

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

During the week of October 26 - 30, 2009, a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Union County. A sample of open and closed foster care and treatment cases were reviewed. Also reviewed were screened-out intakes, foster home licensing records, and unfounded investigations. Stakeholders interviewed for this review included foster parents, foster children, Union DSS supervisors and workers, representative from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health, Family Court Judge, Law Enforcement and Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Period under Review: October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009

Purpose

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

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

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

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.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Ratings

The standard that must be met for all items reviewed onsite is 95%. Each outcome report has its own standard. To be rated an area of **Strength** most items must 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 | Area Needing Improvement |

Agency Data				
Performance Measure 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations on reports of child maltreatment - Of all reports of child maltreatment that were accepted for investigation during the reporting period, what percentage had a dictation type contact of initial contact where the action date is within 24 hours of accepting the report? Report Period: 09/ 1/ 2008 to 08/ 31/ 2009				
Objective: 100% in <= 24 hours (state law)				
	Number of Determinations	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Percent of Investigations Initiated Timely	Numbers of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	17,908	17,547	97.98%	-361
Union	198	193	97.47%	-5

Explanation of Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union 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, Union initiated 193 of its 198 investigations (97.47%) of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours. Reviewers found several cases with high risk ratings that the agency failed to initiate contact as required by policy within the two-hour timeframe. All risk ratings were assigned appropriately.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Onsite Review Findings

Safety Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	19	95	1	5	0	0

Explanation of Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment

This is an area of **Area Needing Improvement** for Union 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 shows that 83.13% of the treatment cases closed were not involved in a subsequent indicated incident of maltreatment. The 14 closed treatment cases that were subsequently re-reported and founded for abuse or neglect caused the county's performance on this item to fall below the state average.

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 **Strength**
- 4) Risk of Harm **Area Needing Improvement**

Onsite Review Findings

Safety Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in Home and Prevent Removal

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	100	0	0	4	0
Treatment	10	100	0	0	0	0
Total Cases	16	100	0	0	4	0

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

This is an area of **Strength** for Union DSS. This item assesses whether services were adequate to protect children in their home and prevent their removal and placement into foster care. In 100% of the foster care and treatment cases reviewed, appropriate services were being offered to safely maintain the children in their home when it was appropriate to do so.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Onsite Review Findings

Safety Item 4: Risk of Harm

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	8	80	2	20	0	0
Total Cases	18	90	2	10	0	0

Explanation of Item 4: Risk of Harm

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item assesses whether the agency's interventions reduced risk of harm to children. In 100% of the foster care cases reviewed risk of harm was adequately managed. However, 20% of the treatment cases needed improvement. In one case the agency failed to complete criminal background checks and assessments on other adults in the home who had an active role in the children's lives. In another case that involved domestic violence, the paternal grandparents took the children to visit their father each week at the father's home. However, there is no evidence that the agency assessed the visits or the grandparents to ensure that the children were safe.

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

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

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

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Agency Data

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

Report Period: 09/01/08 to 08/31/09

Objective: 90.1% (Federal Standard)

	Number of Foster Children Reunified during Reporting Period	Number of Children Who Did Not Re-enter Foster Care Within 12 Months	Percent of Children Who Did Not Re-Enter Foster Care Within 12 Months	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2953	2711	91.80%	50.3
Union	11	8	72.73%	-1.9

Explanation of Item 5: Foster Care Re-entries

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item measures the frequency of children re-entering foster care within a year of discharge. To meet the objective for this item, 90.1% of children must not re-enter foster care within a year of discharge. Agency data shows that 72.73% of the children did not re-enter foster care within 12-months of the date of their discharge from the previous foster care episode. Reviewers determined that children most often re-entered foster care from placements with relatives who had good intentions, but who underestimated the long-term challenges they faced.

Agency Data

Performance Measure 6: Stability of Foster Care Placements - Of all children who had been in foster care at least 8 days but less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home, the percentage that had no more than two placements settings.

