

**Final Report  
Pennsylvania Child and Family Services Review  
March 2009**

**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 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. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) 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 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 (39 foster care cases and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites (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, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

All 64 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the 64 cases are presented in the Table of Case Characteristics on the following page. For this table and subsequent tables shown in the report, the figures displayed may not total exactly 100 percent due to rounding.

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specified outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of the State's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR review, 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.

---

<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.

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.

### Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

Case Characteristics	Foster Care	In-Home Services
<b>Total Number of Cases</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Date case was opened</b>		
Open prior to the period under review	35 (90%)	14 (56%)
Open during the period under review	4 (10%)	11 (44%)
<b>Child entered foster care during the period under review</b>	8 (21%)	*
<b>Child's age at start of period under review</b>		
Younger than 10	19 (49%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	4 (10%)	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	9 (23%)	*
16 and older	7 (18%)	*
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic	0	*
Asian Non-Hispanic	1 (2.6%)	*
Black Non-Hispanic	19 (48.7%)	*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	0	*
Hispanic (of any race)	5 (12.8%)	*
White Non-Hispanic	12 (30.7%)	*
Unknown/Unable to Determine	1 (2.6%)	*
Two or More Non-Hispanic Races	1 (2.6%)	*
<b>Primary reason for opening case</b>		
Physical abuse	5 (13%)	2 (8%)
Sexual abuse	1 (3%)	1 (4%)
Emotional maltreatment	1(3%)	0
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	15 (38%)	5 (20%)
Medical neglect	0	2 (8%)
Mental/physical health of child	0	1 (4%)
Mental/physical health of parent	0	1 (4%)
Substance abuse by parent	6 (15%)	4 (16%)
Child's behavior	5 (13%)	2 (8%)
Domestic violence in child's home	0	0
Child in juvenile justice system	2 (5%)	2 (8%)
Other	4 (10%)	5 (20%)

\*Information on in-home services cases is not available for these characteristics.

## SECTION A: OUTCOMES

In the Outcomes Section of the CFSR Final Report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) is assigned to each of the 23 items reviewed. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The item ratings are used to determine the performance of a State on the 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 or more of the applicable 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. 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.

CB has established very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our nation’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 or the national standards for the six data indicators by the end of their PIP implementations. CB recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often take time to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with CB to establish a specified amount of improvement or to determine specified activities for their PIPs. That is, for each outcome that is not in substantial conformity or item that is rated as an ANI, 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 ANIs 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 CFSRs assesses 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 goals may have been achieved. The purpose is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the completion of a PIP.

The following sections provide information on how Pennsylvania performed on each outcome in the first round of the CFSR as well as the current CFSR. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round, the key concerns observed at that time and the strategies implemented in the PIP to address those concerns are discussed.

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 ANI ratings. Key changes in the CFSR case review process that make it difficult to compare performances 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

For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of Pennsylvania's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR review, which was held in FY 2002, 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.

## I. SAFETY

### Safety Outcome 1

<b>Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	2	3	10	15	<b>57.7</b>
Partially Achieved	4	3	1	8	<b>30.8</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	1	0	2	3	<b>11.5</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	10	11	17	38	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards</b>					
	<b>National Standard (%)</b>		<b>State's Percent</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6 +		97.0	Yes	
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68 +		99.76	Yes	

### Status of Safety Outcome 1

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 or higher 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. However, Pennsylvania met the national standards for the measures assessing the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care. Pennsylvania was in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this outcome in its PIP.

### Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 during the 2008 CFSR are presented below.

## **Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 26 (41 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable if 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.

According to Pennsylvania policy, the protective service program has two components: Child Protective Services (CPS) and General Protective Services (GPS). CPS includes child maltreatment reports involving nonaccidental injuries or conditions in the following categories:

- Serious physical injury
- Serious physical neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Serious mental injury
- Cases involving imminent risk of serious physical injury or sexual abuse

GPS includes reports that do not rise to the level of child abuse, as defined by the State. Reports are assigned as GPS reports if they meet the following categories:

- Less serious injuries or neglect
- Environmental concerns
- Lack of supervision
- Cases involving the behavior of children

GPS services are provided with the consent of the parents unless ordered by the court.

State policy requires that the County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) must begin the investigation of all CPS reports immediately, and the alleged child victim must be seen within 24 hours of the receipt of a CPS report. If there is no information available to ascertain the child's safety, the child must be seen immediately. If it is known that the child is safe, then a response must be within 24 hours. For GPS reports, the investigation must begin immediately if there is no information available to ascertain the child's safety. If it is known that the child is safe, the State policy allows the local CCYAs to establish a response based on the priority level of the report.

Philadelphia County has an expedited response system in place for GPS reports on children who are age 5 and younger. Protocol requires children to be seen within 2 hours of receipt of a report. All other GPS reports are prioritized according to level of risk. Philadelphia County has developed the following requirements:

- Priority 1 allegations require a response time of 0-2 hours and include reports of present danger for children 5 years old and younger.
- Priority 2 allegations require a response time of within 24 hours and include reports of impending danger.
- Priority 3 allegations require a response time of within 24 hours if no impending danger is identified.
- Priority 4 allegations require a response time of 7 days from the receipt of the report and include reports that indicate no present or impending danger.

In Allegheny County, all GPS assessments and CPS investigations must be initiated within 24 hours of assignment. However, interventions must be initiated within 2 hours for all maltreatment reports (whether CPS or GPS) involving children ages 6 and younger.

In Northumberland County, GPS referrals received are assessed by the supervisors of the prevention and/or intake units. All referrals are assigned within 24 hours of receipt by agency. Response times for GPS are based on the referral allegations and level of risk: high-risk referrals require an immediate to 24-hour response time; moderate-risk referrals require a 3-day response time, and low-risk referrals require a 3- to 5-day response time.

