

**South Carolina Department of Social Services**  
**Child Welfare Quality Assurance Review: Berkeley County**  
**Summary Report**

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This summary report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) Berkeley County Quality Assurance Review, conducted July 7-11, 2014. The period under review was July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

DSS Child Welfare Quality Assurance Reviews are conducted using the *Onsite Review Instrument* (OSRI) finalized by the federal Administration for Children & Families (ACF) in July 2008. This instrument is used to review foster care and family preservation services cases. Twenty cases were reviewed including 10 foster care and 10 family preservation cases.

The OSRI is divided into three sections: safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. There are two safety outcomes, two permanency outcomes, and three well-being outcomes. Reviewers collect information on a number of *items* related to each of the outcomes through case file review, the use of the Child and Adult Protective Services System (CAPSS), and case related interviews. CAPSS is South Carolina’s Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), which contains all case related information. This information is detailed on the OSRI as support for rating selection.

The ratings for each *item* are combined to determine the rating for the outcome. The *items* are rated as *strength*, *area needing improvement*, or not applicable. Outcomes are rated as being substantially achieved, partially achieved, not achieved, or not applicable. Ratings for each of the outcomes are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Child Welfare QA Onsite Reviews – Ratings by Outcome**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Substantially Achieved</b>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved</b>
<b>Safety 1</b> CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	89% (8)	11% (1)	0% (0)
<b>Safety 2</b> CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE	50% (10)	25% (5)	25% (5)
<b>Permanency 1</b> CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS	10% (1)	90% (9)	0% (0)
<b>Permanency 2</b> THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN	50% (5)	50% (5)	0% (0)
<b>Well-Being 1</b> FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S NEEDS	10% (2)	70% (14)	20% (4)
<b>Well-Being 2</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	100% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)
<b>Well-Being 3</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS	59% (10)	35% (6)	6% (1)

Results for outcomes and *items* are reported by the number of cases and the percentage of total cases given each rating. In addition, the percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *areas needing improvement*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the *percentage of strengths*. Appendix 1 provides more detailed analysis of issues impacting the ANI ratings.

## SECTION I: REVIEW FINDINGS

### ***SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT***

Two *items* are included under Safety Outcome 1. Ratings for the two *items* are shown in Table 2.

#### **Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated and face-to-face contact with the child made, within the timeframes established by agency policies or State statute.

**Table 2.**

Rating	Item 1	Item 2
<i>Strength</i>	40% (8)	40% (8)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5% (1)	0% (0)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	55% (11)	60% (12)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>88.9% (8)</b>	<b>100% (8)</b>

#### **Item 2: Repeat maltreatment**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if any child in the family experienced repeat maltreatment within a 6-month period.

### ***SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE***

Two *items* are included under Safety Outcome 2. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 3.

#### **Item 3: Services to family**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children’s entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

**Table 3.**

Rating	Item 3	Item 4
<i>Strength</i>	30% (6)	65% (13)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	35% (7)	35% (7)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	35% (7)	0% (0)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>46.2% (6)</b>	<b>65% (13)</b>

#### **Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

### ***PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS***

Six *items* are included under Permanency Outcome 1. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 4.

#### **Item 5: Foster Care reentries**

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether children who entered foster care during the period under review were re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

#### **Item 6: Stability of foster care placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s).

**Item 7: Permanency goal for child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

**Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review, to achieve reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner.

**Item 9: Adoption**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made, or are being made, to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner.

**Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA)**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure:

- That the child is adequately prepared to make the transition from foster care to independent living (if it is expected that the child will remain in foster care until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated).
- That the child, even though remaining in foster care, is in a “permanent” living arrangement with a foster parent or relative caregiver and that there is a commitment on the part of all parties involved that the child remain in that placement until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated.
- That the child is in a long-term care facility and will remain in that facility until transition to an adult care facility.

Table 4.

Rating	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
Strength	10% (2)	35% (7)	35% (7)	10% (2)	0% (0)	10% (2)
Area needing improvement	0% (0)	15% (3)	15% (3)	10% (2)	35% (7)	0% (0)
Not Applicable	90% (18)	50% (10)	50% (10)	80% (16)	65% (13)	90% (18)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	100% (2)	70% (7)	70% (7)	50% (2)	0% (0)	100%(2)

**PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN**

Six items are included under Permanency Outcome 2. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 5.

**Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that the child’s foster care placement was close enough to the parent(s) to facilitate face-to-face contact between the child and the parent(s) while the child was in foster care.

**Item 12: Placement with siblings**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

**Item 13: Visiting with parents & siblings in foster care**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child’s relationship with these close family members.

**Item 14: Preserving connections**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child’s connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school, and friends.

**Item 15: Relative placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

**Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

Table 5.

Rating	Item 11	Item 12	Item 13	Item 14	Item 15	Item 16
Strength	30% (6)	15% (3)	15% (3)	35% (7)	15% (3)	10% (2)
Area needing improvement	5% (1)	10% (2)	25% (5)	10% (2)	25% (5)	30% (6)
Not Applicable	65% (13)	75% (15)	60% (12)	55% (11)	60% (12)	60% (12)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	<b>85.7% (6)</b>	<b>60% (3)</b>	<b>37.5% (3)</b>	<b>77.8% (7)</b>	<b>37.5% (3)</b>	<b>25% (2)</b>

**WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S NEEDS**

Four items are included under Well-Being Outcome 1. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 6.

**Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents (both at the child’s entry into foster care [if the child entered during the period under review] or on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency’s involvement with the family, and provided the appropriate services.

**Item 18: Child & family involvement in case planning**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

**Item 19: Caseworker visits with the child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote achievement of case goals.

**Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the children are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children and promote achievement of case goals.

**Table 6.**

Rating	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20
Strength	10% (2)	25% (5)	70% (14)	20% (4)
Area needing improvement	90% (18)	75% (15)	30% (6)	75% (15)
Not Applicable	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	<b>10% (2)</b>	<b>25% (5)</b>	<b>70% (14)</b>	<b>21.1% (4)</b>

**WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

One item is included under Well-Being Outcome 2. Ratings for the item are shown in Table 7.

**Item 21: Educational needs of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children’s educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

**Table 7.**

Rating	Item 21
Strength	35% (7)
Area needing improvement	0% (0)
Not Applicable	65% (13)
Total	100% (20)
% Strengths	<b>100% (7)</b>

**WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**

Two items are included under Well-Being Outcome 3. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 8.

**Item 22: Physical health of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the child, including dental health needs.

**Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the child(ren).

**Table 8.**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Item 22</b>	<b>Item 23</b>
<i>Strength</i>	55% (11)	50% (10)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	25% (5)	10% (2)
Not Applicable	20% (4)	40% (8)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>68.8% (11)</b>	<b>83.3% (10)</b>

**Table 9. Berkeley County *Percentage of Strengths* on 23 Quality Assurance Items Across Two Reviews**

Item	June 2013 PUR (6-1-2012 to 5-31-2013)	July 2014 PUR (7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014)
1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations	50%	88.9%
2. Reoccurrence of Maltreatment	71.4%	100%
3. Services to Family	41.7%	46.2%
4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	55%	65%
5. Foster Care Re-Entries	100%	100%
6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	90%	70%
7. Permanency Goal for Child	60%	70%
8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Perm. Placement with Relatives	0%	50%
9. Adoption	16.7%	0%
10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	66.7%	100%
11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	100%	85.7%
12. Placement with Siblings	75%	60%
13. Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	14.3%	37.5%
14. Preserving Connections	70%	77.8%
15. Relative Placement	40%	37.5%
16. Relationship of Child in Care with Parent	33.3%	25%
17. Needs and Services for Child, Parents, and Caregivers	30%	10%
18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	50%	25%
19. Worker Visits with Child	60%	70%
20. Worker Visits with Parents	25%	21.1%
21. Educational Needs of the Child	77.8%	100%
22. Physical Health of the Child	25%	68.8%
23. Mental Health of the Child	46.2%	83.3%

## SECTION II: FOSTER HOME LICENSE REVIEW

As part of the Quality Assurance Review Process in Berkeley County, ten Foster Home Licenses were randomly selected from the list of all licenses issued for the county during the period under review. These licenses are reviewed using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Foster Home License Review Instruments*. There is one instrument for issuance of initial licenses and another instrument for the renewal of licenses. Each instrument contains a section of deficiencies, namely agency oversight, data entry, and qualitative issues. Deficiencies noted in this section may not invalidate the license but still require attention and correction by county management. Each instrument includes the appropriate agency, state, and federal requirements.

