needing Improvement**

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|
| Safety Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Children in Home and Prevent Removal. | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Treatment | 7 | 70 | 3 | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 9 | 75 | 3 | 25 | 8 | 0 |

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item assesses whether services were adequate to protect children in their home and prevent their removal and placement into foster care. All of the foster care cases were strong in this area. Thirty percent of the treatment cases needed improvement because the agency failed to address the needs of adults, other than the parents, who lived in the home and occasionally functioned as a caretaker for the children.

Stakeholder Comments: Kershaw County has a lot of resources; however there is a problem with when DSS will and will not help clients pay for services. In some cases, the client may be asked to have an evaluation done and they do not have the means to pay for the services.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Safety Item 4: Risk of Harm | | | | | | |
| | 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 |

Explanation of Item 4: Risk of Harm

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item assesses whether the agency's intervention reduced risk of harm to children. Reviewers found that the risk of harm was reduced in 100% of the foster care cases. However, risk of harm was not adequately managed in 40% of the treatment cases reviewed. In several treatment cases the agency failed to obtain background checks on alternative caregivers. The agency did not consistently address the risks posed by paramours who occasionally lived in the home.

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 | Strength |
| 6) Stability of foster care placement | Area Needing Improvement |
| 7) Permanency goal for child | Strength |
| 8) Reunification or permanent placement with relatives | Strength |
| 9) Adoption | Area Needing Improvement |
| 10) Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) | Strength |

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| 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 the reporting period, the percent that did not re-enter foster care within 12 months of the date of their discharge. | | | | |
| Objective: $\geq 90.1\%$ (federal standard) | | | | |
| | Number Children Reunified During Reporting Period | Number of Children Discharged Who Did Not Re-enter Foster Care | Percent of Children Discharged Who Did Not Re-enter Foster Care | Number of Children Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 2,504 | 2,315 | 92.45 | 58.9 |
| Kershaw | 29 | 29 | 100 | 2.9 |

Explanation of Item 5: Foster Care Re-entries

This is an area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item measures the frequency of children re-entering foster care within a year of discharge. The federal standard for this measure is that at least 90.1% of children entering foster care **not** be re-entries within a year of discharge from care. Agency data indicates that Kershaw DSS met and exceeded the federal standard because 100% of Kershaw County children, who left foster care, did not re-enter foster care.

| 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, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? | | | | |
| Objective: $\geq 86\%$ (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 of Children Above (Below) Objective |
| State | 4,089 | 3,032 | 74.15 | (513.2) |
| Kershaw | 26 | 17 | 65.38 | (5.5) |

Explanation of Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placements

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item measures the frequency of placement changes for children in foster care, and assesses the reasons for those changes. The standard applied to this item is that at least 86% of children in care experience two or fewer placements during the period under review. Agency data indicates that the county did not meet the objective with 65.38% of children in Kershaw County having fewer than two placements. The onsite review confirmed this as an area needing improvement.

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| Onsite Review Findings | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 7: Permanency Goal for Children | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 7: Permanency Goal for Children

This is an area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness of permanency goals for children in foster care and the timeliness of those permanency decisions. The permanency plan was appropriate in all cases reviewed. The agency skillfully managed complex addiction cases that involved parents experiencing recovery and relapse in their treatment history.

| 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: $\geq 75.2\%$ (federal standard) | | | | |
| | Number of Children Returned to Parent/Caretaker | Number of Children Reunified in < 12 Months | Percent of Children Reunified in < 12 Months | Number of Children Above (Below) Federal Standard |
| State | 2,405 | 1,844 | 76.67 | 35.4 |
| Kershaw | 21 | 16 | 76.19 | .2 |

Explanation of Item 8: Reunification or Permanent Placement with Relatives

This is an area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the activities and processes necessary to accomplish the goal of reunification with caregivers or placement with relatives within 12 months. Agency data shows that 76.19% of children entering care returned home within a year. That percentage exceeded the agency's 75.2% objective. Reviewers found that both parents and agency were taking proper steps to ensure that children with this plan would be able to return home safely.

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| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 9: Adoption | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 4 | 67 | 2 | 33 | 4 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 9: Adoption

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the process within the child welfare system to achieve timely adoptions for children in foster care. Agency data shows that Kershaw DSS completed no adoptions during the period under review. This is significant because most of the children who did not return home within a year had the plan of adoption. Reviewers found that 33% of those children had already been in care more than 24 months. Stakeholders believed that the adoption assessment process contributed to this problem.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|--------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 10: Permanency Goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 100 | | | 8 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 10: Permanency Goal of APPLA

This is area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of services provided to children with the permanency plan of APPLA. Reviewers found that children with this plan are receiving appropriate independent living services.