The results of the assessment of item 1 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	3	6	10	19	<b>73</b>
Area Needing Improvement	4	0	3	7	<b>27</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	
Not Applicable	10	11	17	38	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Northumberland County case, 77 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases, and 43 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases.

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 19 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was established with the children in the family within the timeframes required by State policy or law. Item 1 was rated as an ANI in the seven applicable cases when the investigation and/or face-to-face contact were not initiated within the required timeframes.

Additional information from the Onsite Review indicated that, in the cases reviewed, there were a total of 49 maltreatment referrals. Of these 49 referrals, the following was found:

- Twenty-two CPS referrals were initiated within the required timeframes.
- Seventeen GPS referrals were initiated within the required timeframes.
- Two CPS referrals were not initiated within the required timeframes.
- Six GPS referrals were not initiated within the required timeframes.
- In two cases, the referral type could not be determined.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 73 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 a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Pennsylvania implemented the Quality Service Reviews (QSRs) in 2003. The QSR is modeled after the CFSR process and provides qualitative information on the 7 CFSR outcomes and 23 items incorporated into the outcomes. It collects data from onsite case reviews and interviews with caseworkers, parents, foster parents, and children. From October 2003 to May 2007, every county participated in a QSR. The process yielded a review of 632 randomly selected cases from among the 67 CCYAs. The selected cases were comprised of 298 substitute care, 47 shared case management, and 287 in-home cases. The Statewide Assessment indicates that review standards for the QSR are more stringent than the CFSR, which may result in lower ratings for the items than are given during a CFSR. Data from the reviews are referenced in the Statewide Assessment and throughout this report.

QSR data indicate that the timeliness of initiating an investigation was rated as a Strength in 74 percent of the applicable cases; 98 percent of CPS investigations and 77 percent of GPS assessments were initiated in a timely manner. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, those results are likely to understate the performance of the CCYA because the reviewers did not limit themselves to the period under review.

According to the Statewide Assessment, each CCYA must undergo an annual licensing inspection. Response times, according to the Statewide Assessment, are evaluated during the annual licensing inspection conducted by OCYF Regional Offices. Based on the results of these inspections, the State has identified the need to strengthen State policy regarding response times.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Philadelphia County stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that investigations are generally initiated in a timely manner. Stakeholders at the other two review sites did not comment on this item.

**Item 2. Repeat maltreatment**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 17 (27 percent) of the 64 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 6 months before or after that identified report. Information regarding the ratings is provided below.

<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	5	1	5	11	<b>65</b>
Area Needing Improvement	2	3	1	6	<b>35</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	
Not Applicable	10	13	24	47	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 83 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases, 71 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases, and 25 percent of applicable Northumberland County cases.

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 11 cases when there was no indication of two or more substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period. Item 2 was rated as an ANI in six cases because there were two or more substantiated maltreatment reports during the period under review that occurred within a 6-month period. Recurrence occurred in four GPS cases, one CPS case, and one case that was initially opened as a GPS referral but received a subsequent CPS referral.

Although reports occurring prior to the period under review are not included in the ratings, reviewers found that in 45 of the cases reviewed, there were multiple maltreatment reports on the family during the life of the case. Information regarding the disposition of reports that were received prior to the period under review is not available.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 65 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that there was no recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for an overall rating of Strength. Item 2 was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, if a CPS report is received on a child who has been the victim of one or more prior substantiated reports of child maltreatment, the case must be reviewed by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) to assist in the investigation and case planning. If a CPS report is received involving a child currently receiving services with the agency, the new investigation is assigned based on the organizational structure of the CCYA. In some counties the report will be handled by a specialized investigation unit, and in other counties the report may be handled by the caseworker assigned to the case. The results of the new report are incorporated into revised service planning for the child. For CPS reports, a determination of risk must be made at the conclusion of the report consistent with the risk assessment case interval policy.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, there are two sources of repeat maltreatment data: the data generated for the semi-annual data packages, which use the Federal syntax to measure performance on each of the data-driven outcome measures, and the QSR. The data package includes data only on CPS reports, but the QSR includes data on both CPS and GPS reports.

The QSR data indicate that in 11 percent of the cases there was repeat maltreatment within 6 months of the first substantiated report, and in 88 percent of the cases there was no recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

A State-level stakeholder commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that the discrepancy between the national standard for recurrence and the QSR results is due to the fact that, in Pennsylvania, the measure used for the national standard does not incorporate information about GPS reports because the State does not collect these data and, therefore, does not report these data to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. The QSR, however, does include GPS cases in its analysis. Additionally, ChildLine, the central registry for CPS investigations, does not capture data pertaining to GPS cases; therefore, the State does not track families with GPS history, nor does it capture data on recurrence in GPS cases except through the QSR process. The State does rely on counties to track GPS information, but those data are not collected on a statewide level.

## Safety Outcome 2

<b>Safety Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	8	14	22	44	<b>68.8</b>
Partially Achieved	3	1	2	6	<b>9.4</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	6	2	6	14	<b>21.9</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

### Status of Safety Outcome 2

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. Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2 in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP.

### Key Concerns From the 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 the 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 the

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

**Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed during the 2008 CFSR under Safety Outcome 2 are presented below.

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

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 36 (56 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were excluded from this assessment if the children entered foster care prior to 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 table below.

<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	8	7	9	24	<b>67</b>
Area Needing Improvement	5	2	5	12	<b>33</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>36</b>	
Not Applicable	4	8	16	28	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

The item was rated as a Strength in 78 percent of applicable Northumberland County cases, 64 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases, and 62 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases.

Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 24 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Services were provided to the parents and child to prevent removal (18 cases).
- The children were appropriately removed from the home to ensure their safety (five cases).
- Services were provided after the child was reunified with his/her parents to prevent reentry (three cases).

