

**Saluda County DSS  
Child Welfare Services Review  
June 2006**

During the week of June 26-30, 2006 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an on-site review of child welfare services in Saluda 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, Saluda DSS supervisors, and representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Guardian Ad Litem.

**Period included in Case Record Review: December 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006**

**Period included in Outcome Measures: June 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006**

**Purpose**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources**

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

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

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

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Section One

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

**Summary of Findings**

**Overall Finding: Partially Achieved**

-Safety Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations. **Finding: Area Needing Improvement**  
 -Safety Item 2: Repeat maltreatment. **Finding: Strength**

Analysis of Safety Item 1 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
<b>Measure S1.1: Timeliness of initiating investigations</b> on reports of child maltreatment				
Data Time Period: 06/1/05 to 05/31/06				
	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective >= 99.99%*	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,349	15,723	16,347.37	-624.37
Saluda	66	62	65.99	-3.99

\* This standard is based on state law. It is not a federally established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Safety Item 1 : Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	100	0	0	4	0
Treatment	4	80	1	20	5	0
Total Cases	8	89	1	11	9	0

**Explanation of Item 1**

**This is an "Area Needing Improvement" for Saluda DSS.** State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. CAPSS data indicates that 4 of the 66 reports investigated during the period under review were not initiated timely (within 24 hours). Only one of those 4 cases was part of the sample for the onsite review.

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Analysis of Safety Item 2 Findings

**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

**Measure S1.2: Recurrence of Maltreatment** – Of all children who were victims of indicated reports of child abuse and/or neglect during the reporting period, the percent having another indicated report within a subsequent 6 month period.

Indicated Reports Between Dec 1, 2004 and Nov 30, 2005

	Number of Child Victims	Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Rept	Number of Children Objective <= 93.90%	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	10,273	60	9646.35	566.65
Saluda	33	0	30.99	2.01

Note: This is a federally established objective.

**Site Visit Findings** Performance Item Ratings

**Safety Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment.**

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20	0	0
Total Cases	16	89	2	11	0	0

**Explanation of Item 2**

**This is a “Strength” for Saluda DSS.** CAPSS data shows that there were no incidents of repeat maltreatment during the period under review. Onsite reviewers found two incidents of repeat maltreatment that were not captured by CAPSS. In one case, the children were taken into emergency protective custody by another county while Saluda DSS had an open treatment case on the family. In another instance the children in a treatment case suffered additional abuse by a grandparent caregiver, but the incident was not taken as a new report. Still, in terms of percentages, 89% of the cases managed by Saluda DSS experienced no repeat maltreatment.

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Section Two

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

**Summary of Findings**

**Overall Finding: Not Achieved**

-Safety Item 3: Services to prevent removal. **Finding: Area Needing Improvement**  
 -Safety Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren). **Finding: Area Needing Improvement**

Analysis of Safety Item 3 Findings

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b>		Performance Item Ratings				
<b>Safety Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal.</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	25	3	75	4	0
Treatment	5	56	4	44	1	0
Total Cases	6	46	7	56	5	0

**Explanation of Item 3**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Saluda DSS.** Over half of the cases reviewed were rated Area Needing Improvement for this item. The agency is placing children with relatives without assessing those relatives. Some records identified significant problems within the relative’s home, but the children were placed there anyway. Services were directed to the parents of the children but not to the relative caregivers, who sometimes had issues as serious as those of the parents from whom the children were removed.

**Stakeholder Comment:**

“There is no external oversight/ routine review of CPS that might provide checks and balances. There is the statewide safety plan issue and an over-reliance on relatives. Kinship care has been presented as a panacea for kids. The problems we see – unsuccessful placements, safety issues, birth parents intervention... relatives are given a lot of responsibility and then, DSS doesn’t provide enough support or services, and doesn’t provide enough child care.”