Initial License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Initial home assessment studies
- References
- Information related to firearms and ammunition in the house
- Pet vaccination information
- Background checks
- Convictions
- Required trainings
- Medical reports
- Fire inspections/re-inspections
- DHEC/Lead inspections
- Central registry check on alternative caregiver, if applicable
- A review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS
- Completion and issuance of the 1513 prior to the license being issued
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools

Renewal License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Convictions
- Training hours
- Medical reports if a new household member has been added or if there is a change in foster parent's medical status
- Fire inspections
- FBI checks, if applicable
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools
- 1513 completed prior to issuance of the license
- Any amendments to the license, if applicable
- Documentation regarding if there are more than five children in the home
- Annual firearms location update
- Information concerning the alternative caregivers
- Safety checks of alternative caregivers
- A review of child protective service allegations
- Pet vaccination information
- A review of any regulatory infractions
- A review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS

Possible *deficiencies* found in Initial and Renewal cases include:

- Updated home studies
- Discipline Agreements
- Fire drills
- Quarterly home visits
- Disaster Preparedness Plans
- Alternative caregiver forms
- Applications
- Autobiography information
- Financial information
- Child factor's checklists
- Initial home assessment studies
- References

Areas noted as having occurred as required on the assessment are rated as *strengths*. Those *items* that were not met are rated as *area needing improvement (ANI)*. If the issue is not applicable, it is rated N/A.

Additionally, the percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Results of the review are noted in Table 10.

### Foster Home Licensing Findings for Berkeley County

**Initial License Cases.** Four foster care issuances for initial/standard license were reviewed. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Three of the cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* because all of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license issuance. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* for three cases include:

**Safety:**

- Documentation could not be located to verify a lead inspection was completed on a home. (1 case)

**Firearms:**

- Firearms and ammunition were documented to be stored together in a locked box. (1 case)
- Documentation could not be located to verify whether the agency had assessed if a family’s firearms and ammunition were stored separately. (1 case)

**Background Checks:**

- There was not documentation in the case file to verify that a SLED check for an individual was completed in timely manner. (1 case)

**Renewal License Cases.** Five cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* because all of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license renewal. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* for five cases include:

**Table 10. Summary of Ratings for Initial and Renewal Cases.**

Rating	Initial	Renewal
<i>Strength</i>	1 (25%)	1 (16.7%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	3 (75%)	5 (83.3%)
Total	4 (100%)	6 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>1 (25%)</b>	<b>1 (16.7%)</b>

**Background Checks:**

- There was not documentation in the case file to verify that central registry, SLED, sex offender registry, and/or FBI checks were completed for all applicable individuals. (5 cases)

**Fire Safety:**

- The case file did not include documentation verifying that all annual fire inspections for the re-licensure period were conducted. (2 cases)

**Training:**

- Training certificates for the re-licensure period were not located in the case file. (1 case)

**Deficiencies found in Initial and Renewal Cases.** Deficiencies were noted in nine of the files reviewed. Issues identified by the reviewers include:

### **Initial Case Deficiencies**

#### **Documentation:**

- Autobiographies were not located in the case file or were not signed and/or dated. (2 cases)
- Child factor's checklists were not located in the case file or could not be verified as completed. (2 cases)
- Documentation did not verify that the foster parents signed a Discipline Agreement. (1 case)

#### **Alternative Caregivers:**

- Documentation did not include identification of an alternative caregiver/ babysitter. (1 case)

### **Renewal Case Deficiencies**

#### **Alternative Caregivers:**

- Documentation did not include identification of an alternative caregiver/ babysitter. (5 cases)

#### **Documentation:**

- A completed Reassessment Study could not be located in the case file. (2 cases)
- The Licensing Application and license were not located in the case file. (2 cases)
- There was a discrepancy between the information documented on the current license and the documentation in CAPSS regarding the ages, age range, and gender of children allowed in the home. (1 case)

#### **Fire Drills:**

- Documentation verifying that fire drills were conducted within 24 hours of a child's placement was not located in the case file. (5 cases)
- Documentation verifying that quarterly fire drills were conducted while children were placed in foster homes was not located in the case file. (2 cases)

#### **Safety:**

- Documentation did not provide verification that all quarterly home visits were completed. (4 cases)
- Discipline Agreements were not located in the case file or were completed in an untimely manner. (1 case)
- Disaster Preparedness Plans were not located in the case file or were completed in an untimely manner. (1 case)

### SECTION III: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE NO ACTION REPORTS REVIEW

A review of ten no action reports was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed. The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports on which no action was taken by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review No Action Reports Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and fourteen questions regarding the no action decisions and processes (see Table 11).