Case reviews indicate that a broad range of services was offered or provided to families. These included services provided by agency staff and the following additional services: behavioral management, parenting skills training, counseling, funds for utilities and rent, substance abuse assessment and treatment, individual therapy, mobile therapy, homemaker services, education services, transportation services, in-home mental health services, housing services, case aide service, and food vouchers.

Item 3 was rated as an ANI in 12 cases when reviewers determined that services were not provided to ensure the safety of children remaining in home.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 67 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 also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCYF regulations require that services be provided to keep children in their own homes and to prevent placement as long as the children's safety is ensured. An FSP is developed, and the provision and effectiveness of services is monitored and evaluated by a CCYA. The safety of the child is monitored by maintaining contact with the child, the family, and the service providers.

Data from the QSR conducted across the State indicate that 85 percent of the cases were provided services to protect the child and prevent removal. QSR reviewers reported a higher percentage of positive scores for in-home cases than for foster care cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

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

#### Item 4. Risk of harm to child

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

##### Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 64 cases. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. The results of the assessment of item 4 are presented in the table below.

Item 4	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	14	22	44	69
Area Needing Improvement	9	3	8	20	31
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

The item was rated as a Strength in 82 percent of Northumberland County cases, 73 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 47 percent of Allegheny County cases.

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 44 cases 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 ANI in 20 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was a lack of adequate initial and ongoing safety and risk assessments during the period under review (17 cases).
  - Eleven cases lacked ongoing safety and risk assessments.
  - Six cases lacked both initial and ongoing assessments.
- There was risk of harm in the foster care setting, and safety and risk were not assessed (one case).
- Risk and safety were not assessed prior to unsupervised visitation (two cases).
- Risk and safety were not assessed prior to or after reunification (one case).
- Risk and safety were not assessed prior to case closure (two cases)

### **Rating Determination**

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had appropriately addressed the risk of harm to the children in 69 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for an overall rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, safety management and risk assessment are two separate approaches that CCYA caseworkers take to determine whether children can remain in their current living situations. Also, safety and risk assessments must be completed at the conclusion of each CPS investigation or GPS assessment to assist in determining whether the family is in need of services from the CCYA. Safety management addresses any immediate concerns in the environment and is an ongoing process of collecting information related to child safety. The safety assessment is used to make a decision as to whether the child is (1) safe, (2) safe with a comprehensive safety plan in place, or (3) unsafe.

The risk assessment looks at potential risk to the child. Risk assessment is an ongoing evaluative process in which each new piece of evidence that is obtained must be analyzed to determine the extent to which the child is in danger of harm. Along with determining the risk, the severity of the risk is also determined. A risk assessment form is used by CCYA caseworkers as a tool to focus on factors that are associated with child abuse/neglect risk and severity. A risk assessment summary form must be completed every 6 months in conjunction with the FSP and/or Judicial Reviews.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, QSR findings indicate the following:

- In 94 percent of the cases reviewed, CCYA conducted safety assessments.
- In 93 percent of the cases reviewed, CCYA conducted risk assessments
- In 95 percent of the cases reviewed, actions taken in the case were consistent with the findings of the safety and risk assessments.
- In 79 percent of applicable cases reviewed, there was evidence of agency effectiveness in reducing the risk of harm to children.
- Risk assessments and safety assessments were completed more frequently and more thoroughly for in-home cases than for foster care cases.
- In Allegheny County and the suburbs of Philadelphia, only 59 percent of the risk assessments conducted for children in foster care were considered to be thorough.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Allegheny and Philadelphia County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency assesses safety and risk for each case. Allegheny County stakeholders reported that safety assessments are conducted at every contact and that the risk assessment tool is completed every 6 months, when there is a placement change, or if a new maltreatment report is received. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that although risk and safety are assessed on all children, there is an

extensive assessment completed on children who are 5 years old or younger. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that a nurse accompanies caseworkers to assist in assessing the child’s situation. They suggested that this practice was helpful in assessing safety and risk. Northumberland County stakeholders did not comment on this item.

## II. PERMANENCY

### Permanency Outcome 1

<b>Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	4	4	4	12	<b>30.8</b>
Partially Achieved	5	6	13	24	<b>61.5</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	1	0	2	3	<b>7.7</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards</b>					
	<b>National Standard (Scaled Score)</b>	<b>State’s Composite Score</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>		
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6 +	85.2	No		
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4 +	106.1	No		
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7 +	135.5	Yes		
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5 +	102.4	Yes		

### Status of Permanency Outcome 1

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 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). Performance on the individual measures included in the composites is presented in the discussion of the items related to each measure.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 40 percent of Allegheny County and Northumberland County cases and 21 percent of Philadelphia County cases.

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

### **Key Concerns From the 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 the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions in a timely manner.
- There were delays in achieving adoptions 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 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 available to adopting families as a barrier to timely adoptions.
- The State was not consistently assisting youth in achieving the goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA).

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

- Identified those practice standards that, when implemented, were most likely to have a positive impact on permanency for children and youth in the State and 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 the 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 (CWEL)/Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) constellation at the University of Pittsburgh to provide ongoing data analysis and practice and program research and technical assistance to OCYF, CCYA, and private agency staff
- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) for setting goals to establish clear regulatory requirements regarding the timeliness of goal setting, the appropriateness of the goal based on the family and child's situation, and the timely review of progress toward goal achievement with requirements for changes in placement goal when necessary
- Revised CCYA regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to clearly establish requirements regarding 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 clearly establish requirements regarding 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 (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 the dynamics of the family and the issues needing to be resolved prior to making a decision about permanency
- Issued an OCYF Bulletin on the use of permanent legal guardianship (PLG) as a permanency option and fully implemented subsidized PLG in all counties
- Issued an OCYF Bulletin on kinship and revised existing CBT curriculum on kinship care to incorporate the key practice standards and the OCYF policy bulletins
- Provided technical assistance to county courts and CCYAs to reduce or remove barriers to timely adoption of children, using the resources available to the CIP, ABA's Barriers to Termination project, and the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Legal Services Initiative (LSI)
- Conducted forums for judges and masters to highlight the results of the CIP as well as other successful court reform projects in the State
- Provided counties and private agencies with practice and program models that have had success in achieving 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 in other jurisdictions, using CWLA Research to Practice Initiative

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

### Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 during the 2008 CFSR are presented below.

