

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Final Report: Pennsylvania Child and Family Services Review**  
**March 2009**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document presents a summary of the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Pennsylvania. 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. The CFSR is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) 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 within HHS.

The Pennsylvania CFSR was conducted the week of July 28, 2008. The period under review was from April 1, 2007, to August 1, 2008. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal year (FY) 2004, FY 2005, and the 12-month CFSR period ending March 31, 2007
- Reviews of 64 cases at three sites across the State (30 cases in the Philadelphia County office, 17 cases in the Allegheny County office, and 17 cases in the Northumberland County office)<sup>1</sup>
- 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

Information from each resource is presented for all of the items reviewed.

**Background Information**

The CFSR assesses State performance with regard to its substantial conformity with seven child and family outcomes and seven systemic factors. For the outcome assessments, each outcome incorporates one or more of the 23 items included in the review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) based on the results of the case reviews. An item is given an overall rating of Strength if at least 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as a Strength. Depending on item ratings, an

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<sup>1</sup> Initially, 40 foster care cases were selected for the case review. However, one foster case was found to not meet sample requirements after the onsite CFSR and was eliminated from the sample.

outcome can be “substantially achieved,” “partially achieved,” or “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 six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met.

There are 22 items that are considered in assessing the State’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors. Each item reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an ANI based on whether State performance on the item meets the Federal program requirements. A determination of the rating is based on information provided in the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFSR. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Overall performance on each systemic factor 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 (a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

<b>Rating the Systemic Factor</b>			
<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>In Substantial Conformity</b>	
1	2	3	4
None of the CFSP or program requirements is in place.	Some or all of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, but more than one of the requirements fail to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, and no more than one of the requirements fails to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement.

A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome or systemic factor must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome or systemic factor.

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. Key changes in the process that make comparing performance difficult 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

Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven CFSR outcomes. The State did achieve an overall rating of Strength for item 11, proximity of placement.

Additionally, Pennsylvania met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence and absence of maltreatment in foster care. The State also met the national data standard for Permanency Composite 3 (Permanency for children in care for extended time periods) and for Composite 4 (Placement stability).

The CFSR identified the following key concerns with regard to the State's performance in achieving the desired outcomes for children and families:

- The State did not meet the national data standard for Composite 1 (Timeliness and permanency of reunification) or for Permanency Composite 2 (Timeliness of adoptions).
- The State was not in substantial conformity with any of the seven outcomes:
  - Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was substantially achieved in only 30.8 percent of the cases reviewed.
  - Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide children's needs) was substantially achieved in only 35.9 percent of the cases reviewed.
  - Permanency Outcome 2 (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved) was substantially achieved in only 48.7 percent of the cases reviewed.
  - Safety Outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) was substantially achieved in 57.7 percent of the cases reviewed.
  - Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate) was substantially achieved in 68.8 percent of the cases reviewed.
  - Well-Being Outcome 3 (Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs) was substantially achieved in 68.9 percent of the cases reviewed.
  - Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive services to meet their educational needs) was substantially achieved in 81.6 percent of the cases reviewed.

The State's low performance with regard to these CFSR outcomes and national data standards may be attributed in part to the following key factors:

- The CFSR Round 1 PIP focused on creating laws and policies; however, the laws and policies were not effectively implemented.
- There were gaps in services when a family moved to another county. Often this is because of the lack of a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System and because County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) are unable to access information

about families across counties. The State does have an intercounty transfer of cases protocol that counties are required to follow. However, it is entirely up to the initiative of the caseworker to track and refer a family that moves, or to contact the county agency where a family previously lived to learn whether there was child welfare involvement. This can be critical for high-risk families.

### **Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors**

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with five of the seven systemic factors:

- Quality Assurance (QA)
- Staff and Provider Training
- Service Array and Resource Development
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Statewide Information System or Case Review System.