**Table 11. Summary of Item Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	10	0	10
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	4	6	0	10
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	10	0	0	10
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	0	0	10	10
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	8	2	0	10
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	1	0	9	10
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	0	0	10	10
5. Safety factors documented on Intake Assessment not discovered by intake worker	1	9	0	10
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	10	0	0	10
7a. Risk Matrix results included statements contradictory to allegation	10	0	0	10
7b. Risk Matrix results failed to include all statements that support allegation	7	3	0	10
8. Contact with necessary collaterals prior to screen-out decision	2	2	6	10
9. Another intake referral on same perpetrator and/or child within 12 months	2	8	0	10
10. Intake Supervisor ensured consultation with another supervisory-level authority	0	2	8	10

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 12.

**Table 12. Summary of Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	10 (100%)
Total	10 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

In ten cases reviewed, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed.

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (7 cases)
- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix and/or other documentation did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (7 cases)

- The agency included information in the Risk Matrix that was not supported by the documentation of the information given by the reporter with no reconciliation documented. (3 cases)
- All prior intakes of a family were not documented in the Records Check Tab of the intake. (2 cases)
- Documentation of the inquiry in CAPSS conducted by the agency conflicted with the case file documentation without reconciliation documented. (3 cases)
- An evaluation of available documentation and information determined that there were safety factors applicable that were not identified by the agency without reconciliation/justification documented. (1 case)
- The Maltreatment Tab documentation in CAPSS was not accurately completed by the agency.
- There was no documentation in the case file to support that the agency made, or attempted to make, any direct contact with all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts as required. (1 case)
- Per documentation of the allegations made the allegation would have met the legal definition of maltreatment and the agency failed to accept the report without documentation to support reasoning for differences/decisions. (1 case)

**SECTION IV: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES UNFOUNDED REPORTS REVIEW**

Five unfounded reports were reviewed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed. The five unfounded reports were randomly selected from the list of all reports unfounded by the county during the period under review. The review was conducted using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Unfounded Report Instrument*. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and items regarding three primary areas (see Table 13):

- Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment,
- Repeat maltreatment, and
- Risk assessment and safety management.

**Table 13. Summary of Item Ratings for Unfounded Review**

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
1A. Investigation not initiated in accordance with timeframes and requirements	0	5	0	5
1B. Face-to-face contact not made in accordance with timeframes and requirements	2	3	0	5
1C. Delays in investigation initiation or face-to-face contact beyond control of agency	0	2	3	5
2A. At least one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report	0	5	0	5
2B. One substantiated or indicated maltreatment report within six months before or after	0	0	5	5
2C. Repeat maltreatment involving the same or similar circumstances	0	0	5	5
3A. Initial assessment of risk to the children and family in the home	3	2	0	5
3B. Ongoing assessment(s) of risk to the children and family in the home	0	5	0	5
3C. Safety concerns that were not adequately or appropriately addressed by the agency	4	1	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each decision to unfound. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 14.

**Table 14. Summary of Ratings for Unfounded Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5 (100%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Reasons that five unfounded cases reviewed violated pieces of agency policy and procedures include:

- Documentation did not provide sufficient verification of initial and/or ongoing assessments of all individuals. (5 cases)
- The agency failed to ensure and adequately document the occurrence of a forensic interview when indicated. (2 cases)
- There was no documentation to verify that the agency made, followed up with, and/or had substantive contact with all collaterals. (2 cases)
- Documentation did not provide sufficient verification that issues that should have been identified as safety concerns were addressed and/or determined to be inaccurate prior to the agency’s decision to unfound the case. (2 cases)