#### Item 5. Foster care reentries

Strength     Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 8 (21 percent) of the 39 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable 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 table below.

Item 5	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	3	1	3	7	87.5
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	0	1	12.5
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	8	16	31	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Allegheny County and Philadelphia County cases and 50 percent of the two applicable Northumberland County cases.

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in seven of the eight applicable foster care cases because 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. This item was rated as an ANI in one case because the child reentered care within 8 months from the prior episode.

#### Rating Determination

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. The item was rated as a Strength in 87.5 percent of the 8 applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Performance on the Measure Relevant to Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about foster care reentry. There is no national standard for the measure of foster care reentry. National standards with regard to permanency have been established only for the scaled composite scores.

The measure of foster care reentry is part of Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification. The State's performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

Pennsylvania's performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: 28.5 percent of the children exiting foster care to reunification in the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage exceeds the median of 15.0 percent. (For this measure, lower percentages are associated with higher levels of performance.)

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, QSR data indicate that reentry occurred in 23 percent of applicable cases reviewed. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that reviewers indicated that, in at least half the cases that experienced reentry, case work standards were met and the CCYA could not have prevented reentry.

The Statewide Assessment reports that a substantive factor that affects the State's reentry rate is the inclusion of Juvenile Probation Office (JPO) cases in the child welfare population. Recidivism rates are more frequent among JPO cases than among child welfare cases, and these cases are less subject to the control of the CCYA.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders in Allegheny County and Philadelphia County and at the State level commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that reentries into foster care are reduced by CCYAs providing services to the family after reunification. However, stakeholders at the State level indicated that post-reunification services are provided only until the court returns custody to the family, which is when the reentry may occur. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that the Reintegration Initiative has assisted children after they have been reunited with their families.

According to stakeholders at the State level, the State has an older adolescent population coming into foster care. The youth who are reentering foster care are frequently youth who have been served in residential treatment facilities. Stakeholders expressed the concern that the needs of the youth were not thoroughly or accurately assessed prior to entering treatment. Additionally, stakeholders expressed the opinion families are not prepared for reunification with the child, and the services to maintain the child in the home/community are not always available. State-level stakeholders reported that the State is hoping that the integrated services plan at the local level will help bring in other agencies and services to meet the needs of youth returning to their families and communities.

Stakeholders in Northumberland County did not comment on this item.

**Item 6. Stability of foster care placement**

     Strength        **X**   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

All 39 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 table below.

<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	6	9	12	27	<b>69</b>
Area Needing Improvement	4	1	7	12	<b>31</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of Northumberland County cases, 63 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 60 percent of Allegheny County cases.

Item 6 was rated as a Strength in 27 cases 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 (20 cases).
- The placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests and were intended to further achievement of the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services to the child (seven cases).

Item 6 was rated as an ANI in 12 cases when reviewers determined that 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 attainment of the child’s permanency goal. In six of these cases, placements disrupted at the request of the foster parent or relative caregiver because they did not believe that they could meet the needs of the child or adequately handle the child’s behaviors.

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 20 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in 13 cases experienced two placements during the period under review.

- Children in six cases experienced three placements during the period under review, and one child experienced four placements.

#### **Rating Determination**

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 69 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 percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

#### **Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 4: Placement stability**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about placement stability. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 4 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Pennsylvania's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability was as follows:

- C4.1: 86.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is higher than the national 75th percentile of 86.0 percent.
- C4.2: 66.6 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is higher than the national 75th percentile of 65.4 percent.
- C4.3: 42.7 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is higher than the national 75th percentile of 41.8 percent.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, in 27 percent of the cases reviewed for the QSR, children experienced more than two placements during the first 12 months of placement. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that the QSR rated placement stability as a Strength in 74 percent of the applicable cases.

#### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Although stakeholders did not comment specifically on the effectiveness of the State in ensuring placement stability for children in foster care, various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR made the following observations regarding placement stability:

- Allegheny County stakeholders reported that placement matching has improved since the implementation of an electronic bulletin board that displays information on children available for placement and indicates their needs.
- Northumberland County stakeholders indicated that caseworkers in that county make concerted efforts to match children with the best foster care provider.

- Philadelphia County stakeholders expressed concern that children are being moved within the provider system and that Philadelphia County CCYA/Department of Human Services (DHS) is not being informed of the moves.

**Item 7. Permanency goal for child**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

All 39 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. Reviewers also were to determine whether the agency had sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The results of this assessment are shown below.

Item 7	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	5	6	9	20	51
Area Needing Improvement	5	4	10	19	49
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

The item was rated as a Strength in 60 percent of Northumberland County cases, 50 percent of Allegheny County cases, and 47 percent of Philadelphia County cases.

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 20 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate and had been established in a timely manner and when the requirements of ASFA had been met, if appropriate. The item was rated as an ANI in 19 cases 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 (five cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (14 cases).
- A TPR petition was not filed in accordance with ASFA guidelines, and no compelling reasons were documented (eight cases).

