

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Final Report: Oregon Child and Family Services Review
February 2008

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Oregon. The CFSR is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSR is implemented by the Children's Bureau (CB) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Oregon CFSR was conducted the week of September 10, 2007. The period under review for the case reviews was from April 1, 2006, to September 10, 2007. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Child, Adult and Families Division (CAF) of the Oregon Department of Human Services
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal year (FY) 2003, FY 2004, and FY 2005
- Reviews of 65 cases (41 foster care cases¹ and 24 in-home services cases) at three sites throughout the State, including 31 cases in Multnomah County, 17 cases in Deschutes County, and 17 cases in Marion County
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders, including but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys

Background Information

The CFSR assesses State performance on 23 items relevant to seven outcomes and 22 items pertaining to seven systemic factors. In the Systemic Factors section of the report, each item incorporated in each systemic factor is rated as either a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement, based on whether State performance on the item meets Federal policy requirements. Information relevant to each item comes from the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews conducted during the week of the Onsite Review. The overall rating for the systemic factors is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either in substantial conformity with that factor (i.e., a score of 3 or 4) or not in substantial conformity with that factor (a score of 1 or 2).

¹ The CFSR usually includes 40 foster care cases and 25 in-home services cases. However, during the Onsite Review, it was discovered that one of the in-home services cases involved a child who was in foster care. Therefore, the case was designated as a foster care case.

Items relevant to the seven outcomes are discussed in the Outcomes section of the report. An overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 items, depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the case reviews. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as a Strength. Performance ratings for each of the seven outcomes are based on item ratings for each case. A State may be rated as having Substantially Achieved, Partially Achieved, or Not Achieved the outcome. The determination of whether a State is in substantial conformity with a particular outcome is based on the percentage of cases that were determined to have substantially achieved the outcome. Specifically, for a State to be in substantial conformity with an outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome.

ACF has set very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be acceptable. The focus of the CFSR process is on continuous quality improvement, and high standards are set to ensure ongoing attention to the goal of achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being.

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95 percent standard established for the CFSR Onsite Review at the end of their PIP implementation. ACF recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often are time-consuming to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with ACF to establish a specified amount of improvement or implement specified activities for their PIPs. That is, for each outcome or item that is an Area Needing Improvement, each State (working in conjunction with CB) specifies how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the Areas Needing Improvement and determines the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its PIP and still not perform at the 95 percent (for outcomes) or 90 percent (for items) level as required by the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSR assesses a State's current level of functioning with regard to achieving desired child and family outcomes by once more applying high standards and a consistent, comprehensive case-review methodology. This is intended to serve as a basis for continued planning in areas in which the State still needs to improve. The goal is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the closing of the PIP.

Because many changes have been made in the onsite CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State's performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of percentages. Key changes in the CFSR process that make it difficult to compare performances across reviews are the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to increase consistency and to ensure an assessment of critical areas, such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

The 2007 CFSR identified three areas of high performance in Oregon with regard to achieving outcomes for children. The State achieved overall ratings of Strength for the individual indicators pertaining to foster care reentry (item 5), placing children in close proximity to their parents (item 11), and placement with siblings (item 12).

The CFSR identified several areas of concern with regard to achieving outcomes for children and families. The State did not meet the two national standards for the safety-related data indicators—one pertaining to recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period and one pertaining to maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff members. The State also did not meet the national standards for any of the four data composites pertaining to permanency. These include the timeliness and permanency of reunification (Permanency Composite 1), the timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2), achieving permanency for children in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3), and placement stability (Permanency Composite 4).

In addition, case review findings indicated the following:

- Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was substantially achieved in only 46.3 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs) was substantially achieved in only 38.5 percent of the cases.
- Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate) was substantially achieved in only 60.0 percent of the cases.
- Safety Outcome 1 (Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect) was substantially achieved in only 62.5 percent of the cases.

The State's low performance with regard to child outcomes may be due, in part, to a lack of key services and to delays in service provision across the State. Concerns about service delays and gaps were particularly apparent with regard to mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and affordable services for parents without health insurance. The scarcity of services was found to affect the State's effectiveness in maintaining children safely in their own homes. Case review findings indicated that many children remained at risk of harm in their own homes because the services provided to the families often were not sufficient to address all of the safety and risk issues in the home. Both the case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that, although needs assessments generally are conducted, the services recommended through the assessments are not always provided, often because of a scarcity of

these services. Lack of sufficient substance abuse treatment services for parents also was identified as a concern with regard to achieving permanency for children in a timely manner, and lack of sufficient mental health services for children was noted to contribute to a lack of placement stability for many children in the cases reviewed.

Another key finding, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, is that Oregon began a new statewide practice in March 2007 called the Oregon Safety Model (OSM) to address safety concerns. This model was intended to provide caseworkers with critical thinking tools to better assess the key factors necessary to develop in-home safety and service plans and to determine if children can be maintained safely in their own homes. However, stakeholders reported that the OSM is not being implemented consistently across the State.

The State's low performance on many of the outcomes also may be attributed, in part, to the lack of frequent and meaningful contact between caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads. Caseworker contacts with children were found to be of sufficient frequency and quality in only 55 percent of the cases reviewed, and contacts with parents were found to be of sufficient frequency and quality in only 39 percent of the cases reviewed. This lack of contact makes it difficult to ensure children's safety while they are in their own homes or in foster homes, and it also makes it difficult to engage parents of children in foster care in services to meet the requirements of their case plan so that children can return home. In addition, the case reviews found that parents and age-appropriate children were involved in case planning in only 44 percent of the cases.

Another key issue identified in the Oregon CFSR pertained to the safety of children in foster care. Not only did the State not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to maltreatment in foster care, but in 6 (15 percent) of the 41 applicable foster care cases, reviewers indicated that there were maltreatment concerns in the foster home and that these concerns were not adequately addressed by the agency. A related concern was voiced by stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR, who indicated that in many areas of the State, foster homes are operating over capacity. These stakeholders said that "exceptions" to the policy are routinely sought and approved because of the extreme shortages of foster homes. They also noted that, although policy requires that foster homes operating over capacity be monitored every 90 days, there is no way of tracking the homes that have more than the required number of children and, therefore, there is no way of ensuring that the 90-day monitoring visits are being made.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

With regard to systemic factors, Oregon was found to be in substantial conformity with the factors of Quality Assurance System, Training, and Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Oregon was not in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Statewide Information System; Case Review System; Service Array; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

The specific findings with regard to the State's performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance with regard to the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR. In the following section, key findings are summarized for each

outcome and systemic factor. Information also is provided about the State's performance on each outcome and systemic factor during the 2001 CFSR.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

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

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two indicators. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment (item 2).

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance varied across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 89 percent of Marion County cases, compared to 55 percent of Multnomah and Deschutes County cases.

Oregon also did not meet the national standards for the two data indicators relevant for Safety Outcome 1. These indicators pertain to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for Safety Outcome 1 during its first CFSR conducted in FY 2001. The following key concerns were noted in the 2001 CFSR:

- A lengthy screening process delayed assignment of cases to an intake caseworker.
- There was inadequate documentation in the case files of the intake and investigation timelines.
- Repeat maltreatment was found in some of the in-home services cases.

To address these concerns, Oregon implemented the following strategies during its PIP:

- Developed specialized data reports regarding timeliness of investigations and repeat maltreatment and disseminated them to the field to be used to monitor performance in these areas
- Revised agency policy to ensure consistent practice with regard to screening maltreatment reports and determining dispositions
- Supported implementation of new policies and practices through developing online applications of the new tools and procedures and incorporating them into the agency's information technology system
- Provided staff training for current staff on the new policies and also incorporated this training into the training for new caseworkers

The key concerns identified in Oregon's 2001 CFSR were not found in the 2007 CFSR for Safety Outcome 1. In particular, few cases in 2007 involved concerns regarding the timeliness of the screening process and assigning cases for investigation. The key concerns

identified in the 2007 CFSR pertained to a lack of timely initiation of investigations. Most (77 percent) of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for timeliness of investigation involved reports that were given a 5-day timeframe for initiation of response.

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

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two indicators. One indicator (item 3) addresses the issue of child welfare agency efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing services to the families that ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other indicator (item 4) pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to reduce the risk of harm to the children.

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 60 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance on this item varied across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 76 percent of Marion County cases, 55 percent of Multnomah County cases, and 53 percent of Deschutes County cases.

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for Safety Outcome 2 in the 2001 CFSR. The following concerns relevant to this item were noted in the 2001 CFSR:

- In some cases, services did not address pertinent risk factors such as co-occurring drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence.
- There was little evidence that risk was assessed on an ongoing basis or that it was adequately assessed at case closure.
- Stakeholders expressed concern about the adequacy of safety plans.
- Stakeholders expressed concern about the availability of post-reunification support services.
- In some cases, when new potential maltreatment information was received on an open case, it was noted in the case record, but it was not formally reported or investigated.

To address these concerns, Oregon implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Developed standards for treatment service providers requiring them to document parent behavior changes for parents in both the in-home services cases and the foster care cases, including a specific requirement that behavior changes were to be assessed for parents prior to a reunification decision
- Developed a Guided Assessment Process (GAP) and needs-planning process that includes standards, tools, and procedures for assessing safety and risk on an ongoing basis and at critical case junctures
- Revised agency policy to support comprehensive ongoing assessments and safety planning

In the 2007 CFSR, one of the key concerns noted in the 2001 CFSR continued to be a concern in the 2007 CFSR. This pertains to providing services to families after reunification. Other key findings of the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- The agency was appropriately removing children from the home without service provision to the family prior to removal due to safety concerns for the child.

- In many cases, although the agency provided services, they were not sufficient to adequately address the safety issues in the home, and the children remained at risk in their homes.
- There was a lack of adequate safety and risk assessments in the child’s home and in the foster home.

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

There are six indicators incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency’s efforts to prevent foster care reentry (item 5), ensure placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child’s permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency’s efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9) or to ensure that children who have Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 46.3 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that Oregon did not meet the national standards for any of the four data composites.

Oregon’s performance on the individual measures included in each composite is presented in the discussion of the items related to each measure. Although Oregon’s performance on this outcome was low in all sites, there was variation across sites. The outcome was found to be substantially achieved in 60 percent of Deschutes County cases, 50 percent of Marion County cases, and 38 percent of Multnomah County cases.

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 in its 2001 CFSR. The following concerns were identified in the 2001 CFSR:

- Some reunification decisions were not based on a determination that a substantial change had occurred in the family, thus potentially increasing the likelihood of reentry.
- There were insufficient post-reunification services to prevent reentry.
- There were delays in establishing permanency goals in a timely manner that were attributed to changes in caseworker assignments and the lack of concurrent planning. Even when concurrent goals were established, caseworkers often did not work toward the goals simultaneously.
- Children were in foster care for long periods of time prior to a finalized adoption due to delays in adoption home studies, delays in the paperwork required for finalization after termination of parental rights (TPR), and insufficient legal assistance prior to TPR.
- When efforts to reunify were continued for long periods of time without success, the plan often was changed to a goal of APPLA “by default” rather than the agency considering other possible options. The APPLA plan often was established because concurrent

planning had not been ongoing during the efforts to reunify, so that by the time the agency gave up on reunification efforts, the child was considered “unadoptable” either because of the child’s age or behavior problems. The APPLA plan also frequently was established because foster parents had the perception that money and services would be lost if they adopted the child in their care.

- Judges were found to be reluctant to approve a petition for TPR if there was no adoptive resource for the child.
- In some cases, children with severe behavioral problems had case plans that focused on remediation of the problems and delayed efforts to work toward permanency until the child’s behavioral problems had improved.
- Independent living program (ILP) services were not available in all areas of the State.

The following strategies were implemented in the Oregon PIP to address these concerns:

- Developed policy and training on concurrent planning and decision-making regarding TPR
- Enhanced the ILP by increasing access for youth to ILP providers throughout the State, conducting additional training throughout the State, and establishing specialized consultant staff at each service delivery office to serve as community liaisons and consultants for agency staff
- Conducted a pilot study of specific groups of children to determine whether factors such as age, length of stay in foster care, and other characteristics contributed to delays in achieving permanency
- Established protocols for expediting adoptions and provided legal assistance to caseworkers in the adoption process
- Identified statewide system barriers to adoption
- Created a standardized checklist with timelines to monitor each child’s progress through the adoption process, and developed and disseminated management reports providing tracking information
- Improved the legal process for freeing children for adoption
- Developed specific criteria for determining when adoption is not an appropriate permanency goal

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Most of the concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR also were noted in the 2007 CFSR. Key findings of the 2007 review included the following:

- Although many children experience placement stability, a substantial number of cases occurred in which the child was not in a stable placement at the time of the onsite CFSR and in which the child had experienced placement changes that were not in the child’s best interest nor intended to further attainment of the child’s permanency goal.
- The agency was inconsistent with regard to its effectiveness in establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- Although concurrent goals were established frequently, caseworkers were not working on the goals simultaneously.
- Children were assigned the goal of APPLA at very young ages. Four children with this goal were younger than age 13 at the onset of the period under review, and two children were younger than age 7. In addition, there was a lack of adequate consideration of other permanency options before establishing this goal.
- There were extensive delays in achieving adoptions in a timely manner.

- Although most reunifications were determined to occur in a timely manner, this was not consistent across cases.

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

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six indicators that assess the child welfare agency's performance with regard to the following:

- Placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and close relatives (item 11)
- Placing siblings together (item 12)
- Ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13)
- Preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14)
- Seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15)
- Promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16)

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 70.7 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied slightly across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 76 percent of Multnomah County cases, 70 percent of Marion County cases, and 60 percent of Deschutes County cases. Oregon was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and therefore was not required to address the outcome in its PIP.

The 2007 case reviews resulted in the following findings:

- Most of the children in the cases were placed in close proximity to their parents or other relatives (item 11).
- Most of the children in the cases were placed with siblings, if appropriate and safe (item 12).
- There were seven cases in which the frequency of visitation between the child and parents and between siblings was inadequate to meet the needs of the child (item 13).
- For the most part, the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections with extended family members (e.g., through telephone contacts and visits) (item 14).
- The agency was not consistent with regard to seeking both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for the child (item 15).
- The agency was not consistent with regard to making concerted efforts to support the relationship between children and their mothers and fathers (item 16).

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

Well-Being Outcome 1 incorporates four indicators. One pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator examines the child welfare agency's efforts to actively involve parents and children (when appropriate) in the case

planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworker's contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children's parents (item 20).

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 38.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied across sites, although performance was low in all sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 48 percent of Multnomah County cases, 35 percent of Deschutes County cases, and 23 percent of Marion County cases. The outcome also was substantially achieved in 44 percent of the foster care cases, compared to 30 percent of the in-home services cases.

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for this outcome in its 2001 CFSR. The following concerns were noted for this outcome during the 2001 CFSR:

- In many cases, the service needs of children were not adequately assessed or met, particularly the needs of older youth in care.
- In many cases, there was insufficient assessment of parents' needs.
- In some cases, there was a lack of effort to engage parents in services.
- Caseworkers rarely had face-to-face contact with the parents in the in-home services cases and relied on contracted treatment providers to contact the families.

Oregon implemented the following strategies to address these concerns:

- Developed a tool called a Needs Planning Guide, which was designed to assist caseworkers in working with parents and foster parents by providing guidance in how to assess for needs and how to plan for service delivery to address needs
- Developed policies and procedures related to using the Needs Planning Guide and provided training to staff on using the guide
- Revised policy to clarify agency standards with regard to the frequency, location, and purpose (i.e., what the caseworker should be assessing during the visit) of caseworker visits with children and parents
- Incorporated prompts in the State's information system to ensure that caseworkers were entering data into the system regarding their visits with children and parents

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

The case reviews in the 2007 CFSR resulted in the following findings:

- The agency was not consistent with regard to assessing and meeting the services needs of mothers, fathers, children, and foster parents. Fathers were less likely than the others to have needs assessed and met.
- The agency was not consistent with regard to involving mothers, fathers, and age-appropriate children in developing the case plan, with fathers being less likely to be involved than mothers or children.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children were not consistent across cases.
- There was a lack of sufficient caseworker visits with mothers and fathers, but particularly with fathers.

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

There is only one indicator for Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to address and meet the educational needs of children in both foster care and in-home services cases (item 21).

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. Reviewers determined that 76.9 percent of the cases reviewed substantially achieved this outcome. This is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. There were only slight differences in performance on this outcome across sites. The item was determined to be substantially achieved in 81 percent of Multnomah County cases, 78 percent of Deschutes County cases, and 67 percent of Marion County cases. Only 6 of the 24 in-home services cases were determined to be applicable for an assessment of this outcome.

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for this outcome in its 2001 CFSR. The following concerns were noted for this outcome at that time:

- Some foster youth who were not in school or GED courses were not having their educational needs addressed.
- In some cases, caseworkers did not follow up on identified educational service needs.
- Over one-half of the applicable case records did not have school records.
- Many foster parents did not receive educational records and education-related information at the time the child was placed in the home.

Oregon addressed these concerns in its PIP strategies by providing training to agency staff, foster parents, and ILP contractors in such areas as how to effectively advocate for children to facilitate access to early childhood development services such as special education and Head Start. The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

A key finding of the 2007 CFSR was that, although many children did have their educational need met, there were concerns in many other cases that educational needs were identified but no services were provided to address those needs.

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

This outcome incorporates two indicators that assess the child welfare agency's efforts to meet children's physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs.

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 68.3 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied somewhat across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 81 percent of Marion County cases, 64 percent of

Multnomah County cases, and 62.5 percent of Deschutes County cases. There also was variation as a function of type of case. The outcome was substantially achieved in 76 percent of foster care cases, compared to 53 percent of in-home services cases.

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for this outcome in its 2001 CFSR. The following key concerns were identified in the 2001 CFSR.

- Some children with identified treatment needs did not receive the services they needed.
- Some treatment was not consistent or adequate to meet the child's needs.
- There was a lack of follow-up in some cases to ensure that services were provided.

To address these concerns, Oregon implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Increased enrollment into managed care plans
- Provided agency staff and foster parents with training on how to access mental health services and advocate for services in an effective manner

A key finding of the 2007 CFSR was that the agency was generally effective in meeting children's physical health needs, although there were concerns regarding access to dental services. However, the agency was less effective in meeting children's mental health needs. In many cases, children's mental health needs were not assessed, and in many other cases, needs were assessed but services were not provided to address those needs.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of a Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating a statewide information system that can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care.

Oregon is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of a Statewide Information System. Although the system provides many useful reports, it is not able to quickly and accurately identify the location and address of children in foster care under CAF responsibility in the following circumstances: (1) the child's placement is funded by the agency for Seniors and People With Disabilities (SPD), and (2) the child is in a foster home that is supervised by a child-placing agency. Oregon was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2001 CFSR.

Case Review System

Five indicators are used to assess the State's performance with regard to the systemic factor of a Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the timeframes established in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).

Oregon is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Oregon was not in substantial conformity with this factor during its 2001 CFSR and therefore was required to address the factor in its PIP. The following concerns relevant to the Case Review System were identified in the 2001 CFSR:

- Some of the cases reviewed did not have current or meaningful case plans.
- Permanency hearings did not address the issues and concerns necessary to move children toward permanency.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Reviewed and enhanced the case plan narrative in the Family and Child Information System to (1) ensure that the guidance provided was sufficient to assist caseworkers in producing usable and meaningful case plans and (2) include an emphasis on ongoing examination of a child's permanency plan
- Developed appropriate programming for the enhanced case plan module, field-tested the module, and provided training materials to supervisors and branch staff to help prepare caseworkers for using the module and to ensure that case plan narratives were entered in a timely manner
- Revised the court report, in consultation with the Court Improvement Program (CIP) and judges, to ensure that case-relevant information presented to the court is sufficient to assist the court in decision-making
- Provided training on the new State case-plan format to the court through CIP presentations at local, regional, and statewide meetings and training sessions

Oregon met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Key concerns identified in the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- Stakeholder interviews and case record reviews indicated that parents are not consistently engaged in the development of their case plans.
- Stakeholder interviews and the case record reviews indicated that TPR petitions are not consistently filed in a timely manner and that compelling reasons for not filing are not documented in the case record in a consistent manner.

Despite these concerns, the 2007 CFSR also found the following:

- Foster care parents, relative caregivers, and preadoptive parents are consistently notified of reviews and hearings and are given a variety of opportunities to provide meaningful input into reviews and hearings.
- Timely and meaningful reviews of the status of each child in foster care are being conducted at least every 6 months by the courts and the Citizen Review Board.
- Permanency hearings are being held in a timely manner and are meaningful with regard to moving children toward permanency.

Quality Assurance System

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System is based on whether the State has developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30) and whether the State is operating a statewide quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Oregon is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. During the 2001 CFSR, Oregon was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor and therefore was not required to address the factor in its PIP. Key findings of the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- The State has standards in place to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care.
- During the CFSR period under review, the State was operating a quality assurance system that identified the strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provided relevant reports, and evaluated program improvement measures.

Training

The systemic factor of Training incorporates an assessment of the State's new caseworker training program (item 32), ongoing training for child welfare agency staff (item 33), and training for foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Oregon is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of training. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2001 CFSR and therefore was required to address the factor in its PIP. The following key concerns relevant to this systemic factor were identified in the 2001 CFSR:

- Most new caseworker hires were not receiving the initial inservice training prior to carrying cases.
- Many agency caseworkers and supervisors were not participating in ongoing training.
- The agency did not require caseworkers to participate in a specified number of ongoing training hours after completing the initial training.