Report Period: 09/01/08 to 08/31/09

Objective: >= 86% (Federal Standard)

	Foster Care Services Open > 7 days and < 12 months	Number with No More than 2 Placements	Percent with No More than 2 Placements	Number Above (Below) Objective
State	3878	2907	74.962%	-222.5
Union	72	57	79.17%	-4.9

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Explanation of Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item measures the frequency of placement changes for children in foster care, and assesses the reasons for those changes. The objective is that at least 86.7% of the children in care have two or fewer placements within 12 months. Agency data shows that 79.17% of Union County children had two or fewer placements. The practice in Union DSS is to use a group home or shelter as the initial placement for children entering care. The rationale was that, in those settings, children received their medical and mental health assessments, and it gave caseworkers time to determine the most appropriate setting for the children.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>						
Permanency Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0

Explanation of Item 7: Permanency Goal for Children

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness of permanency goals for children in foster care and the timeliness of those permanency decisions. Reviewers determined that in 90% of the foster care cases reviewed, the agency quickly identified the appropriate goal. One case needed improvement because the agency assigned a plan of return home for a child, even though the parent's rights had been terminated for two of the child's siblings.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>						
Permanency Item 8: Reunification or Permanent Placement with Relatives						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	86	1	14	3	0

Explanation of Item 8: Reunification or Permanent Placement with Relatives

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the activities and processes necessary to accomplish the goal of reunification with caregivers or placement with relatives. Reviewers found that in 86% of the cases reviewed the agency had completed the necessary activities to return the child home. However, one case needed improvement due to concerns regarding the agency's lack of assessment of the mother's living environment as to

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

whether or not the environment was appropriate for the child to return home. The child has been in care for almost a year and there was little progress on the treatment plan. In that case the agency failed to schedule drug tests and psychological examinations for the mother as court ordered.

Agency Data				
Performance Measure 9: Time to Finalize Adoption – Of all children who left foster care due to finalized adoption during the reporting year, what percentage, what percentage left foster care in less than 24 months from the date of their latest removal from home? Report Period: 09/01/08 to 08/31/09				
Objective: >= 36.6% (National 75 th Percentile)				
	Total Number of Finalized Adoptions	Number of Adoptions finalized < 24 months	Percent of Adoptions Finalized < 24 months	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	524	104	19.85%	-87.8
Union	1	0	0.00%	-0.4

Onsite Review Findings						
Permanency Item 9: Adoption						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	4	100	6	0

Explanation of Item 9: Adoption

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the process within the child welfare system to achieve timely adoptions for children in foster care. Agency data shows that Union DSS completed one adoption in SFY2008 and has already completed one adoption in SFY2009. However, none were finalized within 24 months of the child entering care. The onsite review revealed that all of the children with the plan of adoption had already been in care for more than 24 months. Reviewers saw delays in changing the plan from reunification to adoption, locating and identifying non-custodial fathers and scheduling of the TPR hearing.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Onsite Review Findings

Permanency Item 10: Permanency Goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0

Explanation of Item 10: Permanency Goal of APPLA

This is an area of **Strength** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of services provided to children with the permanency plan of APPLA. Reviewers also rate whether the agency attempted to locate and reassess relatives or non-relatives that were willing to commit to the youth's long-term care every six months. Reviewers found that in the cases reviewed, there was documentation to support that the children with the plan of APPLA were receiving the appropriate Independent Living services and had an identified resource (foster parent) to help them achieve the goal of APPLA.

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

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

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

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Agency Data

Performance Measure 13: Foster Children Placed in 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?

Report Period: 09/01/08 to 08/31/09

Objective: >= 70% (Agency established objective)

	Total Number of Children<18 and in care during report period	Number of Children Placed in County of Origin	Percent of Children Placed in County of Origin	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	5987	4063	67.86%	-127.9
Union	86	18	20.93%	-42.2

Explanation of Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to keep children close enough to their families so that essential relationships can be maintained. One measure used to evaluate this item is the percentage of children who are placed within the county. The objective is that at least 70% of the children in care be placed within the county. Agency data shows that 20.93% of Union DSS children were placed within the county. Most of the children were sibling groups that were placed out of the county so that they could reside in the same home. The lack of foster homes available to care for sibling groups caused the out-of-county placements.

Onsite Review Findings

Permanency Item 12: Placement with Siblings

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	100	0	0	5	0

Explanation of Item 12: Placement with Siblings in Foster Care

This is an area of **Strength** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to keep siblings together when it is appropriate to do so. In 100% of the cases reviewed, sibling groups were kept together when appropriate.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>						
Permanency Item 13: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	20	8	80	0	0

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to ensure that visits occur between children in foster care and their siblings and parents. Improvement was needed in 80% of the cases because the agency either failed to arrange visits between children and their non-custodial fathers or failed to assess the appropriateness of such visits. There was a lack of diligent search for the fathers. Visitation with siblings was not an issue due to the siblings being placed together in the same foster or group home.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving Connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80	2	80	0	0

Explanation of Item 14: Preserving Connections

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to preserve children's connections to the people, places and things that are important to them. In 80% of the cases reviewed, agency effort was present to help children maintain their relationships with family and friends. However, in two cases, reviewers found no documentation to support the agency's efforts to preserve the child's connections to their biological family members, other than parents and siblings, with whom they had a close relationship.