The specific findings regarding the State’s performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of this 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 FY 2008 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 items. 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). Safety Outcome 1 also incorporates two national data indicators for which national standards have been established. These data indicators measure the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 57.7 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. This outcome was substantially achieved in 77 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases, 50 percent of applicable Northumberland County cases, and 29 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases. Additionally, Pennsylvania met the national standard for the measure assessing the

absence of maltreatment recurrence and for the measure assessing absence of maltreatment of children in foster care. Both items incorporated into this item were rated as ANIs. Key findings from the 2008 CFSR were the following:

- The case reviews identified inconsistent practice in regard to initiating a response to child maltreatment reports and establishing face-to-face contact with children.
- The State does not have a reporting method in place to capture recurrence of General Protective Services (GPS) cases. ChildLine, the central registry for CPS investigations, does not capture data pertaining to GPS cases; therefore, the State neither tracks families with GPS histories nor does it capture data on recurrence in GPS cases except through the Quality Service Review (QSR) process. The State does rely on counties to track GPS information, but those data are not collected on a statewide level.

Pennsylvania achieved substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this outcome in the PIP.

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

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two items. One item (item 3) assesses State efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing the family with services to ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other item (item 4) assesses efforts to manage safety and reduce the risk of harm to children in their own homes and in their foster care placements.

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 68.8 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 82 percent of Northumberland County cases, 77 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 47 percent of Allegheny County cases. Both items incorporated into this item were rated as ANIs. Findings from the 2008 Onsite Review indicate that the State is inconsistent in providing services to prevent removal. Additionally, although there are assessment processes in place, the State is inconsistent in conducting risk and safety assessments.

Pennsylvania also did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2 in its 2002 CFSR. The following key concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:

- Although OCYF had access to a wide variety of placement prevention services, the agency was not consistent in its efforts to provide these services to families or to provide services at the level of duration and intensity that was needed by many families.
- There was a lack of monitoring of families to ensure that they were receiving or participating in services intended to address risk of harm issues.
- Although the initial risk assessment process was valid, the process of assessing risk on an ongoing basis needed to be improved.

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

- Strengthened the skills-based practice of linking risk, safety, and family assessment to case planning outcomes and activities in the CORE and Supervisory Training Series, and offered refresher and skill-enhancement training to already certified caseworkers and supervisors
- Developed and provided case planning resources and tools, such as outcomes/objectives, activities/tasks, documentation guidelines, and case record formats, which are consistent with the practice standards to facilitate caseworkers' development of family service plans (FSPs) with the family, and made case planning resources and tools available in both print and electronic media formats
- Developed a Quality Assurance Committee (QUAC) to assess the practice of CCYA child welfare caseworkers' and supervisors' assessments of the sufficiency of delivered services identified in the FSPs
- Developed a statewide QUAC to assess the effectiveness of training on the skills of risk and safety assessment and the current level of transfer of those skills into practice
- Based on the QUAC's assessment, included skills-based practice strategies during training and strengthened strategies to transfer these skills to practice

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

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

Six items are incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all of the foster care cases reviewed. The items pertain to State 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 items focus on an assessment of State 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 a case goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) are in stable long-term placements and are adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in only 30.8 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.
- The outcome was substantially achieved in 40 percent of Allegheny County and Northumberland County cases and 21 percent of Philadelphia County cases.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for the CFSR 12-month target period for the data indicators, the State did not meet the national standards for Permanency Composite 1 (Timeliness and permanency of reunification) or Permanency Composite 2 (Timeliness of adoptions).

However, the State did meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 3 (Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods) and for Permanency Composite 4 (Placement stability).

All items incorporated into this outcome were rated as ANIs. Key findings for this outcome in the 2008 CFSR were:

- Preventing foster care reentries within a 12-month period is a challenge for the State (item 5).
- The Onsite Review indicates that there are issues in maintaining stable placements for foster children, particularly in (1) meeting their behavioral needs and (2) ensuring that their placements are safe and well-supported (item 6). However, the State did meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability for the 12-month CFSR period ending March 31, 2007.
- The 2008 CFSR indicates that Pennsylvania does not consistently establish timely and appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care and is not consistently meeting Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) requirements and filing for termination of parental rights (TPR) in a timely manner (item 7). However, the State met the national standard for data Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended periods.
- Information from the Onsite Review indicates the State did not make diligent efforts to reunify children with parents or relatives (item 8). Additionally, the State did not meet the national standard for data Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunifications.
- Information from the review indicates that the State is not consistently completing adoptions in a timely manner (item 9). Additionally, the State did not meet the national standards for Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions.
- The State is not consistently assisting youth in achieving the goal of OPPLA (item 10).