The following case goals were identified for the 39 foster care cases:

- Adoption only (12 cases)
- Reunification only (15 cases)
- Guardianship only (two cases)
- OPPLA only (four cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and adoption (one case)

- Concurrent goals of adoption and OPPLA (one case)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and OPPLA (one case)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and reunification with relatives (one case)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and guardianship (two cases)

Case review findings pertaining to TPR were as follows:

- At the time of the onsite CFSR, 28 of the 39 children in the foster care cases had been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. An additional case met ASFA requirements for filing TPR prior to 15 months under specified circumstances.
- ASFA requirements were met in 21 (72 percent) of the 29 cases for which the requirements were applicable.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 51 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 required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards were established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 3 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Pennsylvania's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods was the following:

- C3.1: 30.1 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 (adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is higher than the national 75th percentile of 29.1 percent.
- C3.2: 98.1 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is higher than the national 75th percentile of 98.0 percent.
- C3.3: 31.6 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 is less than the 25th percentile of 37.5 percent. (For this measure, lower scores indicate more positive performance.)

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the QSR determined that establishing permanency goals in a timely manner was a Strength in 83 percent of the applicable cases reviewed.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the SWAN provides timely permanency services to children in foster care regardless of permanency goal or placement setting. SWAN also provides post-permanency services to families who have adopted and families who provide permanency through kinship care or PLC. Additionally, SWAN partners with the Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP) and Independent Living (IL) services to focus on permanency and well-being for children and youth, especially with respect to concurrent planning and youth/family engagement in the court process. The SWAN/IL partnership also provides joint training and conferences to public and private child welfare caseworkers that focus on best practices for youth in foster care to help the youth move more quickly into permanent families or permanent connections with adults. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the SWAN/IL partnership has increased adoption finalizations and PLC discharges for older youth.

According to the Statewide Assessment, a youth workgroup comprised of Youth Ambassadors representing counties from across the State was formed to assist in formulating the Statewide Assessment. The youth ambassadors attended the CFSR Steering Committee meetings and also met independently each month to plan the youth engagement efforts. According to the youth who participated in this process, permanency goals are not always changed or reflective of the youth's wishes and needs.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Various stakeholders in the three sites identified the following issues with regard to agency effectiveness in establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner:

- Stakeholders in Allegheny County expressed the opinion that CCYAs establish timely, appropriate initial permanency goals for children that change as the children's situations warrant.
- Philadelphia County stakeholders expressed the opinion that the initial permanency goal is appropriate, but that changes in the goal are not explored thoroughly nor does the permanency goal change as the child's situation changes.
- Stakeholders indicated that reunification often remains the goal longer than it should.
- In commenting on the practice of concurrent planning, Northumberland County stakeholders noted that even when concurrent goals are established, caseworkers do not work toward both goals simultaneously.
- Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that although establishing concurrent goals is required by policy, it is not implemented in practice.

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the following opinions regarding the agency's effectiveness in seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements:

- The court often will not grant TPR unless an adoptive resource has been identified (Allegheny County stakeholders).

- Some caseworkers will not file for TPR unless an adoptive resource has been identified (Philadelphia County stakeholders).
- The courts often allow parents numerous opportunities to meet reunification goals even when the time that the child has been in foster care exceeds the ASFA requirements (Philadelphia County stakeholders).

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

     Strength      **X** Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 8 was applicable for 22 (56 percent) of the 39 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 table below.

<b>Item 8</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	4	6	6	16	<b>73</b>
Area Needing Improvement	2	0	4	6	<b>27</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	4	9	17	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Northumberland County cases, 67 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases, and 60 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases.

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in 16 cases 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 ANI in six cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner.

**Rating Determination**

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 73 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 required for a rating of Strength.

### **Performance on the Individual Measures Pertaining to Timeliness Included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of reunification. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State’s performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Pennsylvania’s performance on the individual measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification is presented below for the measures pertaining to timeliness:

- C1.1: 69.3 percent of the reunifications occurred in at least 8 days but less than 12 months of the child’s entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 69.9 percent.
- C1.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification who were in foster care for at least 8 days was 6.9 months. This length of stay is higher than the national median of 6.5 months. (For this measure, lower scores indicate more positive performance.)
- C1.3: 44.5 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification after being in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months. This percentage is higher than the national median of 39.4 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 48.4 percent.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, data from the QSR indicate that in 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the State was effective in achieving the goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The few stakeholders at the three review sites commenting about reunification during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the CCYA does everything possible to reunify children with their family. In particular, stakeholders in Northumberland County reported that foster parents mentor birth parents in an attempt to encourage and assist with reunification and the CCYA utilizes Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) prior to reunification.

### **Item 9. Adoption**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 15 (38 percent) of the 39 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 table below.

Item 9	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	1	1	1	3	20
Area Needing Improvement	2	4	6	12	80
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	5	12	24	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 33 percent of Allegheny County cases, 20 percent of Northumberland cases, and 14 percent of Philadelphia County cases.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in three cases when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an ANI in 12 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The adoption was delayed because of court delays or appeals (three cases).
- Delays occurred due to the agency not filing for TPR in a timely manner (three cases).
- There was a lack of concerted efforts by the agency to locate an appropriate adoptive placement (five cases).
- The adoption was delayed after TPR because the pre-adoptive parent did not complete the necessary paperwork in a timely manner (one case).
- There was a delay by the agency in requesting adoption services (one case).

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Adoption was finalized during the period under review in 4 of the 15 applicable cases. In only one of the four cases was the adoption finalized in less than 24 months (the adoption was finalized in 21 months from the time of the child’s entry into foster care).
- Of the 11 children who remained in foster care at the time of the onsite CFSR, eight children had been in foster care for longer than 3 years.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner in only 20 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of adoptions. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 2 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Pennsylvania's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions is presented below.