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

Explanation of Item 15: Relative Placement

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to identify and assess relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. In

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

50% of the cases reviewed, reviewers found that the agency did not look for or assess maternal and paternal relatives as placement options.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>						
Permanency Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	44	5	56	1	0

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to promote a supportive relationship between children in care and their parents, beyond the twice-minimum visitation requirement. In 56% of the cases reviewed, reviewers found no evidence of the agency's efforts to support the parent-child relationship based on the needs of the child. Agency policy requires that child contact with parents take into consideration factors such as the age of the child, issues associated with transitioning a child back into the home, etc. These factors should have affected the content of visitation plans.

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

The county's performance on this outcome is based on the rating of four items.

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

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>						
Well Being Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, Foster Parents						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	50	5	50	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	10	50	10	50	0	0

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union 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? This is a weak area for both foster care and treatment cases. In 50% of the foster care cases and in 50% of the treatment cases reviewed, needs and services of the child and parents were not adequately assessed. In most of the cases that needed improvement the agency failed to assess the foster and non-custodial parent's needs. This item's weakness may be attributed to the lack of quality assessments and documentation. Throughout most of the period under review the office was staffed below 50% and the newly hired workers had less than one year of experience.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>						
Well Being Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	50	5	50	0	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	11	55	9	45	0	0

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

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's efforts to involve parents and children in the case planning process. Reviewers found that 50% of the foster care cases and 60% of the treatment cases needed improvement because the parents and the age-appropriate children were not involved in the case planning process. This rating was affected by the agency's failure to diligently look for and engage the fathers of children in care. This rating was also affected by the presence of incomplete and unsigned treatment plans in the case files.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Agency Data

Performance Measure 14: Face-to-Face Visits with Children (<18 years of age) - Of all children in foster care and treatment for at least one full calendar month during the reporting period, what percentage of children had a documented face-to-face visit every full calendar month during the reporting period?

Report Period: 09/1/08 to 08/31/09

Objective: >= 100% (Agency established objective)

	Number of Children Under Agency Supervision at least One complete Calendar Month	Number of Children visited Every Month	Percent of Children Visited Every Month	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
Foster Care	74	71	95.95%	55.0
Treatment	253	172	67.98%	2.2

Onsite Review Findings

Well Being Item 19: Worker Visits with Child(ren)

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	60	4	40	0	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	13	65	7	35	0	0

Explanation of Item 19: Worker Visits with Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with children under agency supervision, and evaluates the quality of those visits. State law and agency policy require that children under agency supervision be seen each month. Agency data shows that 95.95% of the foster children in foster care and 67.98% of the children in treatment cases were visited monthly. Reviewers determined that the majority of the visits were conducted at the agency and the content of those visits did not always address safety, permanency and child well-being issues.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Onsite Review Findings

Well Being Item 20: Worker Visits with Parent(s)

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	40	6	60	0	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	8	40	12	60	0	0

Explanation of Item 20: Worker Visits with Parents

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item measures the frequency of caseworker visits with parents, and evaluates the quality of those visits. Improvement was needed in 60% of the foster care and 60% of the treatment cases due to the agency's failure to visit both parents during the period under review, especially when the plan was to return the child home to their parents. Reviewers also noted that the majority of the visits with the parents were conducted at the agency rather than in the parents' homes. Caseworkers did not consistently use their visits with parents to discuss treatment or permanency related topics.

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

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

21) Educational needs 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	83	1	12	4	0
Treatment	6	100	0	0	4	0
Total Cases	11	92	1	8	8	0

Explanation of Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and address the educational needs of children under agency supervision. In 83% of the foster care cases and in 100% of the treatment cases reviewers found that workers

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

made direct contact with the school and there were also copies of grade reports and attendance records in the files. This item failed to achieve the 95% objective because of a foster care case in which a child's progress report indicated that the child was failing, but the agency did not act on this information.