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

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

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 11) Proximity of foster care placement | Area Needing Improvement |
| 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 | Strength |
| 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 | 6,538 | 4,322 | 66.11 | (254) |
| Kershaw | 64 | 43 | 67.19 | (1.8) |

Explanation of Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw 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 at that least 70% of the children in care be placed within the county. Agency data shows that 67% of Kershaw DSS children were placed within the county. Reviewers found that the children placed outside of Kershaw County were usually in the adjacent counties, Richland or Sumter, in group or therapeutic placements.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 12: Placement with Siblings | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 5 | 72 | 2 | 28 | 3 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 12: Placement with Siblings in Foster Care

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency’s efforts to keep siblings together when it is appropriate to do so. Although most siblings were kept together, the percentage (72%) was not high enough to meet the agency’s standard (90%) for this item.

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| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 13: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 4 | 50 | 4 | 50 | 2 | 0 |

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to ensure that visits occur between children in foster care with their siblings and parents. In 50% of the cases, reviewers found that visits between parents and their siblings in foster care were not occurring as required by policy (2 times per month). Reviewers could not determine why visits did not occur. In one case, a non-custodial father expressed interest in visiting his son in foster care, but the agency never arranged for those visits.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 14: Preserving Connections | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 7 | 88 | 1 | 12 | 2 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 14: Preserving Connections

This is an area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to preserve children's connections to the people, places and things that are important to them. Reviewers rated 88% of the cases as strong in this area because the agency encouraged relatives to visit children in care, and documented that children continued to communicate with family and friends by telephone.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 15: Relative Placement | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 5 | 50 | 5 | 50 | 0 | 0 |

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Explanation of Item 15: Relative Placement

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to identify and assess relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. In 50% of the cases reviewed this item needed improvement because relatives of the custodial parent (usually the mother) were assessed, but relatives of the non-custodial parent (usually the father) were not assessed.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Permanency Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 1 | 25 | 3 | 75 | 7 | 0 |

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to promote a strong emotionally supportive relationship between children in care and their parents, beyond the twice minimum visitation requirement. In 75% of the cases, reviewers found that the agency provided the minimum required visits for children with their parents, which often totaled two hours per month. This was true even when the children were pre-school aged and the plan was for those children to return to their parents.

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 |

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| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents and Foster Parents | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 8 | 80 | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 6 | 60 | 4 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 14 | 70 | 6 | 30 | 0 | 0 |

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) Were the needs of the children, parents, and foster parents assessed, and 2) Did the agency take steps to meet the identified needs? Seventy percent of the cases were strong in this area. Forty percent of treatment cases needed improvement because the agency failed to assess or address the needs of non-custodial fathers.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 2 | 20 | 8 | 80 | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 7 | 70 | 3 | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 9 | 45 | 11 | 55 | 0 | 0 |

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to involve parents and children in the case planning process. In 80% of the foster care cases and in 30% of the treatment cases, parents and age appropriate children were not actively involved in developing their case plans. Caseworkers generally wrote the plans, had their supervisor review the plan then went over the plan with their clients.

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| Agency Data | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Well Being Item 19: Face-to-Face Visits with Children (<18 years of age) | | | | |
| Objective: 100% (Agency Policy) | | | | |
| Report Period: April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2008 | | | | |
| | Number of Children Under Agency Supervision at Least One Complete Calendar Month | Number of Children Visited Every Month | Percent of Children Visited Every Month | Children Without a Documented Face-to-Face Visit Every Month |
| Foster Care | 45 | 45 | 100 | 0 |
| Treatment | 145 | 90 | 62.07 | -55 |

Explanation of Item 19: Face-to-Face Visits with Children

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with children under agency supervision, and evaluates the quality of those visits. Agency's policy requires workers to make face-to-face contact with children under agency supervision every month. Agency data indicates that all children in foster care were seen according to agency policy. Agency data reflects that only 62% of the children in treatment cases received monthly visits.

| <u>Onsite Review Findings</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| Well Being Item 20: Worker Visits with Parent(s) | | | | | | |
| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 | 5 | 0 |
| Treatment | 6 | 60 | 4 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 7 | 47 | 8 | 53 | 5 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 20: Worker Visits with Parents

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw County DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with parents, and evaluates the quality of those visits. In-home treatment cases showed significant deficiencies in this area. Reviewers found evidence of caseworkers who made their monthly visits, but did not appear to understand the purpose of those visits. In some instances, there was no explanation given as to why the agency did not attempt to involve the fathers of children in care. In one case, a father was in the home during a visit but the worker made no attempt to communicate with him.

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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 need of the child **Area Needing Improvement**

Onsite Review Findings

Well Being Item 21: Educational Needs of Child

| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
|-------------|----------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 5 | 63 | 3 | 37 | 2 | 0 |
| Treatment | 8 | 89 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 13 | 76 | 4 | 24 | 3 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and address the educational needs of children under agency supervision. Although caseworkers consistently asked caregivers (parents and foster parents) about children's school adjustments and performance, they did not consistently verify what they were being told by contacting the child's school directly, or by requesting documentation from the school.