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Analysis of Safety Item 4 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure S2.2: <b>Risk of harm to child</b> – Of all unfounded investigations during the reporting period, the percent receiving subsequent reports within six months of the initial report.				
	Number Alleged Child Victims in an Unfounded Rept 12/01/04 to 11/30/05	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective >= 91.50%*	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	14,561	1,095	13,323.32	142.68
Saluda	47	0	43.01	4.00

This is a DSS established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Safety Item 4:</b> Risk of harm.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	63	3	37	0	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	11	61	7	39	0	0

**Explanation of Item 4**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Saluda DSS.** Risk of harm was adequately managed in only 61 percent of the cases reviewed. The risk of harm was not reduced in 7 of the 18 cases reviewed because of the problems described in item 3. The outcome report shows that there were no additional reports of abuse for the 47 unfounded investigations. That is because those reports were not entered into the system. Several stakeholders stated that they have stopped making reports to Saluda DSS because they have lost confidence in the agency.

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Section Three

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

**Summary of Findings**

**Overall Finding:**

- Item 5: Foster care re-entries
- Item 6: Stability of foster care placemt.
- Item 7: Permanency goal for child
- Item 8: Reunification, plmt w/ relatives
- Item 9: Adoption
- Item 10: Perm goal of other planned arrangmt

**Partially Achieved**

- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Strength**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Strength**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**

Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 5 Findings

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 5:</b> Foster care re-entries.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	100	0	0	4	0

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**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

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

	Number Children Entering Care 06/01/05 to 05/31/06	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Foster Care Episode	Number of Children Objective $\geq 91.40\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,301	257	3,017.11	26.89
Saluda	12	0	10.97	1.03

\* This is a federally established objective.

**Explanation**

**Foster Care Re-entries is a “Strength” for Saluda DSS.** The CAPSS report shows that the 12 children who entered foster care during the period under review had not recently been returned home from foster care. Onsite reviewers also found that children in care were not recent re-entries.

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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 6 Findings

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 6:</b> Stability of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	100	0	0	0	0

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.2: <b>Stability of Foster Care Placement</b> – Of all children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, the percent that had not more than 2 placement settings.				
	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number of Children With No More Than 2 Placements	Number of Children Objective $\geq 86.70\%*$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,610	3,080	3,303.27	-223.27
Saluda	12	12	10.40	1.60

Note: This is a federally established objective.

**Explanation**

**Stability of foster care placement is a “Strength.”** Both the outcome report from CAPSS and onsite review findings indicate that placements for Saluda foster children are stable.



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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 7 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.5: <b>Permanency Goal for Child</b> – Of all children who have been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the percent for which a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition has been filed.				
	Children in Care At Least 15 of Last 22 Months 06/2005 –05/2006	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective ≥ 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,620	1,676	1,918.60	-242.60
Saluda	5	4	2.65	1.35

\* This is DSS established objective. The federal agency, Administration for Children & Families, gathers data on this measure, but has not established a numerical objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 7:</b> Permanency goal for children.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	100	0	0	0	0

**Explanation of Item 7**

**This is a “Strength” for Saluda DSS.** To meet the criteria established in the CAPSS report 53.00% or more of the children in care, 15 of the most recent 22 months must have a TPR petition filed. For Saluda DSS the percentage is 80.0 (4/5). Onsite reviewers found that Saluda DSS did an excellent job of quickly determining the most appropriate treatment plan for the children in care.

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Analysis of Safety Permanency Item 8 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.3: <b>Length of Time to Achieve Reunification</b> – Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caregiver, at the time of discharge from foster care, the percent reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home.				
	Number of Children Where Fos Care Services Closed. Last Plan Was Return Home 06/01/05–05/31/06	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,383	1,990	1,815.85	174.15
Saluda	6	6	4.57	1.43