To address these concerns, the agency implemented the following key strategies as part of its PIP:

- Established policy and statute requiring all newly hired caseworkers to complete a specified course of training prior to assuming a caseload
- Implemented a 3-week long training for supervisors called Supervising for Excellence

The State met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of the PIP implementation period.

The key concern noted in the 2007 CFSR was that State has not established a required minimum number of hours for staff to participate in advanced training and has not implemented efforts to ensure that caseworkers participate in advanced training to develop their knowledge and skills. However, the 2007 CFSR found that the State has an initial 4-week preservice training program that must be completed by new caseworkers prior to carrying a full caseload. In addition, all foster parents including relative caregivers are required to receive initial training (Foundations Training) and complete ongoing training requirements (30 hours every 2 years) to develop their knowledge and skills to appropriately care for children.

Service Array

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array addresses three questions:

- Does the State have in place an array of services to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)?
- Are these services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)?
- Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Oregon is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2001 CFSR and therefore did not address this factor in its PIP.

Key findings of the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- Throughout the State, there are insufficient inpatient substance abuse treatment services, an inadequate continuum of mental health resources, and a serious shortage of foster homes and therapeutic foster homes.
- Services are not available in adequate supply in some areas of the State.
- Transportation to services is limited or unavailable in some parts of the State.
- Although the State has some flexible funding and can access community resources to provide wraparound services, both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interview information indicate that the scarcity of services and the lack of adequate resources make it difficult to ensure individualization of services to meet unique needs.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) (items 38 and 39) and the extent to

which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Oregon is in substantial conformity with the factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2001 CFSR. The general finding in the 2007 CFSR was that the State engages in ongoing consultation with key stakeholders to obtain their input regarding the goals and objectives of the CFSP. The CFSR also found that there is coordination between DHS and other Federal and Federally assisted programs to meet the service needs of the children and families served by the agency (item 40). However, the agency does not consistently engage stakeholders in the process of developing annual reports of progress and services delivered.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State's efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children (item 45).

Oregon is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. During the 2001 CFSR, Oregon was in substantial conformity with this factor. Key concerns of the 2007 CFSR with regard to this systemic factor were the following:

- Although the State's standards for foster family homes and child care institutions are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards, these standards are not consistently adhered to in practice.
- The State does not have a statewide process in place to ensure the diligent recruitment of foster homes, despite significant shortages of all types of foster homes.

Despite these concerns, the 2007 CFSR also found the following:

- The State applies standards equally to all homes and does not claim title IV-E foster care payments until a full certification is in place.
- The State conducts criminal background clearances for foster and adoptive families as part of its certification and approval processes.
- The State is effective in using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely placements for children.

Table 1. Oregon CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved*	Met National Standards?	Rating**	Percent Strength
Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	NO	62.5	NO		
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				ANI	67.5
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				ANI	87.5
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	NO	60.0			
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				ANI	74
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	63
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	NO	46.3	NO		
Item 5: Foster care reentry				Strength	92
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	66
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	78
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	85
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	36
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				ANI	60
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	NO	70.7			
Item 11: Proximity of placement				Strength	97
Item 12: Placement with siblings				Strength	92
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	79
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	88
Item 15: Relative placement				ANI	74
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	66

*95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of the cases must be rated as a Strength.

Table 2. Oregon CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Rating**	Percent Strength
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved		
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs	NO	38.5		
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	43
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	44
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child			ANI	55
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	39
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs	NO	76.9		
Item 21: Educational needs of child			ANI	77
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	NO	68.3		
Item 22: Physical health of child			ANI	88
Item 23: Mental health of child			ANI	71

*95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of strength, 90 percent of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of item 21) must be rated as a Strength. Because item 21 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95 percent strength rating applies.

Table 3. Oregon CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Statewide Information System	NO	2	
Item 24: State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care			ANI
Case Review System	NO	2	
Item 25: Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child’s parents that includes the required provisions			ANI
Item 26: Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review			Strength
Item 27: Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter			Strength
Item 28: Provides a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA			ANI
Item 29: Provides a process for foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child			Strength
Quality Assurance System	YES	3	
Item 30: The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children			Strength
Item 31: The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures			Strength
Training	YES	3	
Item 32: The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under			Strength

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.			
Item 33: The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP			ANI
Item 34: The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State-licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E, and the training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children			Strength
Service Array	NO	1	
Item 35: The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families, determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency			ANI
Item 36: The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP			ANI
Item 37: The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency			ANI
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	YES	3	
Item 38: In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, services providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP			Strength
Item 39: The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP			ANI
Item 40: The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population			Strength
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	NO	2	
Item 41: The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards			ANI

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Item 42: The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds			Strength
Item 43: The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case-planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children			Strength
Item 44: The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom adoptive homes are needed			ANI
Item 45: The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children			Strength

*Scores range from 1 to 4. A score of 1 or 2 means that the factor is not in substantial conformity. A score of 3 or 4 means that the factor is in substantial conformity.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

Final Report
Oregon Child and Family Services Review
February 2008

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

Introduction

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Oregon. The CFSR is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994, which require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSR is implemented by the Children's Bureau (CB) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Oregon CFSR was conducted the week of September 10, 2007. The period under review for the case reviews was from April 1, 2006, to September 10, 2007. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Children, Adults and Families Division (CAF) of the Oregon Department of Human Services
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for Federal fiscal year (FY) 2003, FY 2004, and FY 2005
- Reviews of 65 cases (41 foster care cases and 24 in-home services cases) at three sites throughout the State, including 31 cases in Multnomah County, 17 cases in Deschutes County, and 17 cases in Marion County
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders, including but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys

All 65 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the 65 cases reviewed are presented in the Table of Case Characteristics on the following page.

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to Oregon's performance in achieving specified outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table that presents the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of Oregon's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR review in FY 2001, the State's status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Differences in findings across the sites included in the Onsite Review are described when noteworthy. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate. The second section of the report (Section B: Systemic Factors) provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

Table of Case Characteristics

Case Characteristics	Foster Care Cases	In-Home Cases
	41*	24*
When case was opened/child entered foster care		
Open prior to the period under review	29	11
Open during the period under review	12	13
Child entered foster care during the period under review	12	**
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than age 10	26 (63%)	**
At least 10 but younger than 13	3 (7%)	**
At least 13 but younger than 16	8 (20%)	**
16 and older	4 (10%)	**
Race/Ethnicity		
African American (non-Hispanic)	4 (10%)	**
White (non-Hispanic)	24 (59%)	**
Hispanic (of all races)	4 (10%)	**
American Indian or Alaska Native	1 (2%)	**
Asian	1 (2%)	**
Two or more races	7 (17%)	**
Primary reason for opening case		
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	15 (37%)	7 (29%)
Physical abuse	4 (10%)	3 (12.5%)
Sexual abuse	2 (5%)	1 (4%)
Medical neglect	2 (5%)	0
Mental/physical health of parent	5 (12%)	0
Mental/physical health of child	0	1 (4%)
Substance abuse by parent	7 (17%)	9 (37.5%)
Child's behavior/child in juvenile justice system	3 (7%)	0
Domestic violence in child's home	3 (7%)	2 (8%)
Other (mother requested assistance via the hotline because she was without formula, diapers, money, food stamps, or WIC services)	0	1 (4%)

*The CFSR usually includes 40 foster care cases and 25 in-home services cases. However, during the Onsite Review, it was discovered that one of the in-home services cases involved a child who was in foster care. Therefore, the case was designated as a foster care case.

**Information on these characteristics for in-home services cases is not provided because all children in the family are considered in these cases.

SECTION A: OUTCOMES

In the Outcomes section of the CSFR Final Report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 indicators (items) reviewed. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. In addition to the item ratings, States are evaluated with regard to performance on seven outcomes, each of which incorporates one or more of the individual items. The evaluation options for these outcomes are Substantially Achieved, Partially Achieved, and Not Achieved. For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to seven national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, the national standards for each data indicator must be met as well as the case review requirements. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern identified for that outcome.

ACF has established a very high standard of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. The standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being. This is consistent with the goal of the CFSR to promote continuous improvement in performance on these outcomes.

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95 percent standard established for the CFSR Onsite Review at the end of their PIP implementation. ACF recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often are time-consuming to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with ACF to establish a specified amount of improvement or to determine specified activities for their PIP. That is, for each outcome or item that is rated as an Area Needing Improvement, each State (working in conjunction with CB) specifies the following: (1) how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the areas needing improvement and (2) the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its PIP and still not perform at the 95 percent (for outcomes) or the 90 percent (for items) levels established for the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSR is intended to assess a State's current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case-review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continued PIPs addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior PIP requirements may have been achieved. The goal is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the closing of a PIP.

In the following sections, information is provided pertaining to how the State performed on each outcome in the first round of the CFSR. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round, the key concerns observed at that time are identified as well as the strategies implemented in the PIP to address those concerns. This discussion also focuses on whether the key concerns that emerged in the first CFSR continued to be present in the second review, or whether those concerns were addressed but other concerns emerged.

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State’s performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of data indicators or percentages regarding Strength and Area Needing Improvement ratings. Key changes in the CFSR process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to enhance consistency and ensure an assessment of critical areas, such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents in planning for their children

I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	6	8	11	25	62.5
Partially Achieved	3	1	2	6	15.0
Not Achieved or Addressed	2	0	7	9	22.5
Total Applicable Cases	11	9	20	40	
Not Applicable	6	8	11	25	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Conformity of statewide data indicators with national standards:					
	National Standard (%)		State’s Percentage		Meets Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6 or higher		90.2		No
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68 or higher		99.35		No

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance varied across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 89 percent of Marion County cases compared to 55 percent of Multnomah and Deschutes County cases.

Oregon also did not meet the national standards for the two data indicators relevant for Safety Outcome 1. These indicators pertain to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for Safety Outcome 1 during its first CFSR conducted in Federal FY 2001. In the 2001 CFSR, Item 1: Timeliness of investigations was rated as an Area Needing Improvement, and the statewide data indicator for repeat maltreatment did not meet the national standards. The data indicator for maltreatment of children in foster care met the national standards at that time, although this was determined through resubmission of data after the Onsite Review and before PIP approval. The following key concerns were noted in the 2001 CFSR:

- A lengthy screening process delayed assignment of cases to an intake caseworker.
- There was inadequate documentation in the case files of the intake and investigation timelines.
- Repeat maltreatment was found in some of the in-home services cases.

To address these concerns, Oregon implemented the following strategies during its PIP:

- Developed specialized data reports regarding timeliness of investigations and repeat maltreatment and disseminated them to the field to be used to monitor performance in these areas
- Revised agency policy to ensure consistent practice with regard to screening maltreatment reports and determining dispositions
- Supported implementation of new policies and practices through developing online applications of the new tools and procedures and incorporating them into the agency's information technology system
- Provided staff training for the current staff on new policies and incorporated this training into the training for new caseworkers

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

The key concerns identified in Oregon's 2001 CFSR were not found in the 2007 CFSR for Safety Outcome 1. In particular, few cases in 2007 involved concerns regarding the timeliness of the screening process and assigning cases for investigation. The key concerns identified in the 2007 CFSR pertained to a lack of timely initiation of investigations. Most (77 percent) of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for timeliness of investigation involved reports that were given a 5-day timeframe for initiation of response.

In addition, according to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon has changed its policy regarding the timeframe for initiating an investigation. In the past, the timeframe started at the point that the referral was assigned to an investigative caseworker. At the time of the onsite CFSR, the policy was that the timeframe started at the point of receipt of the report.

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented below.

Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 40 (62 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

Oregon policy states that, upon receipt of an allegation of abuse or neglect, a screener determines whether a child protective services (CPS) assessment is required or the allegation can be closed at screening. If a CPS assessment is required, the screener determines the timeline for the CAF response. This can be either (1) within 24 hours of receipt of the report (immediate response) or (2) within 5 calendar days of receiving the report (response required). Oregon requires that the CPS worker make face-to-face contact with the alleged victim, his or her siblings, his or her parent or caregiver, and other children and adults living in the home within the prescribed timeframe of either 24 hours or 5 days. Oregon also noted in its policy document that agency policy was revised in March 2007 to set the expectation that all reports of abuse and neglect receive a 24-hour response. If the 5-day response is applied, the screener must document that the child is safe.

The results of the assessment of item 1 are presented in the following table:

Item 1	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	6	9	12	27	67.5
Area Needing Improvement	5	0	8	13	32.5
Total Applicable Cases	11	9	20	40	
Not Applicable	6	8	11	25	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Marion County cases, 60 percent of Multnomah County cases, and 55 percent of Deschutes County cases.

Item 1 was rated as a Strength when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy or law. It was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes. In 3 (23 percent) of the 13 cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement, the report had been assigned as an “immediate response” (the investigation must be initiated within 24 hours). In 10 (77 percent) of the 13 cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement, the report had been assigned as a “response required” (the investigation must be initiated within 5 days).

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 67.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for an overall item rating of Strength. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Oregon’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Although some stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that the agency responds in a timely manner to abuse and neglect reports, they also noted that, in some situations, there can be delays in responding if there is a need for a Spanish interpreter or if the investigation must be coordinated with law enforcement. Some stakeholders noted that while some branch offices have very positive coordination with law enforcement, others do not and do not always follow the protocols in place. Several stakeholders also expressed concerns about the lack of feedback from the agency regarding whether reports that stakeholders have made are accepted and the results of the investigation.

Stakeholders reported that the new policy requires that the clock (with respect to the 24-hour or 5-day requirements) begins at the time that the initial call comes in. They noted that, in the past, the clock did not begin until the screening was completed. Stakeholders also indicated that the agency has developed a dashboard report so managers can review the response times in their locations.

Several stakeholders expressed concern about the agency practice of screening out maltreatment reports on youth, particularly if they are 16 or 17 years old. These stakeholders noted that when these youth are reported to the agency as alleged victims of abuse or neglect, the agency rarely responds.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon met the timeliness performance measure on only 66.7 percent of the cases reviewed in its 2001 CFSR. In response to this finding, the agency implemented several new measures as part of its PIP. The Statewide Assessment reports that a September 2006 statewide case review found that item 1 was met in 87.2 percent of the cases reviewed, and the January 2007 review found that item 1 was met in 82.4 percent of the cases reviewed. In February 2007, the Oregon Repository –

Bring Information Together (ORBIT) report shows an achievement of timeliness of CPS contact in 77.4 percent of referrals during that month. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, achievement of timeliness was better for referrals with 24-hour response times (83.6 percent) than it was for referrals with 5-day response times (71.5 percent). The Statewide Assessment also reports that, in this analysis, rural counties achieved timeliness in 84.7 percent of the cases, compared to urban counties, which achieved timeliness in 73.1 percent of their cases. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, although this is an area that continues to need improvement, the State has made significant progress in performance and in monitoring of the measure.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 24 (37 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine whether there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review and, if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. Information regarding the ratings is provided below.

Item 2	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	6	4	11	21	87.5
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	1	3	12.5
Total Applicable Cases	7	5	12	24	
Not Applicable	10	12	19	41	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Item 2 was rated as a Strength when there was no indication of two or more substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period.

Although there was little evidence in the cases reviewed of the recurrence of substantiated maltreatment during the period under review, there were many cases in which there were multiple reports on the family during the life of the case regardless of disposition. The “life of the case” refers to the time span from the first time that an allegation of abuse or neglect was reported on any child in the family to the time of the Onsite Review. In 40 cases, there were 6 or more child maltreatment reports during the life of the case, and in 20 of these cases, there were 10 or more reports during the life of the case. Of the 20 cases with 10 or more reports, 8 had more than 20 reports. For one case, there were 47 maltreatment reports during the life of the case. Information about the types of allegations involved in these reports was not collected during the onsite CFSR unless the report occurred during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 87.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that there was no recurrence of maltreatment. In addition, the State did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the recurrence of maltreatment.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that repeat maltreatment does occur and that it usually happens in cases that are substantiated for threat of harm (which is a category of “abuse” in Oregon) or neglect. Several stakeholders expressed concern about the number of reports that occur before the agency actually intervenes or takes action. Stakeholders suggested that multiple reports are due to a lack of preventive services and ongoing treatment services, particularly for mental health and substance abuse problems.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the data for the 2007 CFSR suggest that maltreatment recurrence is an area needing improvement for the State. The Statewide Assessment reports that a research report conducted by the agency in 2004 found that neglect and threat of harm are the types of maltreatment that are most likely to recur. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the use of threat of harm as an abuse disposition has been increasing over the last several years, and appropriate use of this category is a concern. The agency is in the process of updating the “threat of harm” guidelines used to assist CPS workers in substantiating this category appropriately.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the most common family stressors associated with recurrence are drug and alcohol abuse and law enforcement involvement. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that in 2005, 44.7 percent of founded abuse reports indicated that familial drug use was a risk factor and 29.6 percent indicated that parental involvement with law enforcement was a risk factor. Also, between 2000 and 2005, methamphetamine use by parents played a role for nearly 67 percent of children who entered foster care in Oregon. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, Oregon’s ability to provide treatment to families affected by both drug and alcohol abuse and child maltreatment has diminished in recent years, which has had a negative affect on child safety.

Safety Outcome 2

Safety Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	9	13	17	39	60.0
Partially Achieved	4	3	4	11	16.9
Not Achieved or Addressed	4	1	10	15	23.1
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Status of Safety Outcome 2

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 60 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance on this item varied across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 76 percent of Marion County cases, 55 percent of Multnomah County cases, and 53 percent of Deschutes County cases.

Key Concerns of the 2001 CFSR

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for Safety Outcome 2 in the 2001 CFSR. In that review, Item 3: Services to family to protect children in the home and prevent removal was rated as a Strength, and Item 4: Risk of harm to child was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. The following concerns relevant to this item were noted in the 2001 CFSR:

- In some cases, services did not address pertinent risk factors such as co-occurring drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence.
- There was little evidence that risk was assessed on an ongoing basis or that it was adequately assessed at case closure.
- Stakeholders expressed concern about the adequacy of safety plans.
- Stakeholders expressed concern about the availability of post-reunification support services.
- In some cases, when new potential maltreatment information was received on an open case, it was noted in the case record but it was not formally reported or investigated.

To address these concerns, Oregon implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Developed standards for treatment service providers requiring them to document parent behavior changes for parents in both the in-home services cases and the foster care cases, including a specific requirement that behavior changes be assessed for parents before a reunification decision
- Developed a Guided Assessment Process (GAP) and needs-planning process that includes standards, tools, and procedures for assessing safety and risk on an ongoing basis and at critical case junctures

- Revised agency policy to support comprehensive ongoing assessments and safety planning

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

In the 2007 review, both item 3 and item 4 were rated as Areas Needing Improvement. One of the key concerns noted in the 2001 CFSR continued to be a concern in the 2007 CFSR. This pertains to providing services to families after reunification. Other key findings of the 2007 CFSR were as follows:

- The agency was appropriately removing children from the home without service provision to the family before removal due to safety concerns for the child.
- In many cases, although the agency provided services, they were not sufficient to adequately address the safety issues in the home and the children remained at risk in their homes.
- There was a lack of adequate safety and risk assessments in the child’s home and in the foster home.

Another key finding is that, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, Oregon began a new statewide practice in March 2007, the Oregon Safety Model (OSM), to address safety concerns. This model was intended to provide workers with critical thinking tools to better assess the key factors necessary to develop in-home safety and services plans and to determine if children can be maintained safely in their own homes. However, stakeholders reported that the OSM is not implemented consistently across the State.

Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 43 (66 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded from this assessment if the children entered foster care before the period under review and there were no other children in the home or if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For this item, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families to prevent placement of children in foster care while at the same time ensuring their safety. The results of this assessment are shown in the following table:

Item 3	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	7	11	14	32	74
Area Needing Improvement	5	0	6	11	26
Total Applicable Cases	12	11	20	43	
Not Applicable	5	6	11	22	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

There was variation in performance on this item across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Marion County cases, 70 percent of Multnomah County cases, and 58 percent of Deschutes County cases.

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Services were provided to the parents and child to prevent removal (18 cases).
- The child was placed voluntarily with relatives, and services were provided to the relatives, parents, and children (four cases).
- The children were appropriately removed from the home because the removal was necessary to ensure the child’s safety (four cases).
- Services were provided after the reunification of the child to support the reunification and prevent reentry (eight cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. These included (but were not limited to) the following: domestic violence counseling; substance abuse treatment; parenting skills education and development; mental health assessment; mental health counseling; medication management; housing services; assistance in obtaining restraining orders; individual and family counseling; residential alcohol and drug treatment; outpatient drug and alcohol treatment; in-home parent training (with child present in the home); mentoring; funds for concrete needs (e.g., vehicle repairs, rent); relief nursery programs; and in-home life-skills services, including budgeting, homemaking, child care, parenting, family counseling, transportation, gas vouchers, rent support, and referrals for Head Start.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 11 of the 43 applicable cases when reviewers determined the following:

- No services were provided, and the children remained at risk in the home (six cases).
- Some services were provided, but they did not adequately address the safety issues in the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (four cases).
- The case was closed prematurely without all of the safety risks addressed (one case)

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 74 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

A few stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that the agency makes concerted efforts to provide services to prevent removal. Many stakeholders indicated that a lack of effective services and, in particular, the scarcity of substance abuse treatment and mental health services contributes to the difficulty of maintaining children safely in their own homes.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, 75 percent of the applicable cases were rated as a Strength for this item in the State's 2001 CFSR. The Statewide Assessment reports that in statewide CFSR reviews conducted between 2003 and 2006, an average of 85 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength for this item; in the two quarterly statewide reviews held in 2006 and 2007, 97.1 percent and 87.5 percent of the cases, respectively, were rated as a Strength for the item. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that because of the disparity between results from the branch reviews in 2003 to 2006 and the two statewide reviews in 2006 and 2007, and because the sample size is not statistically representative, the agency does not feel that significant weight can be given to the improved scores at this time.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that a number of services are available to prevent child placement, including addiction recovery teams, domestic violence programs (which are funded by other sources in all counties), and family-based services such as parent training, intensive home-based services (in 13 counties), and family sexual abuse treatment services.