- C2.1: 26.4 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.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 31.6 months. This median length of stay is less than the national median of 32.4 months but higher than the national 25th percentile of 27.3 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months equates to a higher level of performance.)
- C2.3: 20.3 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the CFSR 12-month target period were discharged to a finalized adoption by the last day of the target period. This percentage is higher than the national median of 20.2 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 22.7 percent.
- C2.4: 10.2 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is higher than the national median of 8.8 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 10.9 percent.
- C2.5: 61.6 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is higher than the national 75th percentile of 53.7 percent.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

Stakeholders at the State level commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that the State established SWAN to assist with permanency issues for children in foster care.

According to the Statewide Assessment, data from the QSR indicate that timeliness of adoptions was rated as a Strength in 84 percent of the applicable cases. Additionally, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, data from the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE)

indicate that the number of PAE-registered children who were placed in a pre-adoptive home increased by 106 percent from 2002 (514) to 2006 (1,060). The number of adoption finalizations of PAE-registered children increased by 410 percent from 2002 (148) to 2006 (755).

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, there are two State strategies that contributed to the State's improvement in moving cases to adoption in a timely manner. The first strategy is the change in policy that allows children without a court-ordered goal of adoption to receive services from SWAN. As a result of this new policy, by the time parental rights are terminated, the child may already have a child profile completed and an adoptive family identified through recruitment efforts.

The second strategy pertains to the State's focus on eliminating legal barriers to permanency. Two programs have assisted in this effort—the SWAN LSI and the ABA Permanency Barriers Project. The LSI provides paralegals to CCYAs to manage the critical steps of diligent searches for parents and relatives and to manage the legal paperwork. Evaluation results indicated that the LSI program has reduced the length of time from TPR to adoption finalization by 182 days. The ABA Permanency Barriers Project has been, or currently is, in 21 of the 67 counties. The ABA Project, which works directly with the county court and CCYA to identify and remove barriers to permanency, has, according to the Statewide Assessment, decreased the overall length of stay in care by 167 days compared to those counties not participating in the Project.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the partnership between SWAN and IL services has led to an increase in services for older youth in care that correlates with an increase in the number of older youth adopted. In Federal FY (FFY) 2003, 546 children who were age 10 or older were adopted; in FFY 2004, 684 children who were age 10 or older were adopted; and in FFY 2005, 705 children over the age of 9 years were adopted. This represents an 18.5 percent increase in the number of adoptions of children age 10 and older in the first 18 months of this partnership. However, in FFY 2006, 595 children over the age of 9 years were adopted, and in FFY 2007, 513 children over the age of 9 years were adopted.

Youth taking part in the Statewide Assessment process reported that transition from foster care often is not well planned and youth feel “cut off” when moved out of the system to aftercare. The youth reported the need for more assistance in transitioning from foster care to independence.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the State level commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that services available through SWAN, and particularly LSI, have increased the timeliness of adoptions. Additionally, the ABA Permanency Barrier Project has also increased the timeliness of adoptions. Stakeholders also indicated that the PAE and the Heart Gallery have helped to increase the number of adoptions.

Stakeholders in Allegheny County reported that there is an effective process in place to move cases to adoption. However, the court in Allegheny County will not grant TPR unless an adoptive resource has been identified. Additionally, it sometimes takes the court several months to make the final decision on granting TPR. The appeals process, which can take up to 4 months, delays adoptions.

Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that children free for adoption have a specialized court, “L Court,” and have permanency hearings every 3 months. These stakeholders noted, however, that adoptions are not always achieved in a timely manner.

**Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement**

     Strength        **X**   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 10 was applicable for 6 (15 percent) of the 39 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 table below.

<b>Item 10</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	2	2	1	5	<b>83</b>
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	1	1	<b>17</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	8	8	17	33	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the two applicable Allegheny and Northumberland County cases and 50 percent of the two applicable Philadelphia County cases.

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in five 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 services to prepare the child for independent living. The item was rated as an ANI in one case when reviewers determined the child was not in a long-term placement. Case reviews also found that in four cases, the child was at least 15 years old but not yet 16 years old at the time that the goal of OPPLA was established. In one case, the child was 17 years old at the time that the goal of OPPLA was established, and in one case, the child’s age at the time of goal establishment was not known.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 83 percent of the 6 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. The item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCYF policy requires that a plan of OPPLA be implemented when the child cannot return home and after other permanency goal options have been exhausted. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, data from the QSR indicate that securing an OPPLA for children was a Strength in 86 percent of the applicable cases.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that Philadelphia instituted an "O-Court" to work directly with older youth preparing to transition from the child welfare system. Judges familiar with the issues confronting older youth in foster care work directly with CCYA and the youth to review dependency goals and issues related to transition.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, an expansion of SWAN funding allows for more youth to receive enhanced permanency services to address their needs as they prepare for adult life. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that the State recognizes that discharge planning and transition planning need to be improved for youth who are aging out of the system.

According to the youth who participated in the Statewide Assessment process, supervised IL is a very helpful service for youth. The youth reported that IL caseworkers engage many youth in activities that are beneficial to their goals. They noted that IL workshops and programs have supported youth with their college preparatory tests, post-secondary education choices, and financial aid. The room and board extension for youth also is helpful because it promotes higher education within the foster home and establishes a sense of responsibility by requiring that youth have a job and save money for education. The IL program rewards the youth through rent payments and further guidance through monthly reviews. Additionally, youth participating in the Statewide Assessment process said that FGDM was an effective tool for transition planning for youth.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

According to stakeholders at the State level, youth ages 16 and older are to receive IL services. All 67 counties in the State have IL coordinators. However, some stakeholders reported that youth are not receiving IL services at all or that these services often are provided too close to the time of discharge to be of benefit to the youth. However, many stakeholders suggested that when IL services are provided in a timely manner, they are generally beneficial to the youth.