Pennsylvania was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 in its 2002 CFSR. The following key concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:

- Preventing multiple entries into foster care and maintaining stable placements were a challenge for the State.
- Although children's permanency goals were reviewed on a regular basis, the reviews did not always result in a reconsideration of permanency goals or in filing TPR petitions in a timely manner.
- There were delays in achieving adoptions, which were due in part to (1) delays in changing goals from reunification to adoption, (2) delays in filing for TPR, (3) delays in searching for absent parents, (4) delays in conducting home studies, and (5) a lack of financial and health-care benefits for families that wish to adopt.
- There were delays in achieving TPR due to appeals and to crowded court dockets, making it difficult to schedule TPR hearings.
- The Statewide Assessment for the 2002 CFSR identified the variation in the financial and health-care benefits that were available to adopting families as a barrier to timely adoptions.
- The State was not consistently assisting youth in achieving the goal of OPPLA.

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

- Identified the practice standards that, when implemented, were most likely to have a positive impact on permanency for children and youth in the State; provided training to public and private agencies to assist in implementing relevant practice standards
- Identified evidence-based practice and program models that could be implemented in counties most in need of improving permanency outcomes
- Identified counties with good permanency outcome results and, using the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) as an advisory group, identified practices and programs that lead to county success
- Developed tools for county and private agency organizational assessment to identify areas in which technical assistance is needed, using the expertise of the CWLA Research to Practice Initiative and Consultation Division
- Established a Center of Excellence in Child Welfare Practice within the Competency Based Training (CBT)/Child Welfare Education for Leadership/Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates constellation at the University of Pittsburgh to provide ongoing data analysis, practice and program research, and technical assistance to OCYF, CCYA, and private agency staff
- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) regarding setting goals to establish clear regulatory requirements on the timeliness of goal setting, the appropriateness of the goal based on a family and child's situation, and the timely review of progress toward goal achievement, with requirements for changes in placement goals when necessary
- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to establish clear requirements for the use of concurrent planning as a tool for achieving timely permanency, and revised private children and youth administrative regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to establish clear requirements for the use of concurrent planning as a tool for achieving timely permanency
- Expanded the Court Improvement Project (CIP) beyond Philadelphia County to 12 counties
- Using the American Bar Association's (ABA) Barriers to Termination Project and CIP resources, assessed the reasons for delay in filing petitions for TPR to determine whether the timelines are sufficient, given family dynamics and issues needing to be resolved prior to making a decision about permanency
- Issued an OCYF Bulletin on the use of permanent legal custodianship (PLC) as a permanency option and fully implemented subsidized PLC in all counties
- Issued an OCYF Bulletin on kinship and revised existing CBT curriculum on kinship care to incorporate key practice standards and OCYF policy bulletins
- Provided technical assistance to county courts and CCYA to reduce or remove barriers to timely adoption of children, using resources available to the CIP, ABA's Barriers to Termination Project, and the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) legal services initiative
- Conducted forums for judges and masters to highlight the results of the CIP and other successful court reform projects
- Provided counties and private agencies with practice and program models that have achieved timely adoptions using the CWLA Research to Practice Initiative
- Provided counties and private agencies with a protocol for searching for absent parents
- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to clearly establish the circumstances under which a goal of OPPLA is permissible

- Revised private children and youth administrative regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to clearly establish program and service requirements for youth transitioning out of placement to adulthood
- Identified independent living, youth development, and transition to adulthood practices and program models that have been successful in Pennsylvania and other jurisdictions using the CWLA Research to Practice Initiative

Pennsylvania met the target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP period.

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

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six items that assess State 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); and promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 48.7 percent of the foster care cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 70 percent of Northumberland County cases, 42 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 40 percent of Allegheny County cases.