\* This is a federally established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 8:</b> Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	33	2	67	5	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Saluda DSS.** To meet this federally establish criteria at least 76.20% of the children returned to their parents from foster care must be returned within 12 months of their removal from home. In Saluda County all 6 of the children who returned home in the past year had been in care less than a year. Three of the 8 foster care cases in Saluda DSS had plans of Return Home. That plan was appropriate for only one of the children. The other two cases involved children who had been in care more than 12 months, with mothers who moved from place to place. For those two children the plan was inappropriate because it was not possible for them to return home.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 9 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.4: <b>Length of Time to Achieve Adoption</b> – Of all children who exited from foster care during the year under review to a finalized adoption, the percent that exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home.				
	Number of Children With Finalized Adoption W/in Past 12 Months	Number of Children Where Adoption Was Finalized Within 24 Months of Entering Care	Number of Children Objective $\geq 32.00\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	404	55	129.28	-74.28
Saluda	1	1	0.32	0.68

Note: This is a federally established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 9: Adoption.</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	50	1	50	6	0

**Explanation**

**This is a “Strength.”** The outcome report shows that Saluda DSS completed one adoption in the past year, and that adoption was completed within 24 months of the child entering care. Onsite reviewers saw two cases with the plan of Adoption. One of those cases was being managed in such a way that adoption could be completed within 24 months. In both cases the decision to pursue adoption was made early in the life of the case.

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Analysis of Permanency Item 10 Findings

<b><u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u></b>				
Measure P3.6: <b>Permanency Goal of “Other Planned Living Arrangement”</b> – Of all children in foster care, the percent with a permanency goal of emancipation (Indep Liv Services) or a planned permanent living arrangement other than adoption, guardianship, or return to family.				
	Number of Children In Care at Least One Day 06/01/05 – 05/31/06	Number of Children In Care With Perm Plan “Other Planned Living Arrangement”	Number of Children Objective >= 85.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	8,263	1,455	7,023.55	-215.55
Saluda	17	3	14.45	-0.45

\* This is a DSS established objective.

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 10:</b> Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	60	2	40	3	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Saluda DSS.** The standard for this objective is that no more than 15% of the children in foster care should have this plan (APPLA – Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement). Five of the 8 children in foster care had the plan of APPLA. There was no independent living plan developed for two of those children, nor did the record contain evidence that the children were receiving needed services.

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Section Four

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

**Summary of Findings**

**Overall Finding:**

- Item 11: Proximity of placement
- Item 12: Placement with siblings.
- Item 13: Visiting w/ parents & siblings
- Item 14: Preserving connections
- Item 15: Relative placement
- Item 16: Relationship of child w/ parents

**Partially Achieved**

- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Strength**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**

Analysis of Permanency Item 11 Findings

**Strategic Outcome Report Findings**

Measure P4.1: **Proximity of Foster Care Placement** – Of all children in foster care during the reporting period (excluding MTS and Adoptions children), the percent placed within their county of origin.

	Number of Children In Care 06/01/05 – 05/31/06	Number of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Percent of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Number of Children Objective >= 70.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	6,185	3,956	63.96	4,329.50	-373.50
Saluda	17	9	52.94	11.90	-2.90

\* This is a DSS established objective.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 11:</b> Proximity of foster care placement.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	80	1	20	3	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement” for Saluda DSS.** To meet this objective 70% or more of the children in care must be placed in Saluda County. The outcome report indicates that 53% (9/17) of the children in care were placed in the county. At the time of the onsite review the county had 5 foster homes, more than enough to accommodate 7 children. However, most of Saluda’s children were placed in neighboring Greenwood, Aiken and Edgefield counties. Children from some of those counties were in the Saluda foster homes. The counties in that part of the state readily share foster homes with one another. This practice prevents children from remaining in or near their home communities.

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 12:</b> Placement with siblings						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	100	0	0	5	0

**Explanation**

**This is a “Strength.”** It was apparent that the agency attempted to place siblings together when resources and circumstances made that possible. The need to keep siblings together is one of the reasons some children were placed out of county in Connie Maxwell Children’s Home in Greenwood County.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 13:</b> Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	80	1	20	3	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement.”** In most (80%) instances the agency did a good job of arranging for visits between children in foster care and their parents and with siblings placed in another setting. The one case rated “Area Needing Improvement” involved a sibling group of three – in which one of the children was managed by MTS and the other two by the county. Coordination between the two offices on visits was poor to non-existent.