Item 4. Risk of harm to child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 65 cases. The results of this assessment are shown in the following table:

Item 4	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total	Percent
Strength	10	13	18	41	63
Area Needing Improvement	7	4	13	24	37
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Performance on this item differed across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 76 percent of Marion County cases, 59 percent of Deschutes County cases, and 58 percent of Multnomah County cases. Performance on this item also differed based on the type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 70 percent of the foster care cases, compared to 50 percent of the in-home services cases.

Item 4 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through (1) conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children's home or in children's foster home and (2) addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment. Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 23 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The case was closed, and there was no assessment at the time or no follow-up to ensure that the safety plan had been implemented (three cases).
- There was a lack of adequate safety and risk assessments in the foster home during the period under review (seven cases).
- There was a lack of adequate safety and risk assessments in the child's home during the period under review (13 cases). In one of these cases, there was a third child living in the home of whom the caseworker was unaware and whose safety was never assessed.
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to engage the child or family in necessary services to address risk issues (one case).
- The child was a chronic runaway, and no assessment was done to determine and address the cause of the runaway behavior (one case).

There were six cases in which reviewers identified significant concerns regarding the safety of the child in the foster home. For the most part, reviewers questioned whether the agency's response in these situations was appropriate.

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 63 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had appropriately addressed the risk of harm to the children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for an overall rating of Strength. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Oregon's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency has a risk and safety assessment tool and process in place. However, several stakeholders suggested that there are difficulties with implementing the process on a routine basis. Marion County stakeholders reported that because of the shortage of foster homes, children are placed where there is a bed available and homes are over capacity, which creates safety issues that are not being monitored on an ongoing basis. Although it was noted that foster homes that are over capacity must be visited every 90 days by the licensing caseworker, there is no system in place to track these visits to ensure that they are being made. Stakeholders also noted that the shortage of foster homes results in a situation in which insufficient attention is given to ensure that the children placed in the homes do not represent a risk to one another. One stakeholder noted that when parents express concern about their children's treatment in foster care, these concerns often are not taken seriously, even when they may be valid.

Marion County stakeholders also reported that insufficient assessment is done when children transition from supervised visits with parents to unsupervised visits.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the efficacy of the new OSM in addressing risk of harm to children. While most stakeholders who commented on this suggested that there is a greater emphasis on safety initially in the case, others expressed the opinion that there is less focus on safety throughout the life of the case.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, 80 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength for this item in the 2001 CFSR, 86 percent of the cases reviewed were rated as a Strength in the State's 2003 to 2006 case reviews, 77.4 percent were rated as a Strength in the 2006 quarterly review, and 82.5 percent were rated as a Strength in the 2007 quarterly review.

The Statewide Assessment reports that a formal policy transmittal memorandum was issued to child welfare staff members on March 1, 2005, clarifying and providing direction about the quality and content of face-to-face contacts with children in foster care as well as documentation requirements for the existing policy. Clarification also was provided that unannounced visits to foster homes are recommended. Administrative rule was later changed to incorporate these practices into 30-day face-to-face visits. A checklist was provided for staff use during their visits to enhance their quality.

At the same time that administrative rules for 30-day visits and safety plan reviews at critical junctures were implemented, policy changed in regards to CPS allegations on an open case. If the CPS report reflected new allegations or safety threats, that report was referred to CPS screening. If it reflected the same general issue that was being addressed by the current service plan, the report went to the assigned worker. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, this item appears to be affected by caseworker lack of experience and training in understanding safety threats. The Statewide Assessment reports that a primary goal in implementing the OSM is to provide caseworkers and their supervisors with critical-thinking tools to better assess the key factors necessary to develop an in-home safety and services plan. They noted that these tools will assist caseworkers in determining when children can be safely maintained in their own home.

II. PERMANENCY

Permanency Outcome 1

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations					
Number of cases reviewed by site according to degree of outcome achievement:					
	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	6	5	8	19	46.3
Partially Achieved	3	5	12	20	48.8
Not Achieved or Addressed	1	0	1	2	4.9
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	
Conformity of statewide data indicators with national standards:					
	National Standard (Scaled Score)		State's Composite Score		Meets Standard (Yes/No)
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6 +		118.5		No
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4 +		96.4		No
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7 +		107.8		No
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5 +		96.7		No

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 46.3 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that Oregon did not meet the national standards for any of the four data composites.

Oregon's performance on the individual measures included in each composite is presented in the discussion of the items related to each measure.

Although Oregon's performance on this outcome was low in all sites, there was variation across sites. The outcome was found to be substantially achieved in 60 percent of Deschutes County cases, 50 percent of Marion County cases, and 38 percent of Multnomah County cases.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 in its 2001 CFSR. Item 6: Stability of foster care placement was rated a Strength. All other items in this outcome area were rated as Areas Needing Improvement, including Item 5: Foster care reentry, Item 7: Permanency goal for child, Item 8: Independent living services, Item 9: Adoption, and Item 10: Permanency goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA). The following concerns were identified in the 2001 CFSR:

- Some reunification decisions were not based on a determination that a substantial change had occurred in the family, thus potentially increasing the likelihood of reentry.
- There were insufficient post-reunification services to prevent reentry.
- There were delays in establishing permanency goals in a timely manner that were attributed to changes in caseworker assignments and the lack of concurrent planning. Even when concurrent goals were established, caseworkers often did not work toward the goals simultaneously.
- Children were in foster care for long periods of time before a finalized adoption due to delays in adoption home studies, delays in the paperwork required for finalization of termination of parental rights (TPR), and insufficient legal assistance before TPR.
- When efforts to reunify were continued for long periods of time without success, the plan often was changed to OPPLA by default rather than the agency considering other possible options. The OPPLA plan often was established because concurrent planning had not been ongoing during the efforts to reunify so that by the time the agency gave up on reunification efforts, the child was considered “unadoptable” either because of the child’s age or behavior problems. The OPPLA plan also frequently was established because foster parents had the perception that money and services would be lost if they adopted the child in their care.
- Judges were found to be reluctant to approve a petition for TPR if there was no adoptive resource for the child.
- In some cases, children with severe behavioral problems had case plans that focused on remediation of the problems and delayed efforts to work toward permanency until the child’s behavioral problems had improved.
- Independent living program (ILP) services were not available in all areas of the State.

The following strategies were implemented in the Oregon PIP to address these concerns:

- Developed policy and training on concurrent planning and decision-making regarding TPR
- Enhanced the ILP by increasing youth’s access to ILP providers throughout the State, conducting additional training throughout the State, and establishing specialized consultant staff at each service delivery office to serve as community liaisons and consultants for agency staff
- Conducted a pilot study of specific groups of children to determine whether factors such as age, length of stay in foster care, and other characteristics contributed to delays in achieving permanency
- Established protocols for expediting adoptions and provided legal assistance to caseworkers in the adoption process
- Identified statewide system barriers to adoption

- Created a standardized checklist with timelines to monitor each child’s progress through the adoption process and developed and disseminated management reports providing tracking information
- Streamlined the process for assessing potential adoptive resources
- Improved the legal process for freeing children for adoption
- Developed specific criteria for determining when adoption is not an appropriate permanency goal

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

During the 2007 review, item 5 was rated as a Strength, while all other items included in the outcome were rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Most of the concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR also were noted in the 2007 CFSR. Key findings of the 2007 review included the following:

- Although there was only one case rated as an Area Needing Improvement with regard to reentry into foster care, Oregon’s statewide data in FY 2005 for the national measure of foster care reentry exceeded the national median for this measure.
- Although many children experience placement stability, there were a substantial number of cases in which the child was not in a stable placement at the time of the onsite CFSR, and in which the child had experienced placement changes that were not in the child’s best interest nor intended to further attainment of the child’s permanency goal.
- The agency was inconsistent with regard to its effectiveness in establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- Although concurrent goals were established frequently, caseworkers were not working on the goals simultaneously.
- Children were assigned the goal of OPPLA at very young ages. Four children with this goal were younger than age 13 at the onset of the period under review, and two children were younger than age 7. In addition, there was a lack of adequate consideration of other permanency options before establishing this goal.
- There were extensive delays in achieving adoptions in a timely manner.
- Although most reunifications were determined to occur in a timely manner, this was not consistent across cases.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented below.

Item 5. Foster care reentries

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 12 (29 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for assessment if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into

foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 5	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	1	3	7	11	92
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	1	1	8
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	3	8	12	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	7	13	29	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

The State’s FY 2005 performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: 15.9 percent of the children exiting foster care to reunification in the 12 months before FY 2005 reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. The national median for this measure was 15.0 percent. For this measure, lower percentages are associated with higher levels of performance. Oregon’s performance on the measure is about equal to the national median but is greater than the 25th percentile for this measure of 9.9 percent. This suggests that despite performance on the cases reviewed during the onsite CFSR, foster care reentry continues to be an area of concern for the State.

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in nine cases in which the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode. It was rated as a Strength in two cases in which the child entered foster care within 12 months from the time of exit, but reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to prevent the reentry. One case was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the child reentered foster care within 12 months of the time of exit from foster care.

Rating Determination

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. Reviewers determined that in 92 percent of the applicable cases the child had either not reentered foster care in less than 12 months or had reentered but the agency had made efforts to prevent the reentry. This percentage exceeds the 90 percent required for an overall rating of Strength. However when statewide data are considered in FY 2005, the State performed only at about the level of the national median for the national measure of foster care reentry.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR attributed reentries into foster care to a variety of factors including the following:

- Services often cease when the child goes home.

- Children are reunified before the family is ready when it is determined that parents have complied with service plan requirements, even if no assessment has been conducted regarding changes in behaviors that resulted from participation in services.
- Problems such as drug relapse and domestic violence are ongoing and difficult to change.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a study completed in spring 2007 by Honors in Economics students at the University of Oregon examined some of the factors associated with foster care reentry using a statistical analysis based on the new CFSR reentry measure for 2006. This analysis found that, controlling for all other factors, older children were less likely to reenter foster care than younger children. Furthermore, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Native American children were all found to have a high likelihood of reentry at the 90 percent confidence level. The Statewide Assessment notes that children who had special needs, disabilities, and/or behavior problems were more likely to reenter foster care than children who did not have those concerns.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 41 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 6. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child’s permanency goal or meet the child’s service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child’s current placement setting. The findings of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 6	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	8	6	13	27	66
Area Needing Improvement	2	4	8	14	34
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	

Performance on this item varied somewhat across counties. The item was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of Deschutes County cases, 62 percent of Multnomah County cases, and 60 percent of Marion County cases.

Oregon’s performance on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability is as follows:

- 83.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is about equal to the national median for this measure of 83.3 percent.

- 65.9 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is about equal to the 75th percentile for this measure of 65.4 percent.
- 34.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is about equal to the national median for this measure of 33.9 percent.

These data indicate that Oregon performed at the level of the national median on two of the three measures of placement stability but reached the level of the 75th percentile for the measure of placement stability for children in foster care between 12 and 24 months.

Item 6 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child did not experience a placement change during the period under review, and either the current placement was stable or the child was discharged from foster care during the period under review (21 cases).
- The placement changes experienced were in the child's best interest and were intended either to further achievement of the child's permanency goal or to provide specialized services to the child (six cases). For example, placement changes were made to move the child to a relative's home or from a foster home to an adoptive home.

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review, and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to further attain the child's permanency goal (nine cases).
- The child's current placement setting (at the time of the onsite CFSR) was not stable (seven cases).

Additional findings of the case review were as follows:

- Twenty-three children experienced only one placement.
- Twelve children experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Four children experienced three to four placements during the period under review.
- Two children experienced five or more placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 66 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability or that changes in placements were in the best interests of the child. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Although a few stakeholders expressed the opinion that placement stability is not a problem for children in foster care, most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that placement stability is a challenge in the

Oregon child welfare system. They attributed this primarily to the lack of foster homes, which results in placements based on available beds rather than appropriate matches.

Several stakeholders also attributed placement instability to the inability of many foster parents to deal with the behavioral and emotional issues of children who are placed in their care. Multnomah County stakeholders suggested that the lack of services for youth, particularly mental health services, increases the difficulties experienced by foster parents in managing the behaviors of their foster children.

Stakeholders noted that youth report that they have to change placements because of abusive foster homes or because they were placed in an emergency home that would only take children for 24 hours.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon’s performance on placement stability needs to improve. Entry cohort data (first episode, first placement) examined by the foster care unit every 6 months indicate that, although Oregon does not generally use “receiving centers” for initial placement into foster care, approximately one-third of first placements of children are with foster homes that provide care for 2 weeks or less. Specifically, for the last 6 months of 2006, 31.9 percent of children who entered foster care for the first time were placed in homes in which the placement lasted 2 weeks or less. This rate of first placements into short-term emergency shelter care has remained somewhat stable over the past several years.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that 15 to 16 percent of children are placed with relatives when first entering foster care. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, delays in identifying and placing children with relatives is one of the factors that results in a higher number of placements, because once a relative is identified, Oregon’s preference is to transition that child to the relative placement. As indicated by the data, 30.5 percent of children in family settings on an average daily basis in Federal FY 2006 were placed with a relative, which is roughly twice the percentage of children placed with relatives at the time of entry into foster care.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 41 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 7. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had established a permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and whether the most current permanency goal was appropriate. The results of this assessment are shown in the following table:

Item 7	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	8	9	15	32	78
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	6	9	22
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of Marion County cases, 80 percent of Deschutes County cases, and 71 percent of Multnomah County cases.

Oregon did not meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 3: Achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. Performance on the individual measures included in this composite was as follows:

- 25.8 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (e.g., adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is about equal to the national median of 25.0 percent.
- 98.4 percent of the children exiting foster care in 2005 who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage exceeds the 75th percentile for this measure of 98.0 percent.
- 62.7 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage exceeds the national median of 47.8 percent. For this measure, lower scores indicate more positive performance.

These data suggest that Oregon’s particular strength with regard to this data composite pertains to the percentage of children who are legally free for adoption at the time of exit from foster care who are discharged to a permanent home. The data also suggest that a particular area needing improvement pertains to the percentage of children who were in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of their emancipation from foster care or on their 18th birthday, if they remained in foster care past the age of majority.

Item 7 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate and had been established in a timely manner. The case was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child’s current permanency goal was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (two cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (two cases).
- Not all options were thoroughly considered before establishing a permanency goal of OPPLA (six cases). (In one case the foster mother wanted to adopt the child and the child wanted to be adopted by the foster mother, but the agency maintained a goal of OPPLA.)

- A child was assigned a goal of OPPLA at age 9 because the grandmother determined that adoption would result in a financial hardship for her, although she was committed to raising the target child and her siblings. No efforts were made to help the grandmother identify alternative financial resources if she adopted the children.

Case review findings pertaining to case goals were as follows:

- Eight children had a goal of adoption only.
- Eleven children had a goal of reunification with parents or other relatives.
- Thirteen children had a goal of OPPLA only (i.e., OPPLA is a living arrangement other than adoption, reunification, living with other relatives, or guardianship that involves the child remaining in State custody until reaching the age of majority).
- One child had concurrent goals of guardianship and OPPLA.
- One child had concurrent goals of OPPLA and reunification with parents or other relatives.
- Six children had concurrent goals of adoption and reunification.
- One child had a goal of guardianship.

Case review findings pertaining to TPR were as follows:

- At the time of the Onsite Review, 25 (61 percent) of the 41 children in the foster care cases had been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.
- TPR had been filed in a timely manner in 8 (32 percent) of the 25 cases.
- A compelling reason for not filing for TPR was noted in only 11 (65 percent) of the 17 cases in which TPR had not been filed, despite the 15-month criterion being met. In 6 (35 percent) of the 17 cases, no compelling reason was in the case file.

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 78 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR. A key concern identified pertained to establishing a goal of OPPLA without full consideration of other permanency options. This included exploring with caretakers other financial assistance sources if they adopted the children in their care and exploring with children their reasons for saying that they do not want to be adopted.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the Onsite Review expressed a range of perspectives with regard to the agency's effectiveness in establishing timely permanency goals for children. Although a few stakeholders indicated that appropriate goals are established in a timely manner, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency is not effective in establishing goals in a timely manner. A few stakeholders suggested that the scarcity of services often results in delays in goal changes because the parents are on a waiting list for the services.

Stakeholders also expressed different opinions regarding the use of concurrent planning. While some stakeholders expressed the opinion that concurrent planning is being done in the agency and that plans are worked simultaneously, other stakeholders suggested that concurrent goals are being established but that caseworkers are not working on them at the same time. These stakeholders suggested that efforts are made toward the goal of adoption only when reunification is completely ruled out.

Most stakeholders agreed that the goal of OPPLA is used too frequently and sometimes is a default goal if the agency has no plan for the child. This was noted to be a particular concern in Multnomah County. Agency stakeholders reported that to address this concern, a policy was established last year that the agency must continue to search for a permanent home for a child even if the child's goal is OPPLA.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State's CFSR case reviews on this item that were conducted between the years 2003 and 2006 resulted in an average Strength rating of 87 percent. In the two quarterly statewide reviews in 2006 and 2007, this item was rated as a Strength in 80.6 percent and 82.1 percent of cases, respectively. A review of 12 cases that failed to achieve adequate permanency goals for the child revealed the following two types of concerns:

- Staff members failed to document the permanency plan. Either the permanency plan that was entered in the case file was different than the plan that was being implemented, or there was insufficient documentation about the plan in the electronic or hard case file.
- The movement toward permanency did not occur within Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) timeframes for reasons such as caseworker turnover or the appearance of a previously absent parent late in the case.

Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 20 (49 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of this assessment are shown in the following table:

Item 8	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	3	5	9	17	85
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	1	3	15
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	6	10	20	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	4	11	21	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Oregon did not meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification. Performance in FY 2005 on the individual measures included in this composite was as follows:

- 76.1 percent of the reunifications occurred in less than 12 months of the child’s entry into foster care, which exceeds the national 75th percentile of 75.2 percent.
- The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification was 6.3 months, which is about equal to the national median of 6.5 months but greater than the 25th percentile of 5.4 months. For this measure, a lower number of months represents a higher level of performance.
- 40.6 percent of children who entered foster care in the last 6 months before the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage exceeds the national median of 39.4 percent but is less than the national 75th percentile of 48.4 percent.

These data suggest that Oregon’s strongest performance occurred in the area of achieving reunifications in less than 12 months for children exiting foster care. However, when reunifications within 12 months were examined based on an entry cohort longitudinal analysis, Oregon’s performance was higher than the national median but less than the 75th percentile. Performance on the fourth measure included in this composite pertains to foster care reentry and is provided in the discussion of item 5. As noted under that item, the statewide data indicate that the rate of foster care reentry is only at the level of the national median.

Item 8 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency was making concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. In one additional case, a rating of Area Needing Improvement was assigned when reviewers determined that although the reunification occurred in less than 12 months, reviewers felt that the reunification was not appropriate and that safety concerns remained with the family. In all three cases, reviewers determined that inadequate services had been provided to parents to ensure a safe reunification.

Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 85 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a

timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. In the State’s 2001 CFSR, there was no comparable item. In the reviews conducted in 2001, item 8 pertained to independent living services. The change for item 8 from an assessment of independent living services to an assessment of timeliness of achieving goals of reunification, guardianship, and permanent placement of relatives was not made until Federal FY 2002.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on the area of reunification during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that a key barrier to achieving reunifications in a timely manner is the lack of services for parents and the scarcity of key services such as substance abuse treatment. It was noted that to get into drug treatment centers, parents often have to call every day to see if there is an opening. Stakeholders noted that when children are removed from the home, parents lose their access to the resources to pay for services. A few stakeholders indicated that there is a successful mentor program to support parents who are trying to access services, but they also indicated that this program is still quite small.

Stakeholders reported that a recent policy change in the State has shifted the criteria for reunification from parental compliance with case plan specifications to establishing that a change in parental behaviors has occurred. They expressed the opinion that, although this change may prevent reentries into foster care, it also may lengthen the time to reunification.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State’s CFSR reviews have shown consistent and steady improvement on this item. The statewide CFSR reviews conducted between 2003 and 2006 resulted in an average rating of 76 percent. In addition, in two quarterly statewide reviews conducted in 2006 and 2007, the item was rated as a Strength in 90.0 percent and 94.7 percent respectively. The Statewide Assessment reports that “due to the large disparity between results from the branch reviews in 2003 to 2006 and the two statewide reviews in 2006 and 2007, and the sample size not being statistically representative, we do not feel we can put significant weight on the improved scores at this time.”