Key findings for this outcome in the 2008 CFSR were the following:

- Children in the cases reviewed were in foster care placements that were in close proximity to parents or potential permanent caregivers unless specialized placements were necessary (item 11).
- The State is inconsistent in its efforts to place siblings together (item 12).
- Children's visitation with mothers, fathers, and siblings was not of sufficient quality or quantity to meet the needs of the families. Visits were more likely to occur with siblings and mothers than with fathers (item 13).
- Children's connections with extended family, school, and community were not being consistently maintained (item 14).
- There were inconsistent efforts made to search for maternal and paternal relatives as placement resources for children (item 15).
- The support of the parents' relationships with their children while the children were in foster care was generally inconsistent. Less attention was given to promoting children's bonds with fathers than with mothers (item 16).

Pennsylvania was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR. The following key concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:

- OCYF was not effective in placing children in close proximity to their families of origin, and particularly in placing children with relatives.
- There was a lack of consistency in agency efforts to locate and involve absent fathers in the lives of their children.

- In many cases, the agency had not made diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings in foster care.

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

- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to require documentation that distance from a child's place of residence was considered when making any placement, revised private children and youth administrative regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to require documentation that distance from a child's place of residence be considered when making any placement, and established greater emphasis in the CORE training curriculum for caseworkers and supervisors on the importance of children being placed close to their families
- Revised CCYA and private children and youth administrative regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to establish clear program and service requirements related to visitation, with special attention to visitation with fathers and to transportation issues
- Identified evidence-based practice and program models regarding visitation with fathers and noncustodial parents
- Reviewed the Pennsylvania Visitation Manual, CFSR standards for visitation with parents and siblings, and practice standards, and revised and enhanced the guidelines, as needed, with attention given to visitation with fathers
- Reviewed CBT curriculum on visitation, practice standards, and the Visitation Manual; revised and enhanced the curriculum and guidelines, as needed, especially in relation to fathers
- Revised OCYF Bulletin to include sibling visits and visits with noncustodial parents
- Revised the CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to establish clear program and service expectations regarding the need for preservation of a child's connections and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) requirements; revised the private children and youth administrative regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to establish clear program and service expectations regarding the need for preservation of a child's connections and ICWA requirements; reviewed CBT curriculum to ensure that emphasis is placed on preservation of child's connections to their family and ICWA requirements; and implemented practice standards applicable to supporting preservation of family connections
- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to emphasize use of kin as a placement resource; issued OCYF Bulletin stating kinship care policy; identified and implemented practice standards that support the use of kin as placement resources for children who enter substitute care; and assessed CBT curriculums to emphasize the importance of kin as placement resources and assess the utilization of the curriculum Supporting the Kinship Triad
- Identified evidence-based practice and program models that could be implemented in public and private agencies to improve family involvement in case planning

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

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

Well-Being Outcome 1 incorporates four items. One item pertains to State 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 item examines State efforts to actively involve parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining items examine the frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children's parents (item 20).

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in only 35.9 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. This outcome was substantially achieved in 59 percent of Northumberland County cases, 37 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 12 percent of Allegheny County cases. The outcome was found to be substantially achieved in 38 percent (15 cases) of the 39 foster care cases and 32 percent (8 cases) of the 25 in-home services cases. All items incorporated into this outcome were rated as ANIs.

Key findings for this outcome in the 2008 CFSR were the following:

- The State was effective in assessing and meeting the needs of children receiving foster care services and receiving in-home services. However, the State was less effective in assessing and meeting the needs of foster parents, mothers, and especially fathers. The State was more effective in assessing and meeting the needs of parents for in-home services cases than for foster care cases (item 17).
- The State was not consistent in involving parents and children in the case planning process. Mothers and children were more likely to be involved in case planning than fathers (item 18).
- The State was not consistently effective in ensuring both the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children in foster care or receiving in-home services cases (item 19).
- The State was not effective in ensuring both the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents, particularly visits with fathers (item 20).

Additionally, reviewers noted during the Onsite Review that the agency addressed the concrete needs of families but frequently did not meet the underlying issues/needs. Additionally, siblings in juvenile justice cases were generally not assessed for service needs or for safety/risk. Reviewers also indicated that absent parents, particularly fathers, were not assessed for, or provided, services. There were also gaps in service provision if a family left the jurisdiction and moved to another.