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 14:</b> Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	71	2	29	1	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement.”** This item addresses the agency’s ability to preserve a child in foster care’s connection to the people, places and things that are important to him. In 5 of the 7 cases reviewed children were allowed to maintain their relationships with significant relatives through visits and telephone contact. One case was rated Area Needing Improvement because the agency chose not to work with the mother’s boyfriend, even though this man has functioned as the child’s father since the child’s birth.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 15: Relative placement</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	71	2	29	1	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement.”** This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in identifying and assessing the relatives of children in foster care as possible caregivers. In most (71%) of the cases reviewed there was evidence that both maternal and paternal relatives were assessed as placement options for the children in foster care. In both cases rated Area Needing Improvement the children entered foster care after the agency worked with their family as an in-home treatment case. Though the agency ruled out the parents and the grandmother caregiver, there was no evidence that other family members were assessed as placement options.

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Permanency Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	80	1	20	3	0

**Explanation**

**This is an “Area Needing Improvement.”** This item addresses the agency’s effectiveness in promoting or maintaining a strong emotionally supportive relationship between children in care and their parents. Most (80%) of the relevant cases showed parental involvement based on the needs of the child rather than merely meeting the minimum visitation requirement. One case was rated Area Needing Improvement because there was no diligent search for the biological father of the child in foster care, nor did the agency encourage or allow the involvement of the child’s surrogate father.



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Section Five

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

**Summary of Findings**

**Overall Finding:**

- Item 17: Needs & services
- Item 18: Involvement in case planning
- Item 19: Worker visits with child
- Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)

**Not Achieved**

- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Findings: Area Needing Improvement**

**Site Visit Findings** Performance Item Ratings

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

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	63	3	37	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	10	55	8	45	0	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Saluda 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? In treatment cases when Saluda DSS placed children with alternate caregivers, usually a grandparent, there was often no assessment of that caregiver's needs. In some cases focus was on the custodial parent, with little to no attention given to the non-custodial parent.

Both the stakeholders that were interviewed and the onsite reviewers connected quality work to a specific caseworker, and associated substandard work with a specific caseworker.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 18:</b> Child and family involvement in case planning						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	57	3	43	1	0
Treatment	3	30	7	70	0	0
Total Cases	7	41	10	59	1b	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement.**” Some (41%) cases showed evidence that the worker actually involved the parent(s) in the development of their case plan. Several cases had no case plan. Parents in treatment cases were usually not involved in case planning. Plans were either not written at all or were written by the caseworker and the parent was told what they had to do. Most case plans were not signed by parents.

<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 19:</b> Worker visits with child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	62	3	38	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	10	56	8	44	0	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement.**” This rating is based on two questions: 1) were Saluda DSS staff visiting children according to policy, and 2) did the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? Face to face visits with children was sporadic, inconsistent, often not according to agency policy.

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<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 20:</b> Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	40	3	60	3	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	6	40	9	60	3	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Saluda DSS. Saluda DSS often did not attempt to find or work with non-custodial fathers. This was true even when the record showed that the children had an on-going relationship with their father. Some cases had more than one father. In one such case a father of one sibling was involved by the efforts of the Department of Juvenile Justice.

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Section Six

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

**Summary of Findings**

**Overall Finding:**

**Partially Achieved**

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 21:</b> Educational needs of child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	71	2	29	1	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	12	63	5	37	1	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Saluda DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) did DSS assess the educational needs of the children under their supervision, and 2) were identified educational needs addressed? The answer to both questions was “Yes” for 12 of the 19 applicable cases reviewed. School records were in the files. Educational performance was assessed during monthly visits. But, when a problem was identified there was no intervention designed to deal with that problem.