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Oregon has continued the title IV-E Waiver Subsidized Guardianship Program, which has been of great assistance to children and families. Between 2000 and 2006, the number of children who exited to guardianship increased from 181 children to 259 children, a 43.1 percent increase. In Federal FY 2006, 4.6 percent of all children who exited foster care exited to guardianship. The Statewide Assessment reports that “the Subsidized Guardianship program serves a critical need for many families and assists children in finding permanency.”

Item 9: Adoption

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 14 (34 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. The results are shown in the following table:

Item 9	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	2	1	2	5	36
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	5	9	64
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	2	7	14	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	8	14	27	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Oregon did not meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions. Performance in FY 2005 on the individual measures included in this composite was as follows:

- 18.0 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 26.8 percent.
- The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 33.3 months. This length of stay is slightly higher than the national median of 32.4 months. For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.
- 21.9 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the CFSR 12-month target period were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the target period. This percentage exceeds the national median of 20.2 percent but is less than the 75th percentile for this measure of 22.7 percent.
- 11.9 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the CFSR 12-month target period became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within 6 months. This percentage exceeds the national 75th percentile for this measure of 10.9 percent.
- 48.3 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage exceeds the national median of 45.8 percent but is less than the 75th percentile for this measure of 53.7 percent.

These data suggest that achieving adoptions in a timely manner is a challenge for Oregon. Although the State exceeds the 75th percentile for the percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer who become legally free for adoption, it did not achieve the 75th percentile for any of the other measures and performed below the median on two measures.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in nine cases due to the following concerns:

- There was a lack of concerted efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner with no clear explanation for the lack of effort (three cases).

- There were extensive paperwork delays (one case).
- There were placement stability issues with disruptions in adoptive placements because adoptive parents could not meet the child's needs in four cases. In three cases, the adoption had not yet been finalized even though the children had been in foster care for at least 45 months. In the fourth case, the adoption was finalized after the child had been in foster care for 31 months. In all four cases, disruptions in adoptive placements contributed to the delays.
- There was a lack of diligent effort to find an adoptive home for the child in a timely manner (one case).

Additional case review findings relevant to this item were as follows:

- Of the 14 cases with a case goal of adoption, the adoption had been finalized in 4 cases, and in 2 of those cases, the adoption had been finalized within 24 months of the child's entry into foster care. In the two other cases, the adoption was finalized in 28 months in one case and in 31 months in the other case. For both of these cases, reviewers determined that concerted efforts had not been made to achieve the adoption in a timely manner.
- Of the remaining 10 cases with a goal of adoption, only two children were placed in a pre-adoptive home at the time of the onsite CFSR.

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Case reviewers determined that in 36 percent of the cases, the agency had made diligent efforts to achieve adoptions in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR expressed concerns with regard to achieving adoptions in a timely manner. The following barriers to timely adoptions were noted by several stakeholders:

- A lack of a sufficient number of State attorneys to provide CAF with the support necessary to prepare a case for TPR
- Extensive delays in the paperwork process in the central office, which cause delays in finalizing the adoptions
- Delays due to appeals to the TPR decision
- Delays due to prospective adoptive family appeals of the Adoption Committee decisions

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, since Oregon's 2001 CFSR, Oregon has implemented the following strategies to improve performance in the area of timely adoptions:

- Made the adoption process more transparent
- Launched a concurrent planning workgroup
- Developed internal case-tracking tools to help provide managers with performance reports (ORBIT) at both the State and local levels

- Shortened placement supervision from 1 year to 6 months before adoption finalization
- Streamlined the process for foster parents to become adoptive parents with the development of the progressive home study, the 90-day completion date of the home study, and the quick processing of basic rate adoption assistance requests
- Streamlined the process to free children for adoption

The Statewide Assessment reports that since the 2001 CFSR, the State has shown steady and sustained improvement in its performance on timeliness of adoptions. However, the Statewide Assessment also reports that there is need for improvement in this area. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, one concern is the delay resulting from appeals to the TPR by biological parents. Adoptions can sometimes be delayed a year due to TPR appeals. The Statewide Assessment notes that DHS, in collaboration with the Department of Justice (DOJ), is piloting a project that offers a mediation process in TPR appellate cases. There are no findings to date because the project did not begin until October 2006.

Another concern reported in the Statewide Assessment pertains to the adoptive family selection process. Oregon currently uses a committee process to select the most appropriate family to adopt a child based on the needs of the child. Over the last year, this process has been challenged by various community stakeholders. It is criticized as being a closed process. In several instances, the adoptions have been delayed while committee placement decisions have been questioned and reviewed. To address this issue, Oregon has recently received technical support and assistance from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption.

Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 15 (36 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. The results are presented in the following table:

Item 10	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	4	1	4	9	60
Area Needing Improvement	0	3	3	6	40
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	4	7	15	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	6	14	26	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in nine cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and to provide the necessary service to prepare the child for independent living. Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in six cases when reviewers determined the following:

- There were no formal agreements to substantiate that the child was in a permanent placement (three cases).
- The child had not yet begun to receive independent living skills although the child was older than age 16 at the time of the Onsite Review (one case).
- The child was in a temporary shelter situation (one case).

Of the 15 children with a goal of OPPLA, 4 were younger than age 13 at the start of the period under review. One child was 4 years old, two children were 7 years old, and one child was 11 years old. Only four cases involved children who were 16 or older at the start of the period under review. The average age of children with a goal of OPPLA at the start of the period under review was 13.4 years.

Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 60 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. The item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item praised the independent living programs and services in their localities. They noted that both the youth and the foster parents report positive perceptions of the program. However, a few stakeholders in Multnomah and Deschutes Counties reported that often there are waits for these services and because of the scarcity of services they are not always as individualized as they should be to meet the unique needs of the youth. Stakeholders also noted that although youth technically are eligible for services at age 14.5 years, priority goes to older youth, and because of the scarcity of services, this means that youth usually do not receive the services until they are older.

Many stakeholders also expressed the opinion that the goal of OPPLA is used primarily for older children who do not want to be adopted or for children who are in stable placements and the relative or nonrelative foster care provider cannot afford to adopt the children because the adoption assistance payments are much lower than the foster care payments. Stakeholders also noted, however, that sometimes the goal of OPPLA is assigned because the agency does not have an alternative plan and that this may be prevented if concurrent planning was practiced early on in the case.

Some Multnomah stakeholders indicated that when children are assigned a goal of OPPLA, they lose their court-appointed special advocate (CASA). This was reported to be of concern because it suggests that other forms of permanency are not considered once this goal is established.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, recent data indicate that approximately 25 percent of the children in foster care have a plan of Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) and 21 percent of these children are younger than age 13 (the Statewide Assessment does not indicate how old the children were at the time that the goal of APPLA was established).¹ The data also indicate that 68 percent of the children are placed with a nonrelative, while 11 percent are placed with a relative, and 21 percent are placed in a developmentally delayed (DD) foster care placement. The Statewide Assessment notes that 72.5 of the children with a signed and court-approved permanent foster care agreement on September 30, 2005, did not have a subsequent placement change by September 30, 2006.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that for youth whose permanency plan includes emancipation and independent living, DHS administers Oregon’s Chafee Independent Living programs, which include transition services, employment services, postsecondary education preparation, mentors, and services to former foster youth; life skills training; discretionary funds to assist youth in their transition; an independent living subsidy program for children in DHS custody; and housing services for former foster youth.

Permanency Outcome 2

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children					
Number of cases reviewed by site according to degree of outcome achievement:					
	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	6	7	16	29	70.7
Partially Achieved	4	2	5	11	26.8
Not Achieved	0	1	0	1	2.4
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 70.7 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied slightly across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 76 percent of Multnomah County cases, 70

¹The CFSR Onsite Review instrument uses the term Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA). The term APPLA is used by the State of Oregon and is in the sections summarizing information from the Statewide Assessment referring to this permanency goal. OPPLA and APPLA refer to the same permanency goal.

percent of Marion County cases, and 60 percent of Deschutes County cases. Oregon was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and therefore was not required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key Findings From the 2007 CFSR

The 2007 case reviews resulted in the following findings:

- Most of the children in the cases were placed in close proximity to their parents or other relatives (item 11).
- Most of the children in the cases were placed with siblings, if appropriate and safe (item 12).
- There were seven cases in which the frequency of visitation between the child and parents and between siblings was inadequate to meet the needs of the child (item 13).
- For the most part, the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members, e.g., through phone contacts and visits (item 14).
- The agency was not consistent with regard to seeking both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for the child (item 15).
- The agency was not consistent with regard to making concerted efforts to support the relationship between children and their mothers and fathers (item 16).

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 32 (78 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. Cases determined to be not applicable were those in which (1) TPR had been attained before the period under review, (2) contact with parents was not considered to be in the child’s best interest, and/or (3) parents were deceased or whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child’s most current foster care setting was in close proximity to the child’s parents or close relatives. The results of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 11	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	9	8	14	31	97
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	1	1	3
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	8	15	32	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	2	6	9	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Item 11 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed in the same community or county as the parents or that the child’s placement was not in the same community or county but still was in close proximity to the parents. The item also was rated as a Strength if the child was placed out of his or her community or county but the placement was determined to be necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the child’s permanency goal. In one case, item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the child’s placement was over 1 hour away from her parents. This placement was due to a lack of sufficient resources in the community to meet the child’s need for a structured therapeutic environment.

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that CAF had made diligent efforts to ensure that children were placed in foster care placements that were in close proximity to their parents or relatives or that were necessary to meet special needs. This percentage exceeds the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

A few Deschutes County stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency makes concerted efforts to place children in their communities.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, this area was considered a Strength at the time of the 2001 CFSR review. The Statewide Assessment notes that since 2001, this item has been rated as a Strength in 98 to 100 percent of the cases reviewed during the State’s quality assurance reviews.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 25 (61 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were, or had been, placed together and, if not, whether the separation was necessary to meet the needs (service or safety needs) of one or more of the children. The results of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 12	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	5	4	14	23	92
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	1	2	8
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	5	15	25	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	5	6	16	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed with all siblings or, if siblings were separated, the separation was due to the special needs of one of the siblings or to the fact that placement with siblings was not in the child's best interest. Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together. In one of these cases, despite attempts to find a home, there was no foster home that could accommodate the sibling group.

Rating Determination

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 92 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever possible and appropriate. This exceeds the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency makes concerted efforts to place siblings together.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, this area was considered a Strength at the time of the 2001 CFSR review. Since that time, quality assurance reviews over a 4-year period have consistently identified this indicator as a Strength in more than 90 percent of the cases reviewed.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

___ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 34 (83 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: (1) TPR was established before the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child’s life (or parents were deceased) or (2) visitation with a parent was considered to not be in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings in foster care and whether these visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The findings of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 13	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	7	8	12	27	79
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	3	7	21
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	9	15	34	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	1	6	7	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Performance on this item varied somewhat across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of Marion County cases, 80 percent of Multnomah County cases, and 70 percent of Deschutes County cases.

Item 13 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that (1) the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children, or (2) the agency made concerted efforts to promote frequent visitation even when the current visitation frequency did not meet the child’s needs.

Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the mother (two cases).
- The quality of visitation between the parent and child was insufficient to meet the needs of the child (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father (six cases).

Specific information about visitation frequency is provided in the following table: As shown in the table, during the period under review, children visited with their fathers at least once a month in only 46 percent of the cases. In comparison, children visited with their mothers at least once a month in 78 percent of the cases and with their siblings in 81 percent of the cases.

Visitation Frequency (During the period under review)	Mother and Child	Father and Child	Siblings
At least once a week	18 (56%)	6 (40%)	9 (56%)
Less than once a week, but at least twice a month	3 (9%)	0	0
Less than twice a month, but at least once a month	4 (13%)	1 (6%)	4 (25%)
Less than once a month	6 (19%)	4 (27%)	3 (19%)
Never	1 (3%)	4 (27%)	0
Total Applicable Cases	32	15	16

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 79 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the primary barrier to frequent visitation is the lack of resources to supervise the visits and provide transportation. Stakeholders reported that there are not enough staff members, particularly social services aides, to assist the foster parents with the transportation and that there are not enough staff members to provide supervision. Stakeholders noted that this is a particular concern when the court orders that the child and parents have four or five visits per week and there are not enough resources to make this happen.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, this area was considered a Strength at the time of the 2001 CFSR. The Statewide Assessment reports that, since that time, Oregon’s CFSR process had reported an increase in 2006 to 92.0 percent of cases reviewed being rated as a Strength for this indicator, followed by a decrease in 2007 to 82.1 percent of cases being rated as a Strength. The Statewide Assessment also reports that a constant concern for the agency is the insufficiency of resources to assist in visitation supervision, transportation, and facilitation.

Item 14. Preserving connections

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 14 was applicable for all 41 foster care cases. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child’s connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment are provided in the following table:

Item 14	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	9	7	20	36	88
Area Needing Improvement	1	3	1	5	12
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 95 percent of Multnomah County cases, 90 percent of Deschutes County cases, and 70 percent of Marion County cases.

Item 14 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members (e.g., through phone contact, placement with relatives, and visits) (25 cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the child’s religious or cultural heritage (nine cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the school and the community (12 cases).

Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to extended family (three cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the child’s religious or cultural heritage (two cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections to school or community (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. In 88 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections with extended family, culture, religion, community, and school. This is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in Oregon’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that some efforts are made to keep children in the same schools when they enter placements and to ensure that the children remain connected to extended family. Deschutes County stakeholders reported that the agency recruits family members to help with supervised visits. However, Marion County stakeholders said that their foster homes are so full that foster parents do not have time to help children maintain connections with family, community, or culture. Stakeholders in this county noted that there are not enough Hispanic and Spanish-speaking foster parents in the county to ensure that children with Hispanic cultural backgrounds are able to maintain connections to that culture while in foster care.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State CFSR reviews found that in 2006, 90.3 percent of cases were rated as a Strength for this indicator, and in 2007, 97.4 percent of cases were rated as a Strength. However, as indicated in the Statewide Assessment, a youth survey conducted in Multnomah County (Portland) in December 2006 found that only 71 percent of the 97 foster care youth surveyed said that they are able to maintain contact with people they care about, while 29 percent said that they do not get to see people they care about enough. In addition, in a youth survey completed statewide in March 2007, only 56.5 percent of the 223 youth responding said that DHS “always” or “usually” helps them stay connected to or learn about their community, family, and culture; 38.1 percent said “not usually” or “never”; and 5.4 percent did not respond to this question.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the increasing Latino population in Oregon continues to pose unique challenges with regard to having staff members, community service providers, legal representation, and the fostering community who can best serve these children. These challenges include the need for written and verbal communication tools and training needs.

Item 15. Relative placement

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 35 (85 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because (1) the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period or (2) the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives (both maternal and paternal relatives) as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 15	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	7	6	13	26	74
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	6	9	26
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	7	19	35	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	3	2	6	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Performance on this measure varied somewhat across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 86 percent of Marion County cases, 78 percent of Deschutes County cases, and 68 percent of Multnomah County cases.

Item 15 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed with relatives (13 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives (13 cases).

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (10 out of 18 applicable cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (9 out of 15 applicable cases).

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 74 percent of cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Although only a few stakeholders commented on this item during the onsite CFSR, most of them expressed the opinion that the agency makes concerted efforts to identify relatives and to place children in homes with relatives. However, a few stakeholders suggested that many youth are not placed with relatives and do not feel that sufficient searches are being made for relatives to care for them. Some Deschutes County stakeholders noted that many potential relative caregivers cannot afford to provide care for the child because they do not receive foster care payments.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, for this item, Oregon's CFSR process reported a statewide performance of 88.5 percent Strength in fall 2006 and 100 percent Strength in spring 2007.

The Statewide Assessment Appendix notes that during the 2007 Legislative Session, the legislature placed priorities on the importance of relative placement and on relative and sibling connections through the passage of the following two bills:

- Senate Bill 282 allows the department to reimburse relatives who provide relative foster care. The legislature invested \$2.2 million in DHS to reimburse relative foster parents. Although this amount assumes a “means test” for relatives, it is a positive step to bring Oregon in line with the rest of the Nation in regard to reimbursing relatives at the same rate as nonrelative foster parents.
- Senate Bill 414 requires that diligent efforts be made to not only place siblings together but also to place children with relatives.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 32 (78 percent) of the 41 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if (1) parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child or (2) a relationship with the parents was considered to be not in the child’s best interests throughout the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of this assessment are provided in the following table:

Item 16	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	5	5	11	21	66
Area Needing Improvement	5	3	3	11	34
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	8	14	32	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	2	7	9	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	21	41	

Item 16 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children. Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father (nine cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother (six cases).

Specific findings pertaining to this item are shown in the following table:

Effort Made	With Mother	With Father
Encouraging the parent's participation in school or after school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	11	2
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events	8	0
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	17	4
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them	13	3
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	1	1

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 66 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders did not comment on this item during the onsite CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon's CFSR process has reported a decrease in overall performance for this item from 87.5 percent Strength ratings in 2006 to 79.3 percent Strength ratings in 2007. The Statewide Assessment reports that, at times, the relationship between the foster parent and birth parent has included joint visits for school meetings, WIC appointments, and other medical appointments. The Statewide Assessment also reports that additional funding for therapeutic or specialized visitation may also be available through the System of Care program. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the department supports both a Parent Mentor and Parent Leadership program, which assist parents currently involved with child welfare in negotiating the system and focusing on issues they need to address, including how to stay connected and involved in their child's life.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the site according to degree of outcome achievement:					
	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	6	4	15	25	38.5
Partially Achieved	4	11	7	22	33.8
Not Achieved or Addressed	7	2	9	18	27.7
Total Applicable Cases	17	17	31	65	
Not Applicable Cases	0	0	0	0	

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 38.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied across sites, although performance was low in all sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 48 percent of Multnomah County cases, 35 percent of Deschutes County cases, and 23 percent of Marion County cases. The outcome also was substantially achieved in 44 percent of the foster care cases, compared to 30 percent of the in-home services cases.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for this outcome in its 2001 CFSR. In that CFSR, Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning was rated a Strength, and all other items were rated as an Area Needing Improvement, including Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents, Item 19: Caseworker visits with child, and Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents. The following concerns were noted for this outcome:

- In many cases, the service needs of children were not adequately assessed or met, particularly the needs of older youth in care.
- In many cases, there was insufficient assessment of parents’ needs.
- In some cases, there was a lack of effort to engage parents in services.
- Caseworkers rarely had face-to-face contact with the parents in the in-home services cases and relied on contracted treatment providers to contact the families.

The following are the strategies Oregon implemented to address these concerns:

- Developed a tool called a Needs Planning Guide, which was designed to assist caseworkers in working with parents and foster parents by providing guidance in how to assess for needs and how to plan for service delivery to address needs
- Revised policy to clarify agency standards with regard to the frequency, location, and purpose (i.e., what the caseworker should assess during the visit) of caseworker visits with children and parents
- Incorporated prompts in the State’s information system to ensure that caseworkers were entering data into the system regarding their visits with children and parents

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

The case reviews in the 2007 CFSR resulted in the following findings:

- The agency was not consistent with regard to assessing and meeting the services needs of mothers, fathers, children, and foster parents. Fathers were less likely than the others to have needs assessed and met.
- The agency was not consistent with regard to involving mothers, fathers, and age-appropriate children in developing the case plan, with fathers being less likely to be involved than mothers or children.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children was not consistent across cases.
- There was a lack of sufficient caseworker visits with mothers and fathers, but particularly with fathers.

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had (1) adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents and (2) provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of children’s (but not parents’) needs pertaining to educational, physical health, and mental health needs. These are addressed in later items. The case review results were as follows:

Item 17	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	8	4	16	28	43
Area Needing Improvement	9	13	15	37	57
Not Applicable	0	0	0	0	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Although performance was low on this item for all sites, there was some variation. The item was rated as a Strength in 52 percent of Multnomah County cases and 47 percent of Deschutes County cases, compared to 23 percent of Marion County cases. Performance on the item also varied as a function of type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 51 percent of the foster care cases, compared to 30 percent of the in-home services cases.

Item 17 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met. Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that there was either inadequate assessment of needs or inadequate services to meet identified needs.

Specific case review findings for item 17 are shown in the following table: The data in the table suggest that the agency was considerably less effective in assessing and meeting service needs for fathers than it was for children, foster parents, and mothers. However, in one-third of the applicable cases, mothers and foster parents did not have their needs assessed and/or met, and one-fourth of the children did not have their needs assessed or met.

Item 17: Table of Needs Assessment and Services	Evaluation Results		No. of Applicable Cases
	No	Yes	
Mother's needs assessed and met?	16 (30%)	38 (70%)	54
Father's needs assessed and met?	22 (56%)	16 (44%)	39
Foster parent's needs assessed and met?	12 (30%)	28 (70%)	40
Child's needs assessed and met?	16 (25%)	49 (75%)	65

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 43 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the State had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children and parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR identified the following concerns with regard to meeting the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents.

- There are limited mental health services for adults once they are diagnosed (State-level stakeholders).
- Caseworker caseloads are so large that they do not have time to do social work, including comprehensive assessments of each child and family (Marion County).
- There is very little support for foster parents and children. For example, if foster parents are caring for an infant, they will receive formula but not diapers. Marion County agency-level stakeholders indicated that any support that is available for foster parents comes from the volunteers and from the community, not from the agency.
- A few stakeholders in Multnomah County reported that in-home family counseling services are available in that county from Volunteers of America and that this is a good service.