Pennsylvania was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 in its 2002 CFSR. The following key concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:

- OCYF was not consistent in meeting the service needs of children and families.
- OCYF was not consistent in involving parents and children in the case planning process.

- The frequency and quality of caseworkers' contacts with children and parents was not always sufficient to ensure children's safety and well-being or to promote attainment of case goals. This problem was identified more frequently in the in-home services cases than in the foster care cases.
- There was inconsistency with regard to agency efforts to contact fathers, even in cases in which fathers had been caretakers and/or maintained connections with their children.

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

- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to require family involvement in case plan development and defined clear case management expectations and requirements for coordination
- Revised private children and youth administrative regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to require family involvement in case plan development and defined clear case management expectations and requirements for coordination
- Identified and implemented practice standards that were most likely to have a positive impact on family involvement in case planning to ensure that families are involved in identifying strengths and needs and that services are provided that meet the needs of the family
- Ensured that family involvement in service planning is contained in CORE and supervisory training
- Identified evidence-based practice and program models that could be implemented in public and private agencies to improve family involvement in case planning
- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to establish clear expectations regarding the frequency of contact with the child and parents
- Revised private children and youth administrative regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to establish clear expectations regarding the frequency of contact with the child and parents
- Reviewed CBT curriculum and practice standards regarding family reunification and visitation and revised and enhanced the CBT curriculum

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

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

Only one item is assessed under Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to State efforts to address and meet the educational needs of children in foster care and, when relevant, children in the in-home services cases (item 21).

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 81.6 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 92 percent of Northumberland County cases, 83 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and

69 percent of Allegheny County cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87 percent (27 cases) of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 72 percent (13 cases) of the 18 applicable in-home services cases.

In the 2008 CFSR, a key issue indicated by stakeholders is that although there are State standards, there is not a statewide curriculum, which makes transferring between school districts problematic. Stakeholders in Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties and at the State level reported that children transferring to different school districts because of placement changes often lose credits, thus falling behind in their education. Additionally, stakeholders in Allegheny County and Philadelphia County reported that obtaining school records after a transfer is often difficult.

Pennsylvania was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 PIP. The key concern identified in the 2002 CFSR was that, in some cases, although educational needs were assessed, services were not provided to meet identified needs.

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

- The Departments of Education and Public Welfare provided guidance to local agencies and school districts to meet the unique educational needs of children served by the child welfare/juvenile justice systems.
- The agency incorporated an assessment to ensure that the skills needed to address education-related issues are contained in both the CORE training for direct service staff and the supervisory training curriculum.
- The agency provided guidance requiring that each foster parent receive training in how to access educational resources for the children placed in their homes.
- The agency revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to require that service planning for children receiving in-home services include the educational needs of the children.

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

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

This outcome incorporates two items that assess State efforts to meet the physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs of children in foster care and children in the in-home services cases, if relevant.

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 68.9 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 79 percent of Philadelphia County cases, 62.5 percent of Allegheny County cases, and 56 percent of Northumberland County cases. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 72 percent (28 cases) of the 39 foster care cases and in 64 percent (14 cases) of the 22 applicable in-home services cases.

The key findings for this outcome in the 2008 CFSR are that the State is not consistent in meeting children's physical needs or mental health needs. Additionally, CCYA is more consistent in assessing and meeting the medical and mental health needs of children in foster care than children receiving in-home services.

Pennsylvania was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR. The following key concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:

- Mental health services were not always of sufficient intensity and duration to meet the children's needs.
- In some in-home services cases, children did not receive adequate monitoring to ensure that recommended mental health services were received.

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

- Addressed the mental health needs of all children who are within the children and youth and/or juvenile justice system by reviewing the products developed by the Dependency and Delinquency Health Care Services Work Group
- Awarded grants to four counties to implement a demonstration project for screening and assessment of children and youth placed in shelter care and detention
- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to address child health and safety assessment, including mental health and substance abuse history
- Expanded the training curriculum to incorporate the skills needed to use mental health screening and assessment tools

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

## **II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS**

### **Statewide Information System**

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating an information system that can provide accurate and timely information pertaining to the status, demographic characteristics, location, and case goals for the placement of every child in foster care.