- The agency failed to document a follow-up or closure from recommendations made by medical providers to ensure that parents completed all indicated services, such as a drug screening. (2 cases)
- Documentation did not verify that the agency made initial face-to-face contact with a child within the specified timeframe. (1 case)
- Documentation did not verify that the agency conducted a thorough and comprehensive assessment of risk and safety including an assessment of the father's home where the children spent time. (1 case)
- There was no documentation in the case file to verify that the agency followed up with the reporter prior to the decision to unfound the case. (1 case)
- There was not documentation to verify that the agency made concerted efforts to contact a father who resided in the home. (1 case)
- Documentation did not provide sufficient verification that the agency conducted an assessment of a home in which a child resided. (1 case)
- The agency failed to document the identification of a protector for a child. (1 case)

## SECTION V: FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for reports referred to Family Support Services (FSS). The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Community-Based Prevention Services Assessment Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and sixteen questions regarding the referral to the (FSS) Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 15).

**Table 15. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	5	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	5	0	0	5
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	0	0	5	5
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	4	1	0	5
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	0	0	5	5
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	0	0	5	5
5. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	1	4	0	5
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	5	0	0	5
7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	4	1	0	5
7b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter	3	2	0	5
8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	3	1	1	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	1	4	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	0	1	4	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	3	2	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 16.

**Table 16. Summary of Ratings for FSS Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	1 (20%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	4 (80%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>1 (20%)</b>

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. In four cases reviewed, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (4 cases)
- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix and/or other documentation did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (3 cases)
- The allegation documentation would have met the legal definition of maltreatment, yet the agency documented that there was no maltreatment with no further documentation to support the reasoning for the differences or to document the justification of the final decision. (1 case)
- All existing safety factors noted in the file were not documented in the intake assessment process with no justification documented for the differences/reasons provided not to indicate the safety factors due to further information having been obtained. (1 case)
- There was no documentation to verify that the agency made, or attempted to make, contact with all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts. (1 case)

## SECTION VI: VOLUNTARY CASE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for reports referred to Voluntary Case Management (VCM). The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Community-Based Prevention Services Assessment Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and sixteen questions regarding the referral to the VCM Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 17).

**Table 17. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	2	3	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	3	2	0	5
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	1	0	4	5
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	3	2	0	5
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	1	0	4	5
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	1	1	3	5
5. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	1	4	0	5
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	3	0	2	5
7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	3	0	2	5
7b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter	3	0	2	5
8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	2	2	1	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	3	2	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	1	0	4	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	3	2	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 18.

**Table 18. Summary of Ratings for VCM Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5 (100%)
Total	5 (100%)
% <i>Strengths</i>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Information for the ratings was obtained by reviewing the case file and from CAPSS. In five cases reviewed, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (3 cases)
- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix and/or other documentation did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (3 cases)
- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (2 cases)
- The Maltreatment Tab documentation in CAPSS was not thoroughly completed. (2 cases)
- Through an evaluation of available documentation and information, the allegation would appear to meet the definition of maltreatment. According to the intake assessment, however, the allegation did not meet the legal definition of maltreatment without documented reasoning to support the inaccuracy of the allegations documented after further information was received. (1 case)
- Documentation did not verify that the agency completed a thorough research of CAPSS for family history. (1 case)
- The reporter was documented to have alleged that there was drug paraphernalia in the home and that the child played with illegal substances, which should have driven a higher risk rating for the case. No protective factors were addressed in the documentation to justify a decision to make a referral to VCM. (1 case)
- All previous intakes were not documented by the agency in the intake tab. (1 case)
- All existing safety factors noted in various areas of a file review were not noted by the agency in the intake assessment as risk factors without documentation of the inaccuracy of such information. (1 case)

## **APPENDIX 1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES CAUSING AN AREA NEEDING IMPROVEMENT (ANI) RATING FOR APPLICABLE CASES**

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses that were found in the cases for Berkeley County conducted July 7 – 11, 2014. The period under review was July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

### **Positives:**

*Items 2 (Repeat Maltreatment), 5 (Foster Care reentries), 10 (Other planned permanent living arrangement), and 21 (Educational needs of child)* were identified as *strengths* of the agency; all applicable cases reviewed were rated as *strength* with no *area needing improvement* (ANI).

### **Concerns:**

The following examines the *items* that had the highest ANI ratings.