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 **Strength**
 23) Mental health of the child **Area Needing Improvement**

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Onsite Review Findings

Well Being Item 22: Physical Health of the Child

| | Strength | | Area Needing Improvement | | Not Applicable | |
|-------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|----|----------------|---|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Foster Care | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Treatment | 8 | 89 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 18 | 95 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 22: Physical Health of the Child

This is an area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and attend to the medical needs of children under agency supervision. Case files contained medical records on all but one of the cases reviewed. For children with identified medical needs, caseworkers followed up with service providers to ensure that the children's needs were 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 | 4 | 57 | 3 | 43 | 3 | 0 |
| Total Cases | 10 | 67 | 5 | 33 | 5 | 0 |

Explanation of Item 23: Mental Health of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and attend to the mental health needs of children under agency supervision. Reviewers found that the biggest obstacle was the lack of client access to mental health services specific to client needs. Clients who were victims or perpetrators of sexual abuse had to be referred to mental health providers in other counties. Those clients who did not have their own transportation relied on caseworkers to drive them to appointments, or they missed appointments.

Unfounded Investigations

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

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Explanation of Item 24: Unfounded Investigations

This is an area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the agency's investigative process and determines if decisions were supported by the facts of the cases. Reviewers found quality assessments and decisions that were well supported by the evidence gathered.

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

| | Yes | No | Cannot Determine |
|--|-----|----|-----------------------|
| Was the Intake Appropriately Screened Out? | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Not Applicable |
| Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted? | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| Were Appropriate Referrals Made? | 1 | 1 | 8 |

Explanation of Item 25: Screened Out Intakes

This is area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency screens out reports of incidents of abuse and/or neglect to determine if the intakes were appropriately screened out. All of the intakes screened out did not allege anything that met the legal definition of abuse or neglect. The agency did an excellent job of contacting schools, law enforcement and other collaterals to gather information before making the decision to screen out intakes.

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

Explanation of Item 26: Foster Home Licenses

This is an area of **Strength** for Kershaw DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency ensures that all foster homes comply with licensing requirements. There were no unlicensed foster homes. Documentation in the hard files and in CAPSS was consistent. There was evidence of quality quarterly reviews being conducted, annual background checks, timely fire inspections and evidence of supervisory reviews being conducted.

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| Kershaw County DSS Summary Sheet | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| Performance Item or Outcome | | Performance Item Ratings | | | |
| | | Strength | Area Needing Improvement | N/A* | |
| Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect. | | | | | |
| Item 1: | *ANI | Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment | 12/12 = 100% | 0 | 8 |
| 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 | 9/12 = 75% | 3/12 = 25% | 8 |
| Item 4: | ANI | Risk of harm to children | 17/20 = 85% | 3/20 = 15% | 0 |
| Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. | | | | | |
| Item 5: | *Str | Foster care re-entries | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Item 6: | ANI | Stability of foster care placement | 8/10 = 80% | 2/10=20% | 0 |
| Item 7: | Str | Permanency goal for child | 10/10 = 100% | 0 | 0 |
| Item 8: | Str | Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives | 2/2 =100% | 0 | 8 |
| Item 9: | ANI | Adoption | 4/6 = 67% | 2/6 = 33% | 4 |
| Item 10: | Str | Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) | 2/2 = 100% | 0 | 8 |
| Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children. | | | | | |
| Item 11: | *ANI | Proximity of foster care placement | 8/9 = 89% | 1/9 = 11% | 1 |
| Item 12: | ANI | Placement with siblings | 5/7 = 72% | 2/7 = 28% | 3 |
| Item 13: | ANI | Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care | 4/8 = 50% | 4/8 = 50% | 2 |
| Item 14: | Str | Preserving connections | 7/8 = 88% | 1/8 = 12% | 2 |
| Item 15: | ANI | Relative placement | 5/5 = 50% | 5/5 = 50% | 0 |
| Item 16: | ANI | Relationship of child in care with parents | 1/4 = 25% | 3/4 = 75% | 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 | 14/20 = 70% | 6/20 = 30% | 0 |
| Item 18: | ANI | Child and family involvement in case planning | 9/20 = 45% | 11/20 = 55% | 0 |
| Item 19: | ANI | Worker visits with child | 17/20 = 85% | 3/20 = 15% | 0 |
| Item 20: | ANI | Worker visits with parent(s) | 7/15 = 47% | 8/15 = 53% | 5 |
| Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. | | | | | |
| Item 21: | ANI | Educational needs of the child | 13/17 = 76% | 4/17 = 24% | 3 |
| Item 22: | Str | Physical health of the child | 17/19 = 89% | 2/19 = 11% | 1 |
| Item 23: | ANI | Mental health of the child | 10/15 = 67% | 5/15 = 33% | 5 |

The objective is that 90% of cases be rated "Strength".

Str = Strength

ANI = Area Needing Improvement

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