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System in the 2008 CFSR. The State does not have a statewide information system that readily identifies or captures information regarding the status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement goals for all children in foster care. The information at the State level is "point in time" information. Therefore, the State Office must contact the county to obtain current information on a child in foster care, which is a

cumbersome, timely process. According to stakeholders, the lack of a statewide data system makes it difficult to manage the child welfare program and to comply with State data needs and Federal reporting requirements.

Pennsylvania was in substantial conformity with this factor in the 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

### **Case Review System**

Five items are included in the assessment of State performance for the systemic factor of Case Review System. The items examine 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), implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the timeframes established in ASFA (item 28), and notification of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers about schedules for case reviews and hearings and about their right to be heard in those proceedings (item 29).

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Item 26, 27, and 29 were rated as Strengths. Key findings of the 2008 CFSR were:

- Although efforts have been implemented in the State to increase engagement of families in the case planning process, information from the review process indicates that child and family involvement in case planning remains a challenge for the State (item 25).
- According to stakeholders at the review sites, judicial reviews occur every 6 months, with some occurring more frequently. The State provided data that indicate in 2007 more than 94 percent of children had a periodic review/permanency hearing within the previous 6 months. The number of judicial reviews satisfies the requirements for both the periodic review and the 12-month permanency hearing (item 26).
- Permanency hearings are being held in the State every 6 months. The State provided data that indicate in 2007 more than 94 percent of children had a periodic review/permanency hearing within the previous 6 months (item 27).
- Information from stakeholders interviewed during the Onsite Review indicate mixed results regarding whether or not TPR is filed in accordance with the provisions of ASFA, and the State did not provide data to show that TPR is filed timely or compelling reasons noted. Additionally, the CFSR onsite case review findings show that TPR is not always filed timely nor are compelling reasons for not filing documented (item 28).
- Foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children are consistently provided notification of reviews and hearings and are given opportunities to be heard in reviews and hearings (item 29).

The State was not in substantial conformity for this systemic factor in the 2002 CFSR. The 2002 CFSR identified the following concerns:

- Although Pennsylvania had procedures in place to involve parents in case planning, the procedures were not consistently implemented.

- State procedures for seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements were not implemented fully across the State due to continuances and an insufficient number of attorneys to represent children and families.

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

- Pennsylvania revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to require family involvement in case plan development.
- Pennsylvania revised child and youth agencies' private provider regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to require family involvement in case plan development, and identified and implemented practice standards that were most likely to have a positive impact on family involvement in case planning with regard to identifying their strengths and needs.
- Pennsylvania ensured that the topic of family involvement in service planning was incorporated in training for new caseworkers and supervisors.
- Pennsylvania identified evidence-based practice and program models that could be implemented in public and private agencies to improve family involvement in case planning.
- Pennsylvania revised the language pertaining to TPR in Pennsylvania's Adoption Act to be more consistent with the provisions of ASFA.
- The Pennsylvania PIP Committee, with input from the SWAN Advisory Committee and the Juvenile Court Judges Commission, developed a strategy for effective adoption planning and education that included training for judges on the ASFA timeframes.

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

### **Quality Assurance System**

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

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. Key findings of the 2008 CFSR were the following:

- Pennsylvania has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children (item 30).
- The State has a number of processes in place to monitor quality of services and to identify the child welfare system's strengths and needs (item 31). Processes include the following:
  - The QSR
  - The annual licensing review of each CCYA
  - The Needs Based Plan and Budget process
  - The Practice Standards
  - Individual CCYA QA systems

Pennsylvania was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in the PIP.

### **Staff and Provider Training**

The systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training incorporates an assessment of the State's training provided to new caseworkers (item 32), ongoing training provided to agency staff (item 33), and both initial and ongoing training provided to foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. Key findings for this systemic factor in the 2008 CFSR were the following:

- Pennsylvania has a comprehensive staff development and training program that requires new caseworkers to complete 120 hours of competency-based training (item 32).
- Pennsylvania provides a comprehensive, mandatory, ongoing training program for staff. In addition there are a variety of staff development opportunities available to staff (item 33).
- The State provides mandated pre-service and ongoing training for current and prospective foster and adoptive parents as well as training opportunities for private agency staff (item 34).