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

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

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

Onsite Review Findings

Well Being Item 22: Physical Health of the Child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	50	5	50	0	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	14	70	6	30	0	0

Explanation of Item 22: Physical Health of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and meet the medical needs of children under agency supervision. In 50% of the foster care cases and in 90% of the treatment cases, reviewers determined that the physical health and dental needs of the children were assessed and the identified medical needs were met. Copies of medical, dental and immunizations records were in most of the cases. Half of the foster care cases needed improvement because the agency failed to follow-up on identified medical or dental needs.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>						
Well Being Item 23: Mental Health of the Child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	71	2	29	3	0
Treatment	5	71	2	29	3	0
Total Cases	10	71	4	29	6	0

Explanation of Item 23: Mental Health of the Child

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's ability to assess and meet the mental health needs of children under agency supervision. In 71% of the foster care and in 71% of the treatment cases reviewed, the children's mental health needs were assessed and met. This area needed improvement because children did not consistently receive services called for in their mental health assessments. Some of the delays were caused by a failure to connect the child to another provider when the child's placement changed.

Unfounded Investigations

Onsite Review Findings

	Yes	No
Was the investigation initiated timely?	4	1
Was the assessment adequate?	3	2
Was the decision adequate?	5	0

Explanation of Item 24: Unfounded Investigations

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the agency's investigative process and determines if decisions were supported by the facts of the cases. Four of the five investigations were initiated timely. The decisions were appropriate because the investigators gathered enough information to determine that no condition existed in the home that met the legal definition of abuse or neglect by a parent or a person acting as a parent. However, there were cases that did not meet that legal definition but the children in the home were still at risk of harm for other reasons. In those instances the agency failed to connect the families to other service providers who could provide the needed assistance.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

Screened Out Intakes

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u>	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	8	2	0 Not Applicable
Were necessary Collaterals Contacted?	5	1	4
Were Appropriate Referrals made?	1	1	8

Explanation of Item 25: Screened Out Intakes

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Union DSS. This item evaluates the process by which the agency screens out reports of abuse and/or neglect to determine if the intakes were appropriately screened out. Two intakes that were screened out should have been accepted for investigation because the allegations listed in the report met the legal definition of child abuse and neglect and warranted an investigation.

Foster Home Licenses

Agency Data				
Performance Measure 4: Foster Homes/Facilities with Current Licenses				
Objective: >= 100% (Agency Policy)				
	Number of Open Homes & Facilities	Homes with Current License	Percent of Homes with Current License	Above or (Below) Standard
State	3566	3526	98.88%	
Union	12	12	100.00%	0.1

Explanation of Item 26: Foster Home Licenses

This is an area of **Strength** for Union DSS. A review of licensing records showed many areas of strength and that all licenses issued were valid.

**Union County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
October 2009**

UNION 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	8/10=80%	2/10=20%	10
Item 2: ANI	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: Str	Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal	16/16=100%	0	4
Item 4: ANI	Risk of harm to child(ren)	18//20=90%	2/20=10%	0
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				
Item 5: *ANI	Foster care re-entries	5/5=100%	0	5
Item 6: *ANI	Stability of foster care placement	6/10=60%	4/10=40%	0
Item 7: ANI	Permanency goal for child	9/10=90%	01/10=10%	0
Item 8: ANI	Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	6/7 = 86%	1/7=14%	3
Item 9: ANI	Adoption	0	4/4=100%	6
Item 10: Str	Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)	1/1=100%	0	9
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: Str	Placement with siblings	5/5=100%	0	5
Item 13: ANI	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	2/10=20%	8/10=80%	0
Item 14: ANI	Preserving connections	8/10=80%	2/10=20%	0
Item 15: ANI	Relative placement	5/10= 50%	5/10=50%	0
Item 16: ANI	Relationship of child in care with parents	4/9=44%	5/9=56%	1
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	10/20=50%	10/20=50%	0
Item 18: ANI	Child and family involvement in case planning	11/20=55%	9/20=45%	0
Item 19: ANI	Worker visits with child	13/20=65%	7/20=35%	0
Item 20: ANI	Worker visits with parent(s)	8/20=40%	12/20=60%	0
Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				
Item 21: ANI	Educational needs of the child	11/12=92%	1/12=8%	8
Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				
Item 22: ANI	Physical health of the child	14/20=70%	6/20=30%	0
Item 23: ANI	Mental health of the child	10/14=71%	4/14=29%	6

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

Str = Strength

ANI = Area Needing Improvement

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