Stakeholders noted that youth may ask the court to remain in foster care until the age of 21. Stakeholders at the State level indicated that the CCYA must make concerted efforts to promote this option. Stakeholders believe that youth do not understand the benefits of remaining in foster care, nor are they always informed that remaining in foster care is an option for them. A "Know Your Rights"

manual and a corresponding website were created to define the rights of youth and to explain the benefits of remaining in foster care past the age of majority. However, stakeholders also noted that youth who do not remain in foster care can receive services through the IL program until the age of 21.

According to stakeholders at the State level, each county has a Youth Advisory Board and most regions have a Regional Advisory Board. Additionally, there is a State Youth Advisory Board that meets quarterly. Some foster care youth serve as ambassadors to the CWTP and give presentations or sit on panels for CCYA staff and other youth in foster care. Some youth in foster care have testified at legislative sessions related to issues relevant to youth and children in foster care.

### Permanency Outcome 2

<b>Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	4	7	8	19	<b>48.7</b>
Partially Achieved	6	2	10	18	<b>46.2</b>
Not Achieved	0	1	1	2	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

### Status of Permanency Outcome 2

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

### Key Concerns From the 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, 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 showing that the 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 regulations (drafted but never promulgated) to establish clear program and service requirements related to visitation with special attention to visitation with fathers and to transportation issues and revised 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 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 visiting 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, and revised and enhanced the curriculum and guidelines as needed, especially in relation to fathers
- Drafted regulations 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 a child's connections to his or her family and ICWA requirements, and implemented practice standards applicable to supporting preservation of family connections
- Revised CCYA regulations to emphasize use of kin as a placement resource, issued a Bulletin stating OCYF kinship care policy, identified and implemented (drafted but never promulgated) 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 its PIP implementation period.

## Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 2 during the 2008 CFSR 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 28 (72 percent) of the 39 foster care cases. Cases determined to be not applicable were those in which (1) TPR had been attained prior to the period under review, (2) contact with parents was not considered to be in the child’s best interests, and/or (3) parents were deceased or their 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 table below.

Item 11	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	6	7	14	27	96
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	4
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	3	5	11	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Northumberland and Philadelphia County cases and 86 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases.

Item 11 was rated as a Strength in 27 cases when reviewers determined:

- The child was placed in the same community or county or in close proximity to the parent (24 cases).
- The child was placed out of his or her community or county, but the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child (three cases).

This item was rated as an ANI in one case when the distance between the child’s family and the foster care placement was a barrier to reunification efforts and was not necessary to meet the child’s needs.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 96 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that OCYF 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 was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CCYA is expected to place children in close proximity to their parents and community. If placement in close proximity is not possible, the CCYA must document why such a placement was not pursued and how the chosen placement best serves the child. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the training curriculum for caseworkers and supervisors emphasizes the importance of placing children close to their families.

As indicate in the Statewide Assessment, the QSR found that children were placed in close proximity to their parents in 89 percent of the applicable cases reviewed.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders in Allegheny County and Philadelphia County commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that CCYA caseworkers attempt to place children in close proximity to their families. Allegheny County stakeholders also expressed the opinion that almost all of the county's children in foster care are placed within the county and none are placed out of State. Philadelphia County stakeholders expressed the opinion that although the majority of the children are placed within the county, there are some out-of-State placements due to a lack of sufficient placement resources for children with special needs.

### **Item 12. Placement with siblings**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 12 was applicable for 22 (56 percent) of the 39 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 table below.

<b>Item 12</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	5	3	8	16	<b>73</b>
Area Needing Improvement	2	2	2	6	<b>27</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	5	9	17	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

This item was determined to be substantially achieved in 80 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases, 71 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases, and 60 percent of applicable Northumberland County cases.

Item 12 was rated as a Strength in 16 cases when reviewers determined that the child was placed with siblings or that the child was not placed with siblings but that the separation was in the best interests of the child or was necessary because the child or one of the siblings had special placement needs. Item 12 was rated as an ANI in six cases when reviewers determined that CCYAs had not made sufficient efforts to locate a placement for a sibling group when it was appropriate for the group to be placed together.

#### **Rating Determination**

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 73 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever possible and appropriate. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, QSR reviewers rated this item as a Strength in 83 percent of the applicable cases. According to the Statewide Assessment, the CCYA makes every effort to place siblings together when it is in the best interests of each sibling. However, if siblings are not placed together, the CCYA is expected to include sibling visitation as part of the child's case plan.

#### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders in Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that diligent efforts are made to place siblings together.

#### **Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 30 (77 percent) of the 39 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 prior to 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 (1) 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 (2) whether these visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 13</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	3	5	8	16	<b>53</b>
Area Needing Improvement	4	3	7	14	<b>47</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	2	4	9	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

The item was rated as a Strength in 62.5 percent of applicable Northumberland County cases, 53 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases, and 43 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases.

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 16 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Item 13 was rated as an ANI in 14 cases when reviewers determined that the agency did not make concerted efforts to promote frequent or quality visitation with mothers, siblings, and/or fathers.

Specific findings with regard to the frequency of visitation with mothers, fathers, and siblings are provided in the table below. Visits with mothers occurred at least once a month in 73 percent of the applicable cases, visits with fathers occurred at least once a month in 44 percent of the applicable cases, and visits with siblings occurred at least once a month in 67 percent of the applicable cases.

<b>Visitation frequency for children in foster care (during the period under review)</b>	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Siblings in Foster Care</b>
Visits occurred at least once a week	12 (46 %)	4 (25%)	4 (27%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	5 (19%)	1 (6%)	5 (33 %)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	2 (8%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (7%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	6 (23%)	3 (19%)	4 (27%)
Visits did not occur	1 (4%)	6 (37.5%)	1 (7%)
<b>Total cases for which item 13 was applicable</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

### **Rating Determination**

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 53 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. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Pennsylvania policy requires that the CCYA provides opportunities for frequent visitation between the child in foster care and his or her parents. At a minimum, the opportunity to visit must be provided once every 2 weeks at a time and place convenient to the parent and at a location that will permit natural interaction. Visitation is not required when the goal is adoption or when visitation is not in the best interests of the child. The CCYA also is required to provide transportation for visitations if the child’s placement is 150 miles or more away from the legal county or if the parent is a recipient of public assistance.