The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in the PIP.

### **Service Array and Resource Development**

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development addresses three questions: Does the State have in place an array of services that meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? Are the services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and family served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. Key findings of the 2008 CFSR were the following:

- Pennsylvania has a wide array of services that assess the needs of families and provide appropriate services to meet those needs (item 35).
- Although there is a wide range of services across the State, there are challenges to ensuring that all areas of the State have the full array available. Additionally, barriers such as transportation hinder accessibility in some areas (item 36).

- The State has processes in place, such as Family Group Decision Making and Systems of Care, to facilitate individualization of services to children and families (item 37). In addition, the State has flexible funds available to assist the local counties in meeting the unique needs of children and families.

Pennsylvania was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in the PIP.

### **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 CFSP and producing annual reports (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).

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

Key findings for this factor in the 2008 CFSR were:

- Pennsylvania has a strong working relationship with consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile courts and other stakeholders who are all included in developing goals and objectives of the CFSP (item 38).
- The State utilizes community stakeholders in evaluating services and in developing the annual reports of the State's progress in child welfare (item 39).
- The Department of Public Welfare and CCYAs worked diligently to build partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders to coordinate services that serve children and families throughout the State (item 40).

Pennsylvania was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in the PIP.

### **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 that 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).

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention in the 2008 CFSR.

Key findings of the 2008 CFSR were the following:

- The State has in place a set of comprehensive standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are routinely monitored for compliance (item 41).
- The State uniformly applies the standards to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions (item 42).
- The State complies with Federal requirements by requiring criminal background checks for foster and adoptive homes. The State also has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children (item 43).
- Although Pennsylvania utilizes various methods to recruit a diverse pool of foster and adoptive families, both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that there is not a diverse pool of homes available to meet the cultural, ethnic, and special needs of the children in foster care. Additionally, according to the focus groups, SWAN is doing a good job but is underfunded. SWAN has significantly increased the number of adoptive families and increased approved adoptive African-American families by 124 percent (item 44).
- The State utilizes cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for children (item 45).

The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in the 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in the PIP.

**Table 1. Pennsylvania 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
<b>Safety Outcome 1:</b> Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	57.7	Met 2		
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				ANI	73
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				ANI	65
<b>Safety Outcome 2:</b> Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	68.8			
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				ANI	67
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	69
<b>Permanency Outcome 1:</b> Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	30.8	Met 2; did not meet 2		
Item 5: Foster care reentry				ANI	87.5
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	69
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	51
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	73
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	20
Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement				ANI	83
<b>Permanency Outcome 2:</b> The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	48.7			
Item 11: Proximity of placement				Strength	96
Item 12: Placement with siblings				ANI	73
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	53
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	72
Item 15: Relative placement				ANI	50
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	41

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

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved	Rating**	Percent Strength
<b>Well-Being Outcome 1:</b> Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs	No	35.9		
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	45
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	42
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child			ANI	75
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	29
<b>Well-Being Outcome 2:</b> Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	81.6		
Item 21: Educational needs of child			ANI	82
<b>Well-Being Outcome 3:</b> Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	68.9		
Item 22: Physical health of child			ANI	80
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 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: Pennsylvania CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items**

<b>Systemic Factors and Items</b>	<b>Substantial Conformity?</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>Item Rating**</b>
<b>Statewide Information System</b>	No	2	
Item 24: The 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
<b>Case Review System</b>	No	2	
Item 25: The State 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: The State 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: The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the States 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: The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA			ANI
Item 29: The State 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			Strength
<b>Quality Assurance System</b>	Yes	4	
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 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identified strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluations program improvement measures implemented			Strength

<b>Systemic Factors and Items</b>	<b>Substantial Conformity?</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>Item Rating**</b>
<b>Staff and Provider Training</b>	Yes	4	
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			Strength
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
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 that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children			Strength
<b>Service Array and Resource Development</b>	Yes	3	
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
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			Strength
<b>Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>	Yes	4	
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			Strength
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

<b>Systemic Factors and Items</b>	<b>Substantial Conformity?</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>Item Rating**</b>
<b>Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention</b>	Yes	3	
Item 41: The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards			Strength
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 that 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 ANI.