Stakeholders also reported that there are about 600 plus children in foster care who receive services through funds from title XIX provided by the Seniors and People with Disabilities Office. They indicated that these children include both child welfare children (about 60 to 65 percent) and voluntary placements. The local DD program works with the local child welfare agency to ensure that appropriate services are provided. Stakeholders noted that both the DD caseworker and the CAF caseworker conduct visits with the child either monthly or quarterly.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in response to a review of child welfare practice in Oregon conducted by the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services, CAF recently developed the OSM as a new practice model for assessing and providing services. Rule and policy changes pertaining to the model were implemented on March 20, 2007. The Statewide Assessment reports that the OSM is intended to improve practice in many areas of child welfare and child safety, including how services are offered to children, their families, and foster parents. The Statewide Assessment reports that caseworkers will now use the Safety Assessment tool and the Protective Capacity Assessment (PCA) to determine services for families. The PCA is designed to focus intervention on caregiver engagement, the family's perspective, family needs and strengths, collaborative problem solving, and strengthening and empowering caregivers to resume their role and responsibilities for protecting their children. The new model includes use of Expected Outcomes (expect change in behavior if the client successfully completes a service) and Action Agreements (which describe activities used to accomplish the outcomes). The Statewide Assessment notes that these tools will provide workers with the ability to better determine service needs and to engage and support clients in receipt of those services. The Statewide Assessment also notes that changes in administrative rules and implementation of the OSM also include greater oversight by supervisors to ensure that caseworkers follow through on assessing and providing for child, family, and foster parent service needs.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, foster parents' needs are assessed through the certification process and home study. The Statewide Assessment reports that, as a part of the monthly face-to-face visits, caseworkers monitor safety issues in the home and placement support plans are developed to address foster parent needs around specific children in their care.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon CFSR branch reviews in 2003 found that 77 percent of cases were rated as a Strength for this item. This percentage was 62.3 percent during the statewide review conducted in the fall of 2006 and 87.7 percent for the statewide review in January 2007. Comments from branch and statewide reviews from 2003 to 2007 regarding cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement included the following:

- Needs were not assessed at all, not assessed in a timely manner, or not with sufficient thoroughness.
- Identified needs were not addressed.
- Service agreements were not in the file; therefore, the process was not documented for working with the family to identify needs and services.
- Identified needs did not address the key issues that prevented the child from living safely at home.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable for 62 (95 percent) of the 65 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were not involved with the child in any way and the child was too young or had cognitive delays or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (if age-appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child’s best interest. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child had actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. This assessment produced the following findings:

Item 18	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	5	9	13	27	44
Area Needing Improvement	11	8	16	35	56
Total Applicable Cases	16	17	29	62	
Not Applicable Cases	1	0	2	3	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

There was some variation in performance on this item across the sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 53 percent of Marion County cases, 45 percent of Multnomah County cases, and 31 percent of Deschutes County cases. There was considerable variation in performance on this item as a function of the type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 59 percent of foster care cases, compared to 21 percent of in-home services cases.

Item 18 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age-appropriate) in the case planning process. Key findings with regard to this item are presented in the following table: The data indicate that for the cases reviewed, fathers were less likely to be involved in case planning than either mothers or age-appropriate children. In addition, children were less likely to be involved in case planning than mothers. However, even though the mothers were more likely than fathers or children to be involved in case planning, about one-third of the mothers were not involved.

Item 18: Table of Involvement in Case Planning	Evaluation Results		No. of Applicable Cases
	No	Yes	
Mother involved in case planning?	18 (34%)	35 (66%)	53
Father involved in case planning?	17 (46%)	20 (54%)	37
Child (if age-appropriate) involved in case planning?	18 (55 %)	15 (45%)	33

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 44 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that parents and youth are involved in case planning through the family team meetings, team decision-making meetings, and the new safety-related meetings that occur early in the case. However, many other stakeholders suggested that involvement of parents in case planning is not a consistent practice. Some stakeholders attributed the lack of consistency to the State’s recent transition to the OSM and staff restructuring. They noted that these changes have resulted in further changes in the types of family meetings being held and in confusion regarding how to engage families in case planning using the OSM.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the average branch rating for this item was 84 percent Strength during reviews held 2003 to 2006. In the 2007 statewide quarterly review, 81.5 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength for this item. The Statewide Assessment reports the following reasons for case ratings of Area Needing Improvement:

- Lack of documentation
- Feeling that services and planning were being imposed rather than collaborative
- Lack of family decision-making meetings for planning purposes

- Lack of contact/communication with caseworker
- Fathers and/or youth not included in planning
- Failure to include parents who had, in the early stages of the case, been uncooperative and actively involved in drugs, but were now clean and sober and willing to participate

The Statewide Assessment reports that one of the overarching themes emerging from the assessment of this item is the high caseloads and workloads of caseworkers and their supervisors and the lack of time on the job and resulting lack of experience. Current supervisor workloads make clinical supervision and a thorough review of case planning difficult. Also, collaborative and engaging work with families requires skill and experience. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, adequate staff, supervision, and training are all elements that affect the lack of written plans, the lack of documentation, and the lack of family meetings.

Item 19. Worker visits with child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 19 was applicable for all 65 foster care cases. In conducting the assessment of this item, reviewers were to determine whether the frequency of visits between the caseworkers and children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s safety and well-being and whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. The results of the assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 19	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	7	12	17	36	55
Area Needing Improvement	10	5	14	29	45
Not Applicable	0	0	0	0	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 70 percent of Marion County cases, compared to 55 percent of Multnomah County cases and 41 percent of Deschutes County cases. Performance on this item did not differ substantively as a function of the type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 56 percent of the foster care cases, compared to 54 percent of the in-home services cases.

Item 19 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s safety and well-being and to promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child and the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (seven cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits with children was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur, they were substantive (four cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (seven cases).
- There were extended periods of time in which there were no visits to the child at all (11 cases). (In some cases, several months had elapsed during the period under review in which there were no visits; in three cases, no visits were made during the period under review.)

Specific information from the case reviews is presented in the following table:

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits with Child During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)	In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)
Visits occurred on at least a weekly basis	1 (2%)	2 (8%)
Visits occurred less than weekly but at least twice a month	5 (12%)	1 (4%)
Visits occurred less than twice a month but at least once a month	22 (54%)	11 (46%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	13 (32%)	7 (29%)
There were no visits during the period under review	0	3 (13 %)
Total cases	41	24

An additional finding was that in 26 (40 percent) of the 65 cases, reviewers indicated that the quality of the visits was not sufficient to meet the child’s needs. This percentage did not differ as a function of the type of case.

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 55 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and/or quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR generally expressed the opinion that sufficient caseworker contact with children is not occurring on a consistent basis and varies across caseworkers, with some caseworkers conducting frequent visits and others rarely visiting, if at all. Stakeholders noted that children with a case plan of OPPLA are not likely to be visited once a month and often do not have face-to-face contact with caseworkers for several months. However, agency stakeholders acknowledged that there is a manual specifying the frequency and the quality of visits. Agency stakeholders also noted that it is difficult to find

someone to do courtesy visits if the child is placed in a home on a Native American reservation or in another county. A few Marion County stakeholders reported that visits often require overtime work because of the large caseloads carried by caseworkers.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, this area was considered an Area Needing Improvement at the time of the 2001 CFSR. The Statewide Assessment reports that in a September 2003 statewide case review, sufficient caseworker contacts with children were documented in 34.4 percent of the cases reviewed. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, since that time, there has been steady improvement, and the January 2007 ORBIT reports on this measure showed timely contacts being made in 68.5 percent of the cases. Additional findings reported in the Statewide Assessment were as follows:

- During spring 2006, the Citizen Review Board (CRB) conducted a survey to ascertain compliance with face-to-face contact requirements. In this survey, the board identified 68 percent of the contacts between the child and the caseworker to be within the 30-day requirement.
- The results of a youth survey conducted with 97 youth in Multnomah County (Portland) in December 2006 were that 61 percent of the youth reported that they receive enough contact by their caseworker, with the remaining 39 percent indicating that they would like to have more contact.
- The results of a youth survey completed statewide in March 2007 indicate that 55 percent of the 223 youth responding said that they “always” or “usually” see their caseworker every 30 days; 26 percent said that they do not usually see their caseworker every 30 days, and 13 percent said that they never see their caseworker every 30 days. The remaining youth did not respond to this question.

Item 20. Worker visits with parents

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 56 (86 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of the children. All cases that were not applicable were foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker’s face-to-face contact with the children’s mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and/or ensure the children’s safety and well-being. The results of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 20	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	7	4	11	22	39
Area Needing Improvement	9	10	15	34	61
Total Applicable Cases	16	14	26	56	
Not Applicable Cases	1	3	5	9	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Performance on this item did not vary substantively across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 44 percent of Deschutes County cases, 42 percent of Multnomah County, and 29 percent of Marion County cases. However, performance varied by type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 47 percent of the applicable foster care cases, compared to 29 percent of the in-home services cases. Item 20 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency or quality (19 cases).
- Visits with the mother were of sufficient frequency but not quality (two cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency or quality (19 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency; but when they occurred, they were of sufficient quality (one case).
- Visits with the father were of sufficient frequency but not quality (one case).
- There were no visits with the father (12 cases).
- There were no visits with the mother (six cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the following table: These data indicate that caseworkers were more likely to visit mothers at least once a month (56 percent of applicable cases) than they were to visit fathers at least once a month (25 percent of applicable cases).

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits with Parents	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least weekly	2 (4%)	0
Visits occurred less than weekly but at least twice a month	9 (17%)	1 (3%)
Visits occurred less than twice a month but at least once a month	19 (35%)	8 (22%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	18 (33%)	16 (43%)
There were no visits during the period under review	6 (11%)	12 (32%)
Total Applicable Cases	54	37

Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 39 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or to promote attainment of case goals. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders did not comment on this item during the onsite CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the department faces challenges for performance on this item, similar to the challenges pertaining to face-to-face contacts between caseworkers and children. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the Oregon CRB survey conducted in March 2006 regarding the department's policy of 30-day caseworker contact with parents ranged from 16 percent with fathers to 33 percent with mothers.

Well-Being Outcome 2

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	7	6	17	30	76.9
Partially Achieved	0	3	2	5	12.8
Not Achieved	2	0	2	4	10.3
Total Applicable Cases	9	9	21	39	
Not Applicable Cases	8	8	10	26	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. Reviewers determined that 76.9 percent of the cases reviewed substantially achieved this outcome. This is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. There were only slight differences in performance on this outcome across sites. The item was determined to be substantially achieved in 81 percent of Multnomah County cases, 78 percent of Deschutes County cases, and 67 percent of Marion County cases. Only 6 of the 24 in-home services cases were determined to be applicable for an assessment of this outcome.

Key Concerns of the 2001 CFSR

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for this outcome, which includes only one item, Item 21: Educational needs of the child. The following concerns were noted for this outcome:

- Some foster youth who were not in school or GED courses were not having their educational needs addressed.
- In some cases, caseworkers did not follow up on identified educational service needs.
- Over one-half of the applicable case records did not have school records.
- Many foster parents did not receive educational records and education-related information when the child was placed in the home.

Oregon addressed these concerns in its PIP strategies by providing training to agency staff, foster parents, and ILP contractors on how to effectively advocate for children to facilitate access to early childhood development services such as special education and Head Start. The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

A key finding of the 2007 CFSR was that, although many of the children in the cases reviewed had their educational needs met, concerns were noted that in many cases educational needs were identified but concerted efforts were not made to ensure that services were provided to address those needs.

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 39 (60 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if any of the following applied: (1) children were not of school age or (2) children in in-home cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether concerted efforts were made to meet those needs. The results of this assessment are provided in the following table:

Item 21	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	7	6	17	30	77
Area Needing Improvement	2	3	4	9	23
Total Applicable Cases	9	9	21	39	
Not Applicable	8	8	10	26	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Item 21 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child's educational needs were appropriately assessed and concerted efforts were made to provide services, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three foster care cases and seven in-home services cases when case reviewers determined the following:

- There was a lack of assessment of educational needs even when there was clear evidence that the child was experiencing school-related problems. (three cases, two of which were foster care cases)
- Educational needs were identified and noted in the case record, but concerted efforts were not made to provide services to address those needs. (six cases, four of which were foster care cases)

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 77 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95 percent standard is set for this item because it is the only item assessed for the outcome.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the Onsite Review expressed differing opinions regarding the effectiveness of CAF in meeting the educational needs of children. Most stakeholders indicated that the agency makes concerted efforts to maintain children in their prior schools when they come into placement or when there are placement changes that require a change of school district. It was noted that legislation was passed in 2005 to help keep children in their original schools and to provide transportation supports. However, while stakeholders in Deschutes County said that they have funds to pay for transporting children to their former schools if necessary, Marion County stakeholders said that there were insufficient funds for this type of transportation.

There also were differences across counties in the perception of caseworkers' attendance at Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meetings. Deschutes County stakeholders said that caseworkers rarely attend IEP meetings, and when they do go to the school, it usually is to talk to the child and not to inquire of school personnel about the child's progress. In comparison, Multnomah County stakeholders reported that caseworkers frequently attend IEP meetings.

Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that CAF caseworkers do not have a full understanding of the educational system and that collaboration would work better if they did have this understanding. Other stakeholders held the opposite opinion, expressing concern about the lack of knowledge of school personnel about children in foster care and the foster care system. Both groups indicated that greater collaboration is needed between the two systems. State-level stakeholders said that while there is some State-level collaboration between CAF and the Department of Education, the expectation is that most collaboration will be done at the local level.

Some Deschutes County stakeholders voiced concern about services for children with special needs, indicating that it is difficult to obtain assessments and to provide services to these children.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in the branch-level case reviews conducted between 2003 and 2006, educational needs were reported as being met in an average of 92 percent of the cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment also reports that in the two recent statewide CFSR reviews, educational needs were reported as a Strength in 87.5 percent and 86.2 percent of the cases reviewed, respectively. In addition, as indicated in the Statewide Assessment, in a March 2007 survey of 223 foster youth, 79 percent said that DHS usually or always helped them meet their educational needs and goals, 16 percent said that DHS did not usually or never helped them with their educational goals, and 6 percent of the surveyed youth did not respond to this question. When asked what DHS could have done to meet their educational needs, youth expressed various needs including scholarships, support for obtaining the GED, support for participation in athletics, and continuity regarding staying in the same school.

An additional finding reported in the Statewide Assessment was that 45 percent of 87 foster parents surveyed reported that it was moderately easy to obtain educational assessments for the children in their care, while 40 percent reported it was “hard” to “medium hard” to obtain educational assessments. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that waiting lists for educational testing can be a barrier to getting a child’s IEP.

Well-Being Outcome 3

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Substantially Achieved	10	13	18	41	68.3
Partially Achieved	3	1	7	11	18.3
Not Achieved or Addressed	3	2	3	8	13.3
Total Applicable Cases	16	16	28	60	
Not Applicable	1	1	3	5	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 68.3 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied somewhat across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 81 percent of Marion County cases, compared to 64 percent of Multnomah County cases and 62.5 percent of Deschutes County cases. There also was variation as a function of type of case. The outcome was substantially achieved in 76 percent of foster care cases, compared to 53 percent of in-home services cases.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Oregon did not achieve substantial conformity for this outcome in its 2001 CFSR. Item 22: Physical health of the child was rated as a Strength, and Item 23: Mental health of the child was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. The following concerns were identified in the 2001 CFSR:

- Some children with identified treatment needs did not receive the services they needed.
- Some treatment was not consistent or adequate to meet the child's needs.
- In some cases, there was a lack of follow-up to ensure that services were provided.

To address these concerns, Oregon implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Increased enrollment into managed care plans
- Provided staff and foster parent training on how to access mental health services and advocate for services

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

A key finding of the 2007 CFSR was that the agency was generally effective in meeting children's physical health needs, although there were concerns regarding access to dental services. However, the agency was less effective in meeting children's mental health needs. In many cases, children's mental health needs were not assessed and, in many other cases, although needs were assessed, services were not provided to address those needs.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 3 are presented and discussed below.

Item 22. Physical health of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 51 (78 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether (1) children's physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed and (2) the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 22	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	12	12	21	45	88
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	3	6	12
Total Applicable Cases	14	13	24	51	
Not Applicable Cases	3	4	7	14	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

There was little variation in performance on this item across sites. Performance did not vary substantively as a function of type of case.

Item 22 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children’s health needs (medical and dental) were routinely assessed and services provided as needed. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was a lack of adequate dental services (four cases).
- Physical health needs were not assessed (three cases).
- Identified physical health needs were not addressed (two cases).

Three of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for this item were foster care cases and three were in-home services cases.

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 88 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was adequately addressing the health needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that medical services are accessible for children in foster care. There were some differences of opinion regarding dental services, however. A few stakeholders suggested that dental services are accessible, but other stakeholders voiced concern about availability and accessibility of dental services. Stakeholders noted that orthodontic services are not covered by Medicaid and that often the State will not provide flexible funding to pay for this service.

All stakeholders agreed that foster parents are given the authority and responsibility to address medical care issues with the children and that caseworkers are expected to monitor this through contacts with the foster parents. However, stakeholders had contrasting opinions regarding the effectiveness of caseworkers in monitoring medical services and the effectiveness of foster parents in ensuring that all medical service needs are met.

Stakeholders reported that there are Exceptional Needs Care Coordinators for children in foster care who are enrolled in Managed Care. The coordinators are nurse consultants who are responsible for making sure that foster parents can access medical services for the children in their care, and they are available to all foster parents.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in branch-level case reviews conducted between 2003 and 2006, health needs were met in about 80 percent of the cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment notes that reasons for Area Needing Improvement ratings included the following: (1) assessments or immunizations did not occur within State-mandated timeframes, (2) the records in the file did not indicate services had occurred, (3) dental services were not provided due to a shortage of dentists who accept the Oregon Health Plan, and (4) foster parents or caseworkers did not follow up with needed services. The Statewide Assessment reports that in the statewide review in September 2006, health needs were met in 75.7 percent of the cases, and in the review conducted in January 2007, health needs were met in 88.4 percent of the cases.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the case reviews revealed differences with regard to the effectiveness in meeting children’s health needs as a function of geographic location. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, in Portland, children were likely to have their medical and dental needs met in 86.3 percent of the cases; in the suburban counties (Clackamas, Lane, Marion, and Washington), children had medical and dental needs met in 80.8 percent of the case; and in the remaining rural counties, children had their medical and dental needs met in 77.9 percent of the cases.

Additional data findings reported in the Statewide Assessment were as follows:

- 72 percent of the 87 foster parents surveyed in 2007 said that it was “easy” or “relatively easy” to obtain medical care for children living in their homes.
- Oregon judges interviewed during the CFSR branch-level reviews conducted during 2003 to 2006 reported that when children entered foster care, their physical and dental health needs were addressed.
- 71 percent of the 223 foster youth surveyed for the 2007 State Assessment reported getting the services they wanted. Of those that reported having additional needs, 11 percent said that they needed more dental services, 9 percent reported needing medical care, 8 percent had “other” needs, 3 percent wanted more mental health services, and 10 percent of youth surveyed did not respond to this question.

Item 23. Mental health of the child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 49 (75 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the following table:

Item 23	Deschutes	Marion	Multnomah	Total Number	Percent
Strength	8	12	15	35	71
Area Needing Improvement	4	2	8	14	29
Total Applicable Cases	12	14	23	49	
Not Applicable Cases	5	3	8	16	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	

There was some variation in performance on this item across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 86 percent of applicable Marion County cases, compared to 67 percent of applicable Deschutes County cases and 65 percent of applicable Multnomah County Cases. The item also was rated as a Strength in 79 percent of the 33 applicable foster care cases, compared to 56 percent of the 16 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 23 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children’s mental health needs were appropriately assessed and the identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were not assessed nor addressed (nine cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed, but services were not provided to address identified needs (five cases).

Ratings Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 71 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Oregon’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many of the stakeholder comments regarding mental health services are provided in the section of the report that addresses the systemic factor of service array. For the most part, stakeholders expressed concerns about the mental health system and the difficulty of accessing mental and behavioral health services for children. A key concern expressed pertained to the lack of residential treatment services, the short stays in residential treatment, and the need to have children “fail” in all other treatment modalities before they can be approved for residential treatment.

Various stakeholders also expressed the following concerns:

- There are no clear procedures or processes for monitoring children who are on psychotropic medications.
- There are not enough child psychiatrists, especially outside of the metro area.
- There are extensive delays in obtaining psychological evaluations.
- There are waiting lists for mental health services.
- Children are not receiving the services unless they meet specific criteria as determined by a mental health therapist. This means that services cannot be accessed on a proactive basis but tend to be crisis oriented.
- When services are denied, caseworkers have to go to court and report to the judge that they tried to access those services. The judge may then order the services, but this creates delays.
- Children sometimes are denied services because there is a lack of funds or because the mental health agency does not believe that their circumstances warrant mental health services (Deschutes and Marion County).