- *Item 3 (Services to family)* - 7 of 13 (53.8%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to provide appropriate services to the family to prevent the children from entering foster care. (7 cases)  
Services were not provided to the following individuals:
    - Mother (5 cases)
    - Father (3 cases)
    - Grandparents, who lived in the same household of the mother and child (1 case)
    - Paramour (1 case)
  - The agency failed to seek court intervention when a mother and father were non-compliant with treatment related services. (1 case)
  - The agency failed to assess a father in a timely manner. (1 case)
  - The agency failed to document the completion of thorough assessments of all family members, specifically the following individuals: (1 case)
    - Paramour
    - Grandparents, who lived in the same household of the mother and child
  
- *Item 8 (Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives)* – 2 of 4 (50%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of reunification in a timely manner. (2 cases)

- One case specified that the great-grandmother was not offered services in a timely manner in order to achieve reunification. (1 case)
- *Item 9 (Adoption) – 7 of 7 (100%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner. (7 cases)
    - Documentation indicated that children were eligible for TPR, yet TPR complaints were not filed and/or completed in a timely manner. (5 cases)
    - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to work the concurrent plan of adoption and focused on the goal of relative placement. The agency delayed staffing the case because they planned to place the child with a relative, which did not happen. (1 case)
    - Documentation indicated that the goal of adoption was established; however, no adoptive resources were pursued. (1 cases)
- *Item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) – 5 of 8 (62.5%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The frequency of the visits was insufficient with the following family members: (5 cases)
    - Mother (3 cases)
    - Father (3 cases)
    - Alternative Caregiver who was granted custody when the child left care (1 case)
    - Siblings (1 case)
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote and/or maintain contact between the target child(ren) and their parents. (2 cases)
    - Mother (1 case)
    - Father (1 case)
  - The quality of the visits between the child and the mother was insufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship. (1 case)
- *Item 15 (Relative placement) – 5 of 8 (62.5%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to identify, locate, and evaluate relatives as potential placements for the target child. (5 cases) Potential placements include:
    - Paternal relatives (5 cases)
    - Maternal relatives (3 cases)

- Diligent searches were not conducted to identify possible paternal relatives. (2 cases)
- The agency did not make sufficient inquiry regarding possible relative placements with either the maternal or paternal relatives. (1 case)
- The documentation did not support that the agency identified maternal or paternal relatives to assess for potential placement. (1 case)
- *Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents)* – 6 of 8 (75%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote, support, and maintain positive relationships between the child and the family. (6 cases)  
Specific relationships affected include:
    - Child and mother (6 cases)
    - Child and father (4 cases)
    - Child and legal guardian (1 case)
  - Diligent searches were not conducted when the whereabouts of the father were unknown. (1 case)
- *Item 17 (Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents)* – 18 of 20 (90%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - Assessments were not conducted for the following individuals: (11 cases)
    - Father (9 cases)
    - Mother (5 cases)
    - Paramour (1 case)
  - Services were not provided for the following individuals: (4 cases)
    - Father (3 cases)
    - Mother (2 case)
    - Foster parent (1 case)
  - The agency failed to ensure that the father received the identified services. (2 cases)
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to provide services to the parents to ensure the minor child’s well-being. (1 case)
    - Mother (1 case)
    - Father (2 cases)
  - The agency failed to provide timely services to meet the needs of the legal guardian. (1 case)
- *Item 18 (Child & family involvement in case planning)* – 15 of 20 (75%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*

- The agency failed to make concerted efforts to involve the following people in the case planning process: (15 cases)
  - Father (11 cases)
  - Mother(s) (11 cases)
  - Paramour (1 case)
- A diligent search was not conducted when the whereabouts of the father were unknown. (1 case)
- The agency failed to engage the legal guardian in the case planning process in a timely manner. (1 case)
  
- *Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parents)* – 15 of 19 (78.9%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The frequency of the visitation was insufficient with the following family members: (14 cases)
    - Father (14 cases)
    - Mother(s) (9 cases)
    - Paramour (1 case)
  - The quality of visitation was insufficient between the agency and the following individuals: (8 cases)
    - Mother(s) (8 cases)
    - Father (5 cases)
  - Diligent searches were not conducted when the whereabouts of the father were unknown. (2 cases)