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Section Seven

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

**Summary of Findings**

**Overall Finding:**

- Item 22: Physical health of the child
- Item 23: Mental health of the child

**Not Achieved**

- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**
- Finding: Area Needing Improvement**

<b><u>Site Visit Findings</u></b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 22:</b> Physical health of the child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	50	4	50	0	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for **Saluda DSS**. Half of the foster care cases showed no evidence of a physical examination in the past 12 months. Treatment and foster care cases were also rated Area Needing Improvement when the worker identified medical problems ranging from asthma to skin infections but failed to document any effort to follow-up to determine if medical needs were met.

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<b>Site Visit Findings</b> Performance Item Ratings						
<b>Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child</b>						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	43	4	57	1	0
Treatment	4	44	5	56	1	0
Total Cases	7	44	9	56	2	0

**Explanation**

This is an “**Area Needing Improvement**” for Saluda DSS. The mental health needs of some children were assessed. The needs of other children were not assessed. The identified mental health needs of some children were attended to by medical or mental health professionals. In other cases there was no evidence to show that identified needs were addressed.

**Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses**

**Foster Home Licenses**

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Saluda DSS. Saluda had 5 licensed foster homes at the time of the onsite review. All 5 records were reviewed.

**Strengths**

- Quarterly visits were conducted timely.
- Training hours were well documented.
- All inspections were done timely.
- All background checks completed.

**Area Needing Improvement**

- Agency using obsolete licensing assessment forms and not using most recent Quarterly visit checklist. Consequently, issues like corporal punishment, fire arms, etc., not addressed with foster parents.
- Children from other counties placed in Saluda foster homes, while Saluda County children placed in other counties.

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Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

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

This is a **“Strength”** for Saluda DSS. All investigations were initiated according to policy. Assessments included appropriate collateral contacts. The decision to unfound the case was supported by the available evidence.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

**Screened Out Intakes**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Cannot Determine</b>
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	8	1	1
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	0	1	9
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	6	2	2

This is an **“Area Needing Improvement”** for Saluda DSS. Screened out intakes were handled appropriately in 8 of the 10 cases reviewed. The evidence gathered during the intake process supported those decisions. However, in one case the agency should have contacted the school to determine if school officials had reason to be concerned about the 6 year old who was the object of the report. In another case, a child was allegedly bruised by physical abuse. That child should have been seen by the agency.

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**Case Rating Summary**

The performance and outcome ratings below show the number of cases receiving that rating, followed by the percent of the total that number represents. Not Applicable (N/A) cases do not factor in the percentage.

Performance Item or Outcome	Perf. Item Ratings			Outcome Ratings			
	Strength	Area Needing Improvement	N/A*	Substantially Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	N/A*
Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.				16 (89%)		2 (11%)	
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	8 (89%)	1 (11%)	9				
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	16 (89%)	2 (11%)					
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				10 (56%)	3 (11%)	6 (33%)	
Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	5				
Item 4: Risk of harm to child (ren)	11 (61%)	7 (39%)					
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				5 (63%)	3 (37%)		
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	4 (100%)		4				
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	8 (100%)						
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	8 (100%)						
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	5				
Item 9: Adoption	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	8				
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	3				
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				6 (75%)	2 (25%)		
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	3				
Item 12: Placement with siblings	3 (100%)		5				
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	3				
Item 14: Preserving connections	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	1				
Item 15: Relative placement	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	1				
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	3				
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				7 (39%)	8 (42%)	3 (19%)	
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	13 (55%)	8 (45%)					
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	7 (41%)	10 (59%)	1				
Item 19: Worker visits with child	10 (56%)	8 (44%)					
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	6 (49%)	9 (60%)	3				
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				11 (61%)	5 (28%)	1 (11%)	1
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	12 (63%)	5 (37%)	1				
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				6 (33%)	3 (17%)	9 (50%)	
Item 22: Physical health of the child	8 (49%)	10 (56%)					
Item 23: Mental health of the child	7 (44%)	9 (56%)	2				