Stakeholders noted that the mental health agency offers wraparound services in which they meet with a family and help them solve problems. There was general agreement that these services were valuable, but it was noted that in order to receive the services, the child must reach specified criteria.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in the two statewide quality assurance case reviews, this item was rated as a Strength in 71.4 percent of cases reviewed in spring 2006 and 90.5 percent of cases reviewed in fall 2007. The Statewide Assessment notes that children in urban areas were more likely to have their needs met than children in rural areas. Rural children's needs were met in 74.3 percent of the cases reviewed; for suburban areas, this percentage was 82.1 percent, and for the Portland area, the percentage was 83.7 percent.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that branch-level quality assurance reviews conducted from 2003 to 2006 found that in 77 percent of the cases, children had their mental health needs met. Reasons for Area Needing Improvement ratings included the following:

- Lack of information about the children's mental health needs in the file
- Mental health needs identified but no mental health screening or assessment completed
- Delays in screenings and assessments

Additional data findings included in the Statewide Assessment were as follows:

- Approximately 40 percent of foster parents responding to a survey said it was "easy" or "relatively easy" to get mental health services for the children in their care, and 33 percent said it was "hard" or "moderately hard."

- Approximately 20 percent of caseworkers who responded to a survey said that they experienced challenges in obtaining mental health assessments for children or youth, and 30 percent said it was difficult to obtain mental health treatment. In addition, managed care services around the State have limited the number of sessions per client in most cases.
- Only 3 percent of 223 youth surveyed indicated they wanted mental health services that were unavailable.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Oregon’s mental health system for children was reorganized in the past 2 years with a program called the Children’s Mental Health Initiative and that during the restructuring, previously available services were temporarily unavailable (for a month or two at most). However, the Statewide Assessment also reports the following concerns about the initiative:

- Low rates of reimbursement for mental health services result in many child welfare clients being seen by interns or practicum students.
- New practitioners often have a high turnover. Stakeholders have reported that some children and youth refuse to continue in treatment after being expected to repeatedly report their stories to another new provider.

The Statewide Assessment reports that stakeholders in one rural county, in which 83 percent of the cases were assessed as having the children’s mental health needs addressed, expressed the following concerns:

- Mental health services are not adequate to meet the needs of the clients.
- One provider cannot ethically serve all. One counselor is expected to do family counseling, couples counseling, and individual counseling with the same family.
- Services are limited and hard to get.
- Children who need mental health service must miss a day of school each week to get the service.
- For specialized services—such as for a 3-year-old bed wetter, an angry teen, bipolar or schizophrenic clients, or sex abuse survivors—it often is necessary to travel 90 miles or more to obtain the service.

SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the CFSR Final Report provides information regarding Oregon’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors examined during the CFSR. Information on the items included in each systemic factor comes from the Statewide Assessment and interviews with stakeholders conducted during the onsite CFSR. A score for substantial conformity is established for each systemic factor. Scores of 3 and 4 represent substantial conformity. Scores of 1 or 2 mean that a State is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor. Information is provided regarding the State’s performance on each systemic factor for the State’s first CFSR. If the systemic factor was part of the State’s PIP, the key concerns addressed in the PIP and the strategies for assessing those concerns are noted, as well as any changes in ratings that occurred as a result of the State’s second CFSR.

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Status of Statewide Information System

Oregon is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. This factor is rated a 2 because although there is a statewide information system, it is not able to identify the location and address of children in foster care under CAF responsibility in certain circumstances. The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor during its first CFSR, which was conducted in FY 2001, and therefore was not required to address the factor in its PIP. Findings for the item assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 24. State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months has been) in foster care

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the statewide information system is not able to identify the location and address of children in foster care under CAF responsibility in the following circumstances: (1) the child’s placement is funded by the

agency for Seniors and People with Disabilities (SPD) and (2) the child is in a foster home that is supervised by a child placing agency. This item was rated as a Strength in Oregon's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon uses the Integrated Information System (IIS), the Family and Children Information System (FACIS), and the Adoption Recruitment and Management System (ARMS) to manage its child welfare programs. The Statewide Assessment notes that IIS, FACIS, and ARMS track clients, providers, and services on a statewide basis. The systems also provide fiscal functions and produce management and Federal reports. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child in foster care are available to field staff via displays in the secure FACIS electronic case-file interface. This information can be tracked through reports generated using the child welfare data "mart" except for information on developmentally delayed children under CAF responsibility whose foster care is provided by the SPD agency. The status of these children, their demographic characteristics, and their goals for placement are displayed in FACIS and included in the data mart, but their actual foster care location is tracked by SPD.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that Oregon has developed ORBIT and a dashboard for internal use by CAF managers and staff members to provide them with a current and important feedback loop on performance. ORBIT provides a platform for reporting on the State's performance with regard to the Federally defined outcome measures and on its performance pertaining to various process measures such as the timeliness of CPS response, adoption case tracking, and caseworkers' face-to-face contacts with adults and children. These reports are produced regularly according to a calendar schedule.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that although the existing data systems generate useful reports and track key information, DHS recognizes that there are needs for more integrated and timely reports on additional types of information. The Statewide Assessment reports that in response to these needs, Oregon has initiated a plan to build a compliant Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). The Statewide Assessment reports that the request for proposals to design, develop, and implement the SACWIS was posted in spring 2007, and proposals were due in July 2007. The current plan is for the new SACWIS to be operational in 2009.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that FACIS and ARMS are adequate for identifying information such as the legal status, location of children in foster care, and their demographic characteristics and goals. However, some stakeholders identified concerns with regard to this information. A few stakeholders noted, for example, that for children in placements that are under supervision of the contracted child placement agencies (CPAs), the address that appears in the data system is the central office of the CPA rather than the actual home. Agency stakeholders also noted that they are working to change how the system deals with placement changes within a given CPA. Agency stakeholders reported that they do not have current locations for children with developmental disabilities whose foster care funding is provided by SPD but who are under the legal responsibility of CAF.

Multnomah County agency stakeholders reported that the system cannot identify the race of the children in about 15 percent of the cases. They noted that there is a category that indicates race as “unknown” but no category for multiple races. Stakeholders in this county also noted that information related to race is not always accurately reported. Stakeholders were concerned that the system is cumbersome, slow, and unable to track nonfamily perpetrators.

Several stakeholders reported that there is a reporting platform that is called ORBIT that provides performance information to managers and others on measures such as timeliness of CPS investigations and face-to-face contact between caseworkers and the children in their caseloads. Stakeholders also noted that there are very useful dashboard reports that provide summary data by district and then can be taken down to the worker level. They also noted that there are reports that alert staff as to when particular actions are due or overdue.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
		1	2X	3

Status of Case Review System

Oregon is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. This factor is rated a 2 because parents are not consistently engaged in the development of their case plans (item 25), TPR petitions are not consistently filed in a timely manner, and there is a lack of consistent documentation of compelling reasons for not filing (item 28). Oregon was not in substantial conformity with this factor during its 2001 CFSR and therefore was required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key Concerns Identified in the 2001 CFSR

The following concerns relevant to the Case Review System were identified in the 2001 CFSR:

- Some of the cases reviewed did not have current or meaningful case plans.
- Permanency hearings did not address the issues and concerns necessary to move children toward permanency.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Reviewed and enhanced the case plan narrative in FACIS to (1) ensure that the guidance provided was sufficient to assist caseworkers in producing usable and meaningful case plans and (2) include an emphasis on ongoing examination of a child’s permanency plan
- Developed appropriate programming for the enhanced case plan module, field tested the module, and provided training materials to supervisors and branch staff to help prepare caseworkers for using the module and to ensure that case plan narratives were entered in a timely manner
- Revised the court report, in consultation with the Juvenile Court Improvement Program (JCIP) and judges to ensure that case-relevant information presented to courts is sufficient to assist the court in decision-making
- Provided training on the new State case-plan format to the courts through JCIP presentations at local, regional, and statewide meetings and training sessions

Oregon met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Specific findings of the 2007 review for each item included in this systemic factor and the reasons for item ratings are presented below.

Item 25. Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child’s parent(s) that includes the required provisions

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because stakeholder interviews and case record reviews indicate that parents are not consistently engaged in the development of their case plans. Item 18 in the case review instrument, which addresses involvement of parents and children in case planning, was rated as a Strength in only 42 percent of the 62 applicable cases. In addition, in four of the cases reviewed, there was either no case plan or the case plan had not been updated for a long period of time.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy and procedure provide detailed instructions related to developing the case plan. The Statewide Assessment also notes that, as a result of Oregon’s PIP, in May 2002, the FACIS was updated to include a case plan narrative and to add clarifying instructions to guide caseworkers in developing a case plan that contained all required provisions. These include discussion of the child’s individualized needs, a description of specialized services to meet those needs, and documentation of efforts to involve the child and family in case planning. The Statewide Assessment notes that agency policy requires that the case plan be reviewed every 90 days and that this review take place in a face-to-face meeting. The meeting may include the child, service provider, safety plan participants, substitute caregivers, attorneys, a child’s CASA, persons with significant attachments

to the child, and family members. The Statewide Assessment indicates that if a parent or legal guardian is not available for the review, the caseworker must document the reason why they were unavailable and the efforts made to involve them in the review.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the child's parents are encouraged to participate in the development of the case plan. The caseworker must provide a copy of the case plan to the parents or legal guardians of the child; the American Indian child's Tribe when applicable; and, if involved with the court, the CASA and attorneys of record as soon as possible but not later than 7 working days after the case plan is approved by the supervisor.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed varying opinions and perceptions regarding development of the case plan. Although most stakeholders indicated that caseworkers are preparing case plans, a few stakeholders reported that they have seen cases where there is no case plan in the file. Similarly, while many stakeholders indicated that case plans are being completed within the timeframes specified in policy, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that there are substantial delays in preparing the case plan.

Stakeholders also expressed different opinions and perceptions regarding agency efforts to involve parents in case planning. Many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency encourages caseworkers to involve parents in case planning and that this effort is supported by the new OSM, which requires a safety planning meeting before placement and the Oregon Family Decision Meeting that is required within 60 days of placement. Stakeholders reported that CAF encourages caseworkers to convene additional family decision meetings on an ongoing basis as necessary, but these are not mandated.

Other stakeholders voiced concern that the agency is not consistent in involving parents in case planning. They noted that as the State transitions to the OSM and implements staff restructuring, there have been changes in the types of family meetings being held and some confusion regarding how to engage families in case planning using the OSM. Multnomah County stakeholders, for example, expressed the opinion that CAF is not supporting family meetings at the same level as they had in the past because of the implementation of the OSM and the reduction of support staff and facilitators. These stakeholders voiced concern that there is some confusion about how to engage parents using the OSM.

Some stakeholders reported that because the OSM is new and has created a lot of changes in the system, caseworkers and supervisors are in the process of adjusting to the changes. Stakeholders said that during this adjustment period, there have been delays in the development of the case plan. This situation is complicated by the fact that there is a divergence of opinions among stakeholders both inside and outside the agency regarding the efficacy of the OSM and whether adequate training was received before implementation of the model. Stakeholders also expressed concern about the loss of the consultation education training specialist (CETS) positions in the agency (which recently occurred due to restructuring) and suggested that this has reduced the involvement of parents in case planning because these individuals were responsible for facilitating family meetings and supporting caseworkers in the process.

Stakeholders reported the following additional barriers to developing case plans in a timely manner and involving parents in case planning:

- The high level of turnover in the caseworker position
- The extreme variation in skills among caseworkers and supervisors
- The loss of support workers for agency staff due to budget cuts, which has resulted in an increased workload for caseworkers, making it more difficult for them to have the time necessary to engage parents

Item 26. Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength because timely and meaningful reviews of the status of each child in foster care are being conducted at least every 6 months by the courts and the CRB. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, administrative reviews are required to be held every 6 months for every child in an out-of-home placement and in the legal custody of DHS (exceptions are children hospitalized or placed in detention on a long-term basis). The county agency that has legal jurisdiction for the child is responsible for the administrative review. For nonfinalized adoptive placements on fully free children, the supervising department office is responsible for the administrative review. The Statewide Assessment notes that no DHS data are available on timeliness of administrative reviews.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, administrative reviews are conducted by local CRBs. Each board consists of a coordinator who is an Oregon Judicial Department employee and three to four community volunteers. The volunteers receive 16 hours of orientation training approved by the Oregon Supreme Court and 8 hours of training annually. The Statewide Assessment notes that all current CRB volunteers have received comprehensive training on the requirements of ASFA.

The Statewide Assessment reports that although CRB schedules vary depending on the size of the branch office, all reviews are held on a timely basis within the 6-month timeframe. In addition, the findings made by the CRB are substantially the same as those made by the court at a permanency hearing. According to the Statewide Assessment, this ensures that timelines, safety, health, and well-being are consistently reviewed throughout the life of the case, not only during permanency hearings.

The Statewide Assessment notes that if the administrative review is not done by the CRB, the requirement may be met by a permanency hearing or other court hearing that meets the definition of a complete judicial review when the court relieves the CRB of

its responsibility to review the case or by an internal review committee within the agency, which must be followed by CRB review in not more than 30 days after the internal review.

Stakeholder Interview Information

All stakeholders who commented on this item expressed the opinion that cases are reviewed every 6 months by a CRB or the court, and sometimes by both. Often, cases are reviewed more frequently. Stakeholders noted that in some counties, reviews are conducted every 60 days and sometimes every month, depending on the particulars of the case. Most stakeholders suggested that the recommendations from CRB reviews are considered by the court and that the court values the CRB information.

There was general agreement among stakeholders that the court review hearings do not really differ from the permanency hearings because the same issues are addressed in both hearings. However, there were mixed opinions among stakeholders regarding the efficacy of the CRB reviews. Some stakeholders questioned the efficacy of holding judicial reviews every 60 to 90 days, which occurs sometimes. They noted that these frequent reviews do not really improve outcomes because they take caseworkers away from their efforts to work with families on their case plan.

Item 27. Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as a Strength because permanency hearings are being held in a timely manner and are meaningful with regard to moving children toward permanency. Stakeholders noted that since the 2001 CFSR, CAF and the State’s JCIP have engaged in a substantive collaborative process designed to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of permanency hearings. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State schedules and participates in permanency hearings for children in substitute care 12 months from the date of jurisdiction (or 14 months from the day of placement) and at least every 12 months thereafter. The Statewide Assessment notes that procedures are in place to ensure that by the time of the permanency hearing, CAF has made all required reasonable or active efforts. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, in FY 2005, Oregon Judicial Department data indicate that 84.4 percent of first permanency hearings were held in a timely manner (within 14 months from the date of placement), which is an increase from 65.2 percent in FY 2001.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in October 2005, the Oregon DOJ and DHS were given a special appropriation of \$2.5 million to help with the problem of limited legal representatives for child welfare caseworkers in dependency hearings. The Statewide

Assessment reports that although this package does not guarantee legal representation at every hearing, it does represent a significant step forward in providing legal services at critical points.

Stakeholder Interview Information

All stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that permanency hearings are held within the required timeframe. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the hearings are effective in moving children to permanency, although a few stakeholders thought that quality varied across judges.

Many stakeholders were concerned about the lack of representation of the agency by legal counsel in the court hearings. They noted that someone from the agency’s Attorney General’s Office is unlikely to appear in court unless it is a highly contentious case. As a result, stakeholders said that caseworkers are on their own in court. They have to complete their own court orders, and they are subject to criticism from the courts and other attorneys if they are not correct. One judge referred to the situation as one of having caseworkers “practice law without a license” and noted that caseworkers should not be expected to take on this responsibility. A few State-level stakeholders reported that DHS has recently received funding to increase the Attorney General’s Office staff. However, as indicated in the Statewide Assessment and by stakeholders, although this funding is likely to increase attorney representation in some hearings, it is not adequate to provide for legal representation in all hearings and therefore is not a complete resolution to this concern.

Item 28. Provides a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the ASFA

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Stakeholders and the case record reviews indicated that TPR are not consistently filed in a timely manner and that there is a lack of consistent documentation of compelling reasons for not filing in the case record. In the case reviews conducted during the onsite CFSR, there were 17 cases in which TPR was not filed in a timely manner, and in 35 percent of these cases, no compelling reasons were noted in the case file. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS procedures for filing for TPR are consistent with ASFA requirements and exceptions and with Oregon statute. The Statewide Assessment reports that, consistent with Oregon law, the pursuit of TPR is solely for the purpose of freeing the child for adoption. The department must prove by clear and convincing evidence that there are legal grounds to terminate parental rights and it is in the best interest of the child to do so. In the cases in which the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applies, the burden of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that before proceeding with the filing of a TPR petition, DHS requests approval from the juvenile court of the change of plan from reunification to adoption. The department closely examines the viability of the plan of adoption, specifically on the likelihood of freeing the child, the capacity to place the child in an adoptive placement, and the ability to sustain the

placement (provision of necessary resources). The Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers staff cases with the assistant attorney general (or the Multnomah district attorney) and the DHS Central Office legal assistant specialist to determine if a legal case exists for TPR and if it is in the best interest of the child to proceed. According to the Statewide Assessment, questions concerning the adoptability of the child are addressed in Adoption Council.

According to the Statewide Assessment, in cases in which the department does not file a petition to terminate parental rights consistent with ASFA timeframes, the caseworker must document compelling reasons not to pursue TPR in the case file. The reasons currently identified by rule include the following:

- The child is being cared for by a relative (permanent placement).
- DHS has not provided to the family the services deemed necessary for the safe return of the child.
- It is not in the best interest of the child.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in a March 2007 court survey distributed to judges, district attorneys, the CRB, CASA, and the Defense Bar, the question was asked: “When granting an exception to DHS for not filing a TPR petition within 15 of the last 22 months, what are the reasons the court routinely considers and allows?” Of all 251 survey respondents, 36.7 percent indicated that parental progress or engagement in services was the reason that the court allowed TPR petitions to be delayed beyond 15 of 22 months in care. More than 53 percent of judges and district attorneys indicated this was the reason for granting a delay in filing TPR petitions. The second most frequently cited reason for not filing was “child’s special needs,” which was identified by 13.5 percent of all respondents. Finally, the lack of an adoptive resource was identified by 11.6 percent of all respondents.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Almost all stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed concerns about the TPR process and identified delays in achieving TPR. Stakeholders noted that petitions for TPR are being filed in a timely manner only if a child’s goal has been changed to adoption. According to stakeholders, this last condition results in many TPR petitions not being filed for children who have been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months because the court will not approve a change of goal to adoption. Most stakeholders reported that the court will not approve a goal of adoption under the following conditions:

- The court determines that the parents need more time to meet the case goal requirements.
- There is no identified adoptive placement for the child.
- The court determines that the child is not adoptable. Some stakeholders reported that in some instances, children actually are identified as not adoptable in court records.

Several stakeholders noted that because of a TPR that was recently overturned by the State Supreme Court, DHS has been asking for extensions in filing the TPR petition to ensure that there is a solid legal case before filing for TPR.

Despite these concerns, various stakeholders identified the following as promoting timely filings for TPR:

- The practice of some child welfare agency offices to track each step toward permanency to ensure that the case is progressing as required
- Agency staffings at set points in the case related to ASFA requirements
- A new agency practice, supported by recent funding from the DOJ, of holding staffings with the agency attorneys at 4 and 8 months after a child enters foster care to ensure that greater attention is paid to the child’s progress toward permanency, including timely filing of TPR petitions

Item 29. Provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

This item was rated as a Strength because caregivers are consistently notified of reviews and hearings and are given a variety of opportunities to provide meaningful input into reviews and hearings.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the local child welfare branch office notifies caregivers of children who have been placed in CAF custody and in out-of-home care of any court hearing or administrative review concerning the child. The notice is by mail, by phone, or in person and relates to every court hearing. The notice informs the caregivers that they have the right to attend the review and hearing and that they have an opportunity to be heard. The Statewide Assessment reports that all legal custodians and parents must be invited and encouraged to participate in administrative reviews and permanency hearings. Case records must contain documentation that written advance notice was provided to those invited to attend the administrative review or permanency hearing.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that caregivers receive notification of all reviews and hearings pertaining to the children in their care. Stakeholders in the sites included in the CFSR reported that notification was the responsibility of the local child welfare agency, although State-level stakeholders indicated that this may vary across the State in some jurisdictions that have the courts send notice.

Most stakeholders indicated that in the majority of instances, foster parents can be heard in both the reviews and the court hearings. In general, stakeholders expressed that if foster parents want to be heard, the court will let them speak. Stakeholders reported that often the caseworker will notify the court that the foster parent is present at the hearing and wants to speak. Stakeholders noted that the agency will make phone participation available to foster parents in some instances and allow them to have input through written communications. Stakeholders indicated that although there is some variation in practice across courts, many judges will directly communicate to foster parents and relative caregivers that they are welcome at the hearing and that their opinions are important and

will solicit input from foster parents during the hearing. A stakeholder noted that there is training for foster parents on court participation.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3X	4

Status of Quality Assurance System

Oregon is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. During the 2001 CFSR, Oregon was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor and therefore was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 was rated as a Strength because the State has standards in place to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon has standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided services that protect the safety and health of the children. One policy reported in the Statewide Assessment pertains to face-to-face contact with children in foster care. Oregon’s policies require that children with an open service plan, whether remaining at home or in foster care, have face-to-face contact with a caseworker every 30 days with some exceptions. According to State policy, the caseworker’s supervisor or the child welfare program manager may approve an exception to the requirement of caseworker face-to-face contact with the child or young adult, parent, legal guardian, foster parent, relative caregiver, or provider when (a) the safety and well-being of the child or young adult can be confirmed by another responsible adult who has face-to-face contact with the child or young adult and confirms the child or young adult is safe, without a face-to-face contact by the caseworker, and (b) approval for the exception is documented in the case file.

The Statewide Assessment notes that in the recent implementation of the OSM, standards have been strengthened to require face-to-face contact with each adult member of the applicant household. Another recent change is that the number of children that a foster home may serve has been lowered. According to State policy, Oregon allows a foster home to include four children when there is only one adult in the home, and seven children when there are two adults in the home. Policy also limits placement to two children in a foster home who are younger than age 3. However, Oregon policy also states that “under extraordinary circumstances, a child welfare program manager may approve placement of a child or young adult in a certified family that exceeds the maximum number of children and young adults.” There is a form that is to be completed for management approval; the form requires a reason and examples of exceptions, such as the need to have a placement for a large sibling group or the “extraordinary abilities of the family to meet the special needs of children specified in the exception.” The form also requires the caseworker to report the “method of evaluating the safety and well being of children placed in the home.” Policy also requires that a written plan be completed each time the home exceeds eight children. The Statewide Assessment notes that in the rare case in which a program manager makes an exception, the certifier will monitor the safety of the children by visiting the foster home every 90 days.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, foster parents are to work collaboratively with DHS and health care providers to get the children’s needs assessed and met. According to the Statewide Assessment, children who enter foster care are to have a mental health, dental health, and physical health assessment within 60 days of entering care, and children should receive all required follow-up. Foster parents are to keep medication logs for each child on medications in their home. The Statewide Assessment reports that a registered nurse visits the foster home for an assessment of children’s special needs or personal care and develops a personal care plan.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR were in general agreement that the agency has established standards that are intended to ensure the health and safety of children in foster care. They noted that with implementation of the OSM, new rules have been written for certification, licensing, and face-to-face contact. Stakeholders reported that training has been provided on what face-to-face contact is to include, so that it is not simply a drive-by visit. Also, stakeholders reported that with the advent of the OSM, foster parents are now required to participate in 30 hours of ongoing training every 2 years.

Stakeholders reported that caseworkers are required to ensure that a medical and dental evaluation is scheduled within 30 days of the child’s entry into foster care, although the foster parents actually do the scheduling and take the children to the evaluations.

Stakeholders also reported that DHS recently revised policy regarding psychotropic drug use so that monitoring is increased with the use of a foster care nurse who considers the age of the child, the number of medications, and whether appropriate counseling is being provided in conjunction with the medications. A stakeholder noted that there is statewide training on this issue.

Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as Strength. Although the State recently discontinued the case review components of its quality assurance system to implement a new system, during the CFSR period under review, the State was operating a quality assurance system that identified the strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provided relevant reports, and evaluated program improvement measures.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, after the 2001 Federal CFSR, Oregon’s quality assurance process was modified to replicate key elements of the Federal CFSR process. Oregon began conducting case reviews in local branches, developed branch-level PIPs based on the findings of those reviews, and provided branch-level monitoring of Federal outcome measures that the 2001 CFSR had identified as areas needing improvement.

The Statewide Assessment reports that since 2001, Oregon has conducted comprehensive branch-level case reviews of 458 cases in 35 counties in all areas of the State. The reviews use the sampling and review methods of the first Federal CFSR. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, at the conclusion of each branch office review, the agency assigned consultants to the branch to help them draft a PIP to address the areas needing improvement. Starting with branches reviewed in 2005, the consultants conducted follow-up visits 6 months after the review to discuss the branch’s progress in meeting the program improvement goals and to make further recommendations.

Another quality assurance activity indicated in the Statewide Assessment pertains to the intranet-based performance measure system for outcomes. This reporting system, which is called ORBIT, allows child welfare personnel at all levels to view State, district, county, and branch summaries on each of the key measures and allows them to view the case-level details displayed by branch, service unit, or caseworker. ORBIT provides reports on the following topics:

- Repeat maltreatment
- Timeliness of CPS response
- Timeliness of caseworkers’ face- to-face contact with children and parents
- Foster care reentry
- Stability of foster care placements
- Timeliness of adoption
- Timeliness to reunification
- Adoption goals
- Adoption tracking

The Statewide Assessment also reports that to explore alternate quality assurance methods, prepare for the 2007 Federal review, and provide baseline data for implementation of the OSM, Oregon conducted statewide case reviews in September 2006 and January 2007 using the new Federal CFSR case review instrument and samples of 50 to 60 in-home and foster care cases per review. For the January 2007 review, foster care cases were chosen from the four sample types designated by the new Federal sampling procedure. Formal PIPs were not required from these first two statewide reviews due to the imminent implementation of the OSM; however, results of the statewide reviews were provided and discussed with district managers, child welfare managers, and central office staff members. Additional statewide reviews will compare practice after implementation of the OSM. Oregon is currently looking into the possibility of working with the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement to develop a quality assurance process that is fully supportive of the field’s efforts to implement and evaluate the OSM.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders indicated that the State had a case review process that imitates the Federal CFSR. They noted that it used the Federal instrument and included interviews with case-related stakeholders and other stakeholders in addition to case record reviews. Stakeholders reported that although this process began as a branch-level review, the branch reviews have been discontinued; most recently, two statewide case reviews were completed. State-level stakeholders indicated that the State currently is in the planning stages for a new quality assurance system, which will include a case review component.

Stakeholders reported that the agency developed the ORBIT reporting system, which tracks and distributes data indicators at district, branch, and county levels via a web-linked application and also allows the user access to case-level information on specific indicators. In addition, stakeholders said that there is a dashboard report that provides information regarding timeliness of face-to-face contacts and responses to maltreatment allegations. Stakeholders noted that CPS has consultants in the field who use a review tool to evaluate qualitative decisions regarding screening, assessments, safety, services, and whether all parties have been interviewed.

Stakeholders noted that an ICWA CFSR was developed in collaboration between the Tribes and CAF. Joint review teams from the Tribes and agency conducted the first review in May 2006 for ICWA cases from the Indian Child Welfare unit in Portland.

IV. TRAINING

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3X	4

Status of Training

Oregon is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2001 CFSR and therefore was required to address the factor in its PIP.

The following key concerns relevant to this systemic factor were identified in the 2001 CFSR:

- Most new caseworker hires were not receiving the initial in-service training before carrying cases.
- Many agency caseworkers and supervisors were not participating in ongoing training.
- The agency did not require caseworkers to participate in a specified number of ongoing training hours after completing the initial training.

To address these concerns the agency implemented the following key strategies as part of its PIP:

- Established policy and statute that required all newly hired caseworkers to complete a specified course of training before assuming a caseload
- Implemented a 3-week training period, referred to as Supervising for Excellence, for supervisors

The State met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services

 X Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as a Strength because the State has an initial 4-week preservice training program that must be completed by new caseworkers before carrying a full caseload. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon statute and law requires that all child welfare caseworkers receive preservice training before being assigned a caseload. The training covers core concepts in protective services, child welfare best practice, legal risk, and the OSM, as well as principles around child safety, permanency, and well-being. Training includes both a classroom and a field component and is designed to develop skills appropriate for the caseworkers' job classification. According to the Statewide Assessment, participation in training is tracked and monitored and supervisors are informed if a caseworker has not completed the

training requirements. The Statewide Assessment reports that training includes practical, hands-on, experiential activities that are specific to the “how to” of doing the work.

The Statewide Assessment reports that field observation is a transfer of learning follow-up required for CPS caseworkers who have completed the classroom component of the core training. In this training, CPS consultants and core trainers who have experience conducting CPS assessments accompany the new CPS caseworkers on an assessment in their local branch. This provides an opportunity for individual hands-on coaching, modeling, and observation of the caseworker. A template is used to support the trainers and consultants who are conducting the field follow-ups to focus on agreed-upon keys areas of skill and knowledge needed for successful CPS assessment. The trainees and their supervisor are given written feedback regarding strengths and abilities demonstrated by the trainee as well as additional activities that could support the employee’s professional development. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, at present, field observation follow-up is provided only for caseworkers with specific assignment to CPS, but the agency is exploring whether there is capacity to expand it to all caseworkers.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR agreed that the agency has a preservice staff training program and that caseworkers must complete the training before they receive a caseload. Stakeholders noted that although some new hires may have to wait 4 to 6 weeks before a training session begins, this waiting time may be used to conduct field activities from the field activities guide, shadow experienced workers, and/or engage in distance-learning opportunities. Stakeholders noted that a certain number of slots are reserved for Tribal workers who want to participate in training.

With regard to the content of the training, many stakeholders noted that the training provides a great deal of necessary theoretical information. However, these stakeholders indicated that caseworkers need practical skills such as how to use the computer, access FACIS, conduct assessments, prepare for court hearings and reviews, and work with foster parents. In general, stakeholders agreed that when caseworkers come back from training, they are not ready to work on a case. Stakeholders also noted that the curriculum of the core training often is not supported by practice in a caseworker’s home unit.

Most stakeholders who commented on this item reported that the most valuable training comes from on-the-job training that takes place after the caseworker completes the core training. Stakeholders noted that structured on-the-job training is available for CPS caseworkers once they complete the 4-week training but that other caseworkers do not have structured on-the-job training opportunities. Some agency stakeholders reported that new caseworkers often receive on-the-job training from their supervisors. However, it was noted that supervisors are not briefed on the training curriculum and do not have any input into what the curriculum covers. Stakeholders also reported that, in the past, caseworkers were mentored by the CETS but that the CETS positions have been eliminated with recent restructuring, resulting in less on-the-job mentoring for new caseworkers.

Many agency stakeholders at the local sites said that there has been insufficient training for caseworkers, supervisors, and agency managers on the new OSM. They noted that the new model represents a considerable change in practice and procedure and that most

people are struggling to figure out how to implement it. A few stakeholders indicated that although the safety model has been integrated into the core training, the caseworkers who return from training still do not seem to know how to implement it.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the State has not established a required minimum number of hours for staff members to participate in advanced training and has not implemented efforts to ensure that caseworkers participate in advanced training to develop their knowledge and skills. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS does not require that caseworkers complete a specified number of in-service training hours. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that there are a number of ongoing, specialized training opportunities for the agency staff such as the following: certifier and adoption caseworkers Foundations Training, Freeing and Placing Children for Adoption, Supervising Training (returning 2007), Eligibility Training for title IV-E eligibility staff, Father’s Paternity Training, Domestic Violence 101, and Social Service Assistance Training. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Internet-linked distance-learning training is currently provided on a monthly basis with 22 to 24 trainings offered per calendar year. Class information is available online at the Partnership’s Net Link Central.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item reported that there are no mandated hours of ongoing training for workers. Several stakeholders expressed the opinion that this may be due to lack of a sufficient training staff to provide the training. Local-level agency stakeholders indicated that the agency environment does not encourage ongoing training for caseworkers because of their caseload responsibilities. Stakeholders noted that (1) managers are not always willing to allow the travel time and money to ensure that caseworkers can access training, and (2) there are no individualized training plans for caseworkers, although they are asked to complete a form indicating the types of training that they would like. A few stakeholders at the local level voiced concern that there is no training either during core or afterwards that focuses on caseworker safety, specifically, on how to remain safe during a home visit.

Stakeholders noted that there is no training in clinical supervision and little ongoing training for supervisors other than quarterly supervisory meetings. Stakeholders indicated that more practice-related ongoing training is needed and expressed concern that the CETS are no longer available to provide this training.

Despite these concerns, most stakeholders noted that there are a number of training opportunities available to caseworkers if they wish to participate, although this sometimes can be difficult because of caseload responsibilities. Stakeholders also reported that there are

several ongoing trainings that all staff members must complete, such as a cultural competency training, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training, and trauma training. There are specific trainings that the agency provides based on State practice needs, such as implementation of the new OSM, paternity and father issues, caseworker visitation, and use of the APPLA goal. Stakeholders said that distance training is provided by the agency, with two trainings offered each month.

Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children who receive foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength because all foster parents including relative caregivers are required to receive initial training (Foundations Training) and complete ongoing training requirements (30 hours every 2 years) to develop their knowledge and skills to appropriately care for children. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon provides preservice training as well as continuing education for foster and adoptive parents. The Statewide Assessment reports that participants prepare for the role of foster parent, relative caregiver, and/or adoptive parenting by taking part in required Foundations Training. Foster parents are required to attend annual training for professional development at a minimum of 15 hours per year, which is an increase from the previous requirement of 10 hours. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the increase was made in response to a request from the Oregon Foster Parent Association. The Statewide Assessment notes that CAF and the Child Welfare Partnership will need to redesign the Foster/Relative/Adoptive Parent Training program to meet the annual training needs with the recent budget cut to the program.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Child Welfare Partnership provides extensive training and educational opportunities for foster, relative, and adoptive parents. The partnership training staff worked extensively with foster care certifiers and adoption workers as well as with foster parent associations to identify needs related to ongoing training for provider families. An online training calendar is available to all providers. Additional training is available to foster, adoptive, kinship, and birth parents through the online Foster Parent College website. According to the Statewide Assessment, these interactive courses provide valuable information, insights, and advice from experts on dealing with serious child behavior problems. Also, foster families were sponsored to attend several conferences, including Shoulder to Shoulder, Oregon Foster Parent Association State Conference, Families Are Us, the Marion/Polk Foster Parent Conference, and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Conference.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in a March 2007 survey conducted for the Statewide Assessment, foster parents were asked to rank how useful they felt their training was. For initial training, 65 percent of respondents indicated that the training was useful, and 73 percent expressed the opinion that the ongoing training was useful.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that foster parents attend 16 to 24 hours of preservice (Foundation) training (depending on the branch), with 16 hours being the minimum. However, Marion County stakeholders reported that the full training is not available for Spanish-speaking foster parents and that there is only a 7-hour training session for these parents because not all of the materials have been translated. Foundation training is offered in the foster parents’ own community.

Stakeholders noted that foster parents are required to complete 30 hours of ongoing training every 2 years. Stakeholders said that the ongoing training requirement can be met through videos, readings, special speakers, conferences, and web-based trainings. Several stakeholders expressed concern about how foster parents were going to get the 30 hours of training because of the reduction in the number of trainers available due to budget cuts.

Stakeholders noted that child care is a barrier to attending training because the agency will not pay for it. Although the foster parents can use respite providers, they have to find them on their own, ensure that they are certified to provide respite care, and pay for them.

V. SERVICE ARRAY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
Rating	1X	2	3	4

Status of Service Array

Oregon is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. This factor is rated 1 because there is not in place an array of services (item 35), services are not accessible throughout the State (item 36), and Oregon is not individualizing services to meet the needs of families and children they serve (item 37). The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2001 CFSR and therefore did not address this factor in its PIP.

Findings for the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because throughout the State there are insufficient inpatient substance abuse treatment services, an inadequate continuum of mental health resources, and a serious shortage of foster homes and therapeutic foster homes. Item 35 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Oregon’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS provides a full spectrum of services from family preservation and family support to family reunification, adoption support, and independent living services. The Statewide Assessment reports that DHS provides the following family preservation and support services through contracts with providers: intensive family services, parent training, family sexual abuse treatment, intensive home-based services, supportive remedial day care services, homemaker services, and family support teams/addiction recovery teams. Services are provided to promote and support adoptions, such as postadoptive support services, purchased adoption home studies, private adoption supervision and finalization, and diligent recruitment.

For youth whose permanency plan includes emancipation and independent living, DHS administers Oregon’s Chafee ILP, which include transition services, employment services, postsecondary education preparation, mentors, and services to former foster youth; life skills training; discretionary funds to assist youth in their transition; an independent living subsidy program for children in DHS custody; and housing services to former foster youth.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) facilitates development of a local community plan for the children and families in each of Oregon’s 36 counties that address service concerns both statewide and locally.

In addition to these services, DHS has many contracts for services across the State to address mental health services needs of children in foster care. However, a concern was noted regarding the length of time it takes to obtain residential mental health services after a behavioral health assessment indicates that such treatment is needed.

One concern noted in the Statewide Assessment is that in-home services clients do not have access to the Oregon Health Plan because their parents are part of the working poor and make more than the cutoff amount for enrollment in the Oregon Health Plan, yet they do not have enough money for private insurance. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that the legislature recently provided more

than \$10 million to support intensive outpatient and residential drug and alcohol treatment for families that are involved with, or at risk of becoming involved with, the child welfare system and are not eligible to participate in the Oregon Health Plan.

The Statewide Assessment notes that CFSR branch reviews conducted between 2003 and 2006 indicated that under Item 17: Needs and services, 77 percent of the 458 cases reviewed were found to be in compliance with the item. According to the Statewide Assessment, the counties with the highest percentage of compliance were predominantly in the metropolitan area. However, urban counties adjacent to the largest metropolitan area experienced lower rates of compliance. This may be attributed to the rapid growth of the metropolitan area and subsequent population growth in adjacent counties.

The Statewide Assessment reports that a foster parent survey conducted in April 2007 noted that of the 87 foster parents who returned the survey, 49 percent found it easy to access physical health services, 26 percent found it easy to access both mental health and dental services, and only 17 percent found it easy to access early intervention and educational assessment services for their foster children. The foster parents who responded to the survey had more years of experience than average foster parents, and none were relative providers.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that there is a wide array of services available in the State but that there are not enough services to meet the needs of children and families. Stakeholders identified a key service gap that pertained to substance abuse treatment services, particularly inpatient services. Most stakeholders agreed that there are sufficient substance abuse assessment services but that there is a considerable gap in treatment services, particularly inpatient treatment. One stakeholder noted that parents are asked to call programs every day to check on the availability of beds. Stakeholders also noted that there are concerns about who pays for these services for parents, particularly when parents do not qualify for the Oregon Health Plan. Stakeholders noted that many of the parents are not insured and cannot afford to pay for the services, which hampers reunification efforts. Some stakeholders, however, noted that there are systems in place to support parents in accessing treatment such as alcohol and drug treatment coordinators, addiction and recovery teams, trackers, and the family involvement team.

Another key service gap pertained to mental health services. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that there are insufficient treatment services to meet the mental health needs of children and parents, particularly residential treatment and that the treatment provided did not always match the needs of the child. Stakeholders noted that under the new system, the agency cannot directly refer a child for mental health services but must go through the health maintenance organization (HMO) provider who decides what services the child is qualified to receive based on a level system. In addition, stakeholders said that the Behavioral Health Network (BHN) has transitioned from a fee for services model to a quota model in which there are a particular number of service slots assigned for each age group. The BHN is penalized if they go over or under the number of slots. Stakeholders noted that this severely limits the services that the agency can provide and the ability to tailor the services to meet the individual needs of the child. Deschutes County stakeholders noted that they have only two mental health residential treatment slots allotted to the county. Stakeholders noted that there is considerable turnover among mental health therapists and that sometimes this is very destructive for the child.

An additional concern noted by stakeholders is that some children who have mental health problems that usually are treated with psychotropic medications—such as depression, obsessive compulsive disorders, and attention deficit disorders—are not being referred to mental health practitioners but are instead prescribed medications by pediatricians, who often do not monitor their use or follow up with the children. A few stakeholders, however, noted that there are nurses on staff in the child welfare agency who monitor medications and that the agency recently developed a new policy regarding psychotropic medications.

A third major concern expressed by stakeholders throughout the State was the extreme shortage of available foster homes and therapeutic foster homes to meet the needs of children. In Deschutes County, this was described as “a step away from disaster.” Stakeholders noted that while there is a shortage of general foster homes, the major gaps are in the area of homes for adolescents, siblings, medically fragile children, and children with other special needs. Several stakeholders noted that because of the shortage, caseworkers are “breaking the rules” to get children into foster homes. Stakeholders in two sites noted that most of the foster homes operate at over capacity. Stakeholders in all sites expressed the opinion that the shortage of foster parents can be attributed to the low foster care payments, the expectation that foster parents must provide all of the transportation for the children to services and meetings, and the fact that the State will not provide funding for child care for foster children so that working parents often cannot become foster parents. A few stakeholders noted that the agency does not treat foster parents as part of the team and that caseworkers treat them as if they are the clients.

Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because some services are not available in adequate supply in some areas of the State and because insufficient transportation is a barrier to accessing services. This item was rated as a Strength in Oregon’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, family support and preservation services, family reunification services, adoption services, and independent living services are available in each county in the State, although there may not be specific programs operating in each community in each county. The Statewide Assessment reports that Tribal services are available within the jurisdiction of each Tribe.

However, the Statewide Assessment notes that stakeholder interviews during the branch reviews found that the limited resources in smaller, rural communities, exacerbated by limited transportation resources, present particular challenges in obtaining behavioral health and medical services for both children and adults. The Statewide Assessment also notes that staff turnover due to low wages results in lack of a sufficient staff in rural communities and further compounds the difficulty in obtaining services. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, interviewees reported that they frequently must travel outside of their home county to receive needed services such as comprehensive medical and developmental assessments, alcohol and drug treatment, and dental services.

The Statewide Assessment also identified the concern that in small communities, a single mental health staff person serves as the domestic violence individual counselor for both parents, the child’s play therapist, a family counselor, a group counselor, and a drug and alcohol treatment counselor.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed views that are consistent with the information provided in the Statewide Assessment. In particular, stakeholders noted that in some areas of the State there are insufficient dental health services and services for youth, including independent living services. Stakeholders also noted that there is a considerable lack of transportation services and that the agency does not provide transportation services at all for children in the in-home services cases. Stakeholders noted that there are insufficient contracted in-home services, parent training, and parent mentor programs in some parts of the State. Stakeholders indicated that the shortages in some parts of the State are mitigated by purchasing additional services with flexible funding sources. Stakeholders also noted that there are waiting lists for culturally competent services, particularly in the area of mental health.

Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has flexible funding and can access community resources to provide wraparound services, both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interview information indicate that the scarcity of services and the lack of adequate resources makes it difficult to ensure individualization of services to meet unique needs. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the OSM requires that a child safety meeting be held for each case to develop an ongoing safety plan. The Statewide Assessment reports that the safety plan is expected to be unique for each family and identify the individual needs of children and parents. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that service gaps that exist systemically both across the State as well as in rural areas of the State frequently result in an inability to meet the specific individualized needs of children identified in their plan. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the following areas of difficulty were identified through CFRS branch reviews and stakeholder interviews:

- Children with multiple handicapping conditions are difficult to place and provide with comprehensive services.
- Multiple assessments address varying needs and require coordination.

- Children’s needs often must be fit into the existing service systems rather than the services being wrapped around the child’s needs.
- Waiting lists for needed services often result in children getting served by the first available resource rather than the most appropriate resource.

In response to these concerns, the Statewide Assessment notes that 43 new treatment foster care placements have been developed under contract with private providers to provide foster care placement with individualized wraparound services to the children in these placements, and System of Care funds are being used to allow flexibility in meeting the individualized needs of children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that agency policy supports the individualization of services to meet the unique needs of children and families. They noted that flexible funds and System of Care funds can be used to ensure that specific needs are met and that many caseworkers are creative in attempting to find services locally to meet the needs of the children in their caseloads, although stakeholders said that caseworkers vary considerably with regard to their efforts and their skillfulness in accessing services for children and families. Stakeholders noted as examples of individualized services the new individualized wraparound services being developed for some children receiving behavioral rehabilitation foster care services and the intensive community care program for in-home wraparound services provided by the mental health HMO.

However, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that insufficient funding for services is the greatest barrier to individualizing services for children and families. They noted that although flex funds are available, there is no clear policy on how funds are to be used. Stakeholders expressed the opinion that the main guideline for flex funds is that they are “the last resort” and that unwritten rules in the agency have narrowed the scope of how these funds can be used. Stakeholders reported that flex funds were reduced in 2001, resulting in a situation in which there is less money but more children. Stakeholders also expressed the concern that, due to shortages in traditional services, flex funds are being used to purchase services that should be part of the normal array of services.

Several stakeholders expressed concern that visitation between parents and children is not based on the needs of the child and family but rather on the funding available for this service. For example, there are many localities where all visits occur in the agency office, which is not conducive to family bonding. They also indicated that visits with infants are scheduled only twice a month, which is not sufficient to promote bonding between parents and an infant.

Stakeholders expressed concern that independent living services for youth are not individualized based on the needs of the youth. They indicated that most services were classroom based, and that although independent living plans usually are developed for each youth, there is little follow-up with the service needs identified in the plan.

Several stakeholders noted that individualizing services was difficult because of insufficient funding or lack of funding for the following services:

- Family-based services
- Services for children in families that do not have access to the Oregon Health Plan and do not have enough income to pay for many services
- Services for monolingual Spanish-speaking families (which are very difficult to access in most areas of the State, including foster parent training classes and parenting classes for biological parents)

Stakeholders noted that Oregon Family Decision Meetings and the safety meetings are used to identify resources and develop individualized plans. Stakeholders, however, expressed concern that the Team Decision Meetings that were previously used to develop individualized services before placement are no longer held.

VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
Rating	1	2	3X	4

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Oregon is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2001 CFSR. Findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength because the State engages in ongoing consultation with partners in establishing its child welfare goals and objectives. The State has particularly strong collaboration efforts with the Tribes and the JCIP. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, examples of consultation with stakeholders in both developing the goals and objectives for the CFSP and implementing the provisions of the CFSP include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Family Decision Meetings
- JOIN Project quarterly meetings (JOIN is a database project developed with input from the JCIP, CRB, DHS Child Welfare, Oregon Youth Authority, and the DOJ in which data needed to track children and young adults for the State and Federal periodic review requirements is electronically collected from Child Welfare, Oregon Youth Authority [OYA], and the Oregon Judicial Information System and stored in the centralized JOIN database.)
- JCIP Steering Committee and subcommittees for training and data/outcomes (composed of CAF staff)
- Child Welfare Advisory Committee
- Children’s Justice Act Task Force
- Foster Parent Advisory Committee
- Domestic Violence Advisory Committee
- CRB
- ICWA quarterly meetings
- Regular meetings between district managers and juvenile court judges

The Statewide Assessment notes that on a local level, district managers, branch managers, and program managers meet regularly with community partners and stakeholders to address issues specific to their community, families, and children.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, efforts regarding implementation of the OSM were taken in part to restore a balance between collaboration and strong working relationships with partners and stakeholders and strengthening the agency’s focus on child safety and legal mandates for child protection. The Statewide Assessment notes that some partners perceived this as a “push back” and have expressed the opinion that CAF is now less interested in stakeholder input. According to the Statewide Assessment, in response to stakeholder concerns, CAF extended the comment period for the draft rules and held discussion sessions in which those reviewing the draft rules could meet with program managers involved in drafting the rules to address some of the concerns before the close of the review and comment period. The Statewide Assessment reports that partners historically have wanted to see the agency do more prevention work and intervene earlier with families on an at-risk basis. With the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services’ evidence-based practice focused on safety threats and responsibility for child safety, initially some community partners thought the agency would no longer be involved in cases of neglect. The Statewide Assessment indicates that as the agency continues to meet with community partners and provide information and training about the model, these concerns are being addressed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that the agency participates in an extensive consultation process in developing and implementing the goals and objectives of the CFSP. The agency was reported to engage in

consultation with courts, Tribes, youth, and parents. The State shares data and includes partners in workgroups that address specific areas of State performance.

Stakeholders said that the key consultation process is through the Child Welfare Advisory Committee, which includes 21 members representing CASA, the CRB, juvenile court, Juvenile Rights Project, Children’s Alliance, Foster Parent Association, law enforcement, Juvenile Department OYA , Parents Anonymous, youth and parent representatives, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Boys and Girls Aid Society, Commission on Children and Families, Department of Education, Oregon Homeless and Runaway Youth coalition, and others. According to several stakeholders, there are subcommittee groups in areas such as legislation and future issues who provide feedback to the larger committee. Stakeholders praised the efforts of the agency to ensure participation of parents who are clients on various task forces and committees to provide consumer input on ways the system can be improved.

Some stakeholders indicated that consultation with Tribes is substantive. They reported that an ICWA advisory committee was established in 1978 and since then the committee, which includes Oregon’s nine Tribes and the Native American Youth Association, has provided recommendations and advice, particularly with regard to the agency’s 5-year plan. Stakeholders said that the ICWA committee developed an ICWA procedures manual for the DHS staff.

Stakeholders indicated that there is extensive consultation with the courts. Stakeholders reported that the courts are very involved in the CFSR process and are a part of CAF’s planning team. Several stakeholders indicated that CAF participates substantially in the planning team for the courts.

Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP

_____ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the agency does not consistently engage stakeholders in the process of developing annual reports of progress and services delivered. This item was rated as a Strength in Oregon’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interview Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS has a participatory title IV-B planning process for developing the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) as well as the CFSP. The OCCF, the CRB, the JCIP, and the Tribes all participate in the planning process and submit information that is included in these reports. However, stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency makes considerable changes with regard to progress and services without adequate consultation with and participation by stakeholders. Several stakeholders, for example, expressed the opinion that there is a disconnect between what happens in the advisory committee meetings and what actually happens in the agency. They noted that the agency announces

changes in policy, such as implementation of the OSM, without involving stakeholders in the policy decision; stakeholders feel excluded from the process.

Item 40. The State’s services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally assisted programs that serve the same population

 X Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because the State’s services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally assisted programs that serve the same population. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in Oregon, CFSP services are coordinated with the services and benefits of other public and private agencies that serve the same general population of children and families. The Statewide Assessment reports that as a result of the reorganization and integration of DHS, staff members from various divisions within DHS are co-housed in many communities, which encourages a cooperative and collaborative planning process.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, coordination exists between DHS and a number of key programs:

- DHS works with the Oregon Judicial Department (including the Division of Child Support [DCS], the JCIP, and the CRB). Examples include membership on the JCIP committees as discussed previously and the DCS/DHS/OYA committee, which looks at issues that develop between the systems that lead to interruption or slowing of performance on child outcomes. A major focus has been on cross-training to better understand each department’s systems.
- In coordinating with Medicaid, administered by the DHS Division of Medical Assistance Programs (DMAP), staff members from CAF and DMAP confer daily to ensure that children in foster care have access to needed health services, medications, and treatments. CAF has been involved with the project to update the Medical Management Information System (MMIS) from its inception, ensuring that the needs of foster care children are addressed in the new MMIS.
- DHS works with TANF, administered by the DHS Office of Self-Sufficiency Programs, and the Family Support and Connections program is an example of joint efforts to address the safety and well-being of children. In addition to Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program (CBCAP) funding, TANF is also being used to expand this program. Oregon’s philosophy is to look at TANF as a children’s program in that functioning, self-sufficient families tend to result in better outcomes for children.
- DHS has agreements with public or private agencies or contractors to perform title IV-E or IV-B functions and determines whether services provided under the agreements or contracts are monitored for compliance with State plan requirements. For example, the OCCF administers many of the family preservation and support services in Oregon. This is monitored by the OCCF submission of an annual report to be included in the APSR, as well as OCCF providing periodic financial information to CAF Child Welfare.

- Title IV-E, title IV-B, and title XX are all coordinated and administered by DHS CAF. Six Tribes have a title IV-E agreement with the State of Oregon, including:
 - Klamath Tribes
 - Coquille Indian Tribe
 - Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
 - Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
 - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
 - Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

The CAF Federal Compliance Unit provides training and monitors Tribal compliance with State plan requirements for the title IV-E program.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DHS coordinates child welfare services with the services of other Federal or Federally assisted programs. All of the programs identified in the Statewide Assessment were noted by stakeholders, particularly the collaboration with TANF on the Family Support and Connections Program. According to a stakeholder, the Family Support and Connections Program is a prevention program that uses CBCAP funds and is managed by TANF. The target population is TANF families who have risk indicators consistent with risk indicators of families with children in foster care, such as drug and alcohol use. If TANF caseworkers see families with these risks, they offer services through contractors. The services include home visits, a family assessment, and joint case-planning with TANF caseworkers. If it is necessary to report the family to CAF and the child welfare agency opens a case, then the family is terminated from the Family Support and Connections Program. When children are reunified, the family can be referred to this program for services if they are eligible for TANF.

Stakeholders reported that legislation established formal local coordinating and planning process that includes child welfare, mental health, physical health, TANF, education, workforce development, and youth services. Each county submits a plan to CAF and the focus is on developing statewide initiatives.

VII. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Oregon is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. This factor is rated a 2 because although the State has implemented standards, exceptions to the policy regarding the number of children allowed in the foster home are frequently made (item 41) and Oregon does not have a statewide process in place for recruitment of foster homes despite significant shortages (item 44). During the 2001 CFSR, Oregon was in substantial conformity with this factor. Findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards, exceptions to the number of children allowed in the foster home are frequently made. Stakeholders interviewed during the onsite review indicated that exceptions are granted often, sometimes resulting in foster homes operating over capacity (e.g., foster parents reporting a number of medically fragile children in the home that exceeds policy). This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in March 2007, new certification standards were implemented. These standards focus more specifically on safety and well-being for children by increasing the certification oversight of foster homes and relative caregivers. The following is a summary of some of the changes made to the certification standards, as reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- The requirement was increased for the department certification staff to visit the certified home every 180 days (at a minimum).
- Minimum training requirements for certified caregivers have increased from 10 hours to 15 hours per year. Training plans may include additional training requirements beyond the 15 hours to meet a child’s specific needs or increase a certified family or individual’s skills.

- Certified caregiver to child ratios have been decreased to four children to one certified adult, seven children to two certified adults and a maximum of two children under the age of 3 years. All ratios include the certified family’s own children living in the home.
- Various approvals and oversight have been put in place to ensure safety and additional supervision of children in foster care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR identified the recent changes in the standards and procedures for certification of foster homes that were reported in the Statewide Assessment. They noted that children cannot be placed into a home until the home is certified.

Stakeholders indicated that residential facilities are required to have a license; all residential facilities are licensed for 2 years out of the CAF central office. A site review is done every 2 years.

Although several stakeholders acknowledged that these standards are established in policy, they reported that because of a considerable shortage of foster care homes, it is not always possible to adhere to the standards with regard to the number of children in the homes. They noted that caseworkers use the exceptions to regularly place more children in a home than is established in policy, and the exceptions are not sought solely for sibling groups. Stakeholders reported that, although these exceptions must be approved by the supervisor and the program manager, they are not rare occurrences. They expressed the opinion that the shortage of foster homes results in frequent approvals of requests for an exception. Marion County stakeholders said that the majority of foster homes in that county are over capacity and many have eight or nine children placed in the same home, although the limit is seven. Stakeholders in this county also said that some homes in which the foster parents have been certified to provide care for medically fragile children have more children in their homes than the number specified in State policy.

Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength because the State applies standards to homes before issuing a full certification and does not claim title IV-E foster care payments until full certification is in place. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS has the same requirements for all families caring for children in the State’s legal custody. The certification of the person providing care includes relative caregivers and nonrelated foster parents. This standard of certification for all persons is the same, regardless of whether a foster care payment is being made or not. Stakeholders generally

expressed the opinion that standards are applied equally to all caregivers, although for relatives, the certification process can be expedited.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders indicated Oregon certifies all homes in which children are placed. New certification standards went into effect in March 2007. The State uses a time-limited expedited child-specific certification to allow immediate placement of a child into a home of foster parents with whom the child has an existing relationship. Stakeholders reported title IV-E payments are not claimed for these homes. When all requirements are met, these homes receive full certification and title IV-E reimbursements are then claimed.

Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength because Oregon obtains criminal background clearances for foster and adoptive families as part of its certification and approval processes. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interview Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Oregon legislature previously took advantage of the provision in the Federal code (42 U.S.C. 671(a)(20)(A)) that allowed States to opt out of the specific Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster/adoptive families. Passage of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act in 2006 eliminated the opt-out provision from Federal law, but States that previously took advantage of the provision are permitted to continue to opt out until October 1, 2008. Until that time, Oregon will continue to conduct criminal background checks according to its existing rules (Oregon Administrative Rules 413-120-0400 through 413-120-0470), which differ somewhat from the current Federal requirements. Oregon rules require foster/adoptive applicants, and any other adult household members, to undergo a statewide criminal background check. A nationwide fingerprint-based FBI check is also conducted any time an individual meets any of the following criteria:

- The individual has lived outside Oregon within the past 5 years.
- The individual discloses a previous arrest or conviction.
- The statewide criminal check reveals a previous arrest or conviction.

A fingerprint-based FBI check may be run even if none of the criteria listed above is met if there are questions about the true identity of the individual being checked.

Oregon rules permit CAF to license a foster home or approve a home for adoption after completion of the statewide check. If a home is licensed after a statewide check is completed, and a subsequent FBI check reveals criminal history that was not previously known, a foster license or adoption approval may be revoked. Once it is known that an individual has a criminal conviction in his or her history, an exception must be requested and approved before a family can be issued a foster license or approved for adoption. Any and all criminal convictions require approval of an exception by management personnel before foster licensure or adoption approval can occur, regardless of the age or severity of the conviction(s). The more severe the conviction, the higher the level of management approval is required. Some extremely severe crimes are automatically disqualifying and ineligible for an exception at any level.

Oregon rules have been extended beyond Federal regulations to assess arrest history in addition to convictions and have included the requirement of the foster parent or adoptive placement; within 1 working day, all certified families must report any arrests or court conviction for any member of the household.

Information provided by stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR is consistent with what was reported in the Statewide Assessment.

Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because Oregon does not have a statewide process in place to ensure the diligent recruitment of foster homes despite significant shortages of all types of foster homes. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Oregon places a high value of searching for relatives and persons who are known and have a relationship with the child. The State attempts early in the life of the case to seek out these individuals as placement options for the child if the relative or known individual meets the State's certification requirements. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, out of 5,309 certified families for children, 2,878 (54 percent) were certified for a related child or for a child with whom they had a prior relationship.

The Statewide Assessment reports that generally recruitment campaigns are funded and staffed by volunteers; nonprofit organizations; community organizations; and small, specialized grant funds. There are significant local community efforts to recruit families for foster and adoption throughout Oregon. Often, these efforts are child specific and locally based. Oregon has used civic organizations, faith communities, cultural fairs, and individual communities to recruit homes for children.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that Oregon has a contract with the Boys and Girls Aid Society to answer a foster/adoptive parent inquiry phone line, which answers all inquiries about adoption and foster care in the State of Oregon.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, despite the many recruitment efforts, Oregon remains challenged by the overall numbers of children who require substitute care placements and the ability to have an adequate supply of families awaiting children at the time children need families. The increase in the number of certified foster families has not kept up with the increase in the average daily population of children who need a foster family.

The Statewide Assessment reports that there are unique challenges in recruiting foster homes for Native American and Hispanic children who need foster care. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the results of a survey of Tribal communities resulted in a finding that a number of the respondents expressed the opinion that Native American children were not being placed in culturally appropriate homes or with foster families that had adequate training on cultural issues. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the State has struggled to keep pace with the increasing numbers of Hispanic children and families in Oregon.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there is no unified recruitment plan at the State or central office level but that some recruitment occurs locally and varies from location to location. Stakeholders also expressed the opinion that most of the recruitment is conducted for adoptive homes, not for foster homes. A few stakeholders suggested that the emphasis with regard to foster homes is to find relatives and to certify them as foster care providers rather than to attempt to recruit nonrelative foster homes. One agency stakeholder indicated that the number of child-specific homes has increased but the number of general foster homes has not.

Various stakeholders mentioned that for adoptive family recruitment, there are ads in the newspaper and on the Northwest Adoption Exchange, as well as waiting children media spots in Oregon and on Idaho's Wednesday's Child and participation in the Heart Gallery. Stakeholders noted that Wendy's Wonderful Kids has provided funding for recruiters to conduct child-specific recruitment for adoptive families. Several stakeholders indicated that there has been an increase in the number of adoptive homes each year.

Stakeholders in all three sites included in the CFSR expressed the opinion that the lack of foster homes in general is a considerable problem and that more recruitment is needed for nonrelative foster homes to fill in the gap. Stakeholders also indicated that there is a substantial lack of therapeutic foster homes. Deschutes County stakeholders noted that there is no recruitment plan in the county and, in particular, there is no formal process to recruit families that represent the race/ethnicity of the children who need placements. They noted that the usual pattern is to "every so often conduct a blitz by going to fairs and making presentations." Marion County stakeholders noted that although they have a full-time recruiter, there is a significant lack of foster homes and particularly a lack of homes that match the ethnicity of children in foster care. They reported that there was a crisis a while ago with regard to the lack of foster homes and that the faith community held forums to spotlight the issue. After that, some families came forward to volunteer, but

the effort has not been ongoing due to lack of time. Multnomah County stakeholders expressed similar concerns about the lack of a recruitment plan for foster homes and about the challenges regarding the availability of foster homes.

Stakeholders in all sites indicated the following key barriers to recruiting foster parents and retaining the ones that have been certified:

- There is no one to help the families deal with the issues that emerge when providing foster care for children with behavioral problems. Stakeholders in Marion County noted that at one time there was an individual who provided this service, but this position was eliminated with budget cuts. They suggested that since the loss of that position, there have been more placement disruptions and more foster parents leaving.
- The agency does not reimburse foster parents for day care services. As a result, working parents cannot become foster parents unless they are willing and able to pay for day care, which can be very expensive.
- There is a lack of transportation services; therefore, foster parents are expected to provide all transportation to services, meetings, reviews, etc. Stakeholders suggested that because many foster parents care for several children in their homes, this is not a reasonable expectation.
- The foster care payment rate is too low.

Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength because the State is effective in using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely placements for children. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy and practice in the area of interjurisdictional/interstate placements is primarily dictated by the terms and requirements of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC). The Statewide Assessment reports that in 2006, the department undertook an analysis of data compiled over a year-long period to determine if the work associated with the processing of interstate placement requests was equitably and efficiently distributed among the responsible department personnel. Analysis of these data resulted in redistribution of work among personnel in the department’s central ICPC unit.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Oregon complies with requests from other States for either a foster study or adoption study whether the child is legally free for adoption or not. However, a barrier to completion of Oregon’s request for studies often is the other State’s policy, which will not allow an adoption study if Oregon’s child is not yet legally free for adoption. This can greatly delay permanency for children when they remain in Oregon’s foster care system while a relative family is available for placement in another State.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Oregon recruits throughout the United States for adoptive homes. CAF contracts with the Boys and Girls Aid Society when considering out-of-State general applicants (not relatives or current caretakers) at adoption committees. The Boys and Girls Aid Society will work with Oregon's ICPC and the State's adoption unit or contracted agency to clarify information such as licensing, training requirements, etc. The Boys and Girls Aid Society contract alleviates the workload in the field offices. This longstanding contract and partnership has developed into regular contact and coordination with local and statewide media organizations. This coordination includes working through partnerships with a media outlet in Boise, ID, that features Oregon children who are waiting for adoption. In addition, this is how Oregon accesses the registration of eligible children with adoption exchanges such as the Northwest Adoption Exchange and AdoptUsKids.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders who commented on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DHS is effective in placing children both in other counties and in other States. They use the Northwest Adoption Exchange; Wednesday's Child in Boise, ID; and the Heart Gallery to ensure that Oregon children who are waiting for adoption or permanent placement are included in these efforts. A few stakeholders reported that the ICPC has not been a barrier to timely placement of children out of State.