The Statewide Assessment reports that there is no specific State policy that requires visitation between siblings in foster care; however, it is encouraged and considered to be “best practice.”

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, data from the QSR process rated visitation with parents and siblings as a Strength in 73 percent of the applicable cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Only a few stakeholders commented on this item during the onsite CFSR. One Allegheny County stakeholder expressed the opinion that children are not seeing their parents on a regular basis due to private providers not transporting children to visitation. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that children see their siblings on a regular basis. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that sibling visitation often has to be court ordered due to providers not arranging sibling visits. Northumberland County and Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that visitation occurs with incarcerated parents.

**Item 14. Preserving connections**

       Strength        **X**   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 14 was applicable for 36 (92 percent) of the 39 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 this assessment are provided in the table below.

<b>Item 14</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	6	7	13	26	<b>72</b>
Area Needing Improvement	3	3	4	10	<b>28</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>36</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	0	2	3	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

The item was rated as a Strength in 76 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases, 70 percent of Northumberland County cases, and 67 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases.

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 26 cases 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 and visits and placements with relatives) (22 cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the child’s religious or cultural heritage (five cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the school, community, and important activities such as dance class or sports (e.g., by selecting placements that did not require a change of school, jobs, sports teams, etc.) (15 cases).
- The agency ensured that the child’s connection to previous long-term foster parents was preserved (two cases).
- The agency explored connections but none were found (one case).

Item 14 was rated as an ANI in 10 cases 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 (five cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections to school (three cases).
- The agency did not explore connections (one case).

- There was no evidence the agency thoroughly explored whether the child had Native American ancestry to determine whether the provisions of the ICWA applied (three cases).

### Rating Determination

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 72 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 percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in Pennsylvania’s 2002 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCYF policy requires that children be placed in close proximity to their homes and their school districts in an attempt to preserve connections. QSR data indicate that preserving connections was rated as a Strength in 78 percent of the applicable cases.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders did not comment on this item during the Onsite Review.

### Item 15. Relative placement

     Strength      X Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 32 (82 percent) of the 39 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 table below.

Item 15	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	7	5	4	16	50
Area Needing Improvement	3	3	10	16	50
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	0	2	5	7	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 70 percent of Allegheny County cases, 62.5 percent of Northumberland County cases, and 29 percent of Philadelphia County cases.

Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 16 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed with relatives or close family members (10 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable (six cases). In these cases, children were not placed with relatives because a relative could not be found or because identified relatives were unable or unwilling to care for the children and/or had a criminal record or history of substantiated child maltreatment.

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

- The agency had not made diligent efforts to search for maternal relatives (11 cases).
- The agency had not made diligent efforts to search for paternal relatives (12 cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources in only 50 percent of applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, data from the QSR indicate that relative placement was rated as a Strength in 77 percent of the applicable cases. Additionally, according to the Statewide Assessment, the data profile and data analysis undertaken by OCYF indicate that approximately one in five children in foster care is placed with a relative. The Statewide Assessment also reports that fewer than 3 percent of children in foster care have a goal of placement with relatives and 3 to 4 percent of children are released from foster care to relatives.

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCYF policy supports placement of children with fit and willing relatives if such placement is in the best interests of child. State policy promotes relative placement through the following:

- By providing for an abbreviated home study, including immediate child abuse background checks and Pennsylvania State Police criminal history record checks, as a basis for immediate placement with a relative
- By providing for reimbursement of relative caregiver costs (excluding Federal reimbursement)
- By encouraging the approval of the relative caregiver home as a foster family home if continued placement is necessary

State policy requires that kinship foster homes meet State approval requirements. The same board rate reimbursement is given to kinship foster parents as regular foster parents.

The Pennsylvania Juvenile Act was amended to provide for PLC, which is equivalent to guardianship. According to the Statewide Assessment, relatives are the most likely to receive PLC for children. Pennsylvania policy provides for a subsidy to be given in PLC cases when the custodian meets the foster family approval requirements.

LSI developed the Diligent Search Package to help locate relatives who may be a potential placement resource and to help locate missing parents in order to proceed with TPR. The package was provided to all CCYAs and is available online.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, an issue discussed repeatedly by youth interviewed as part of the Statewide Assessment is the need for relative placement options to be explored thoroughly.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the CCYA makes concerted efforts to seek maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources. Allegheny County stakeholders expressed the opinion that over one-half of the children in foster care in Allegheny County are placed with relatives.

According to Philadelphia County stakeholders, there is much emphasis placed on PLC, as it is easier to achieve than other permanency options.

### **Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents**

**Strength**       **Area Needing Improvement**

#### **Case Review Findings**

Item 16 was applicable for 27 (69 percent) of the 39 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if (1) parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child, (2) a relationship with the parents was considered to be not in the child's best interests throughout the period under review, or (3) both parents were deceased. 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 table below.

<b>Item 16</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	1	3	7	11	<b>41</b>
Area Needing Improvement	6	3	7	16	<b>59</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	4	5	12	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 50 percent of applicable Philadelphia County and Northumberland County cases and 14 percent of Allegheny County cases.

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 11 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. The table below identifies the activities as well as the number of cases in which each type of activity was noted.

<b>Effort Made</b>	<b>With Mother</b>	<b>With Father</b>
Encourage the parent's participation in school activities and case conferences, attendance at doctor appointments with the child, or engagement in the child's after-school or sports activities	12	2
Provide or arrange for transportation or provide funds for transportation so that the parent could attend the child's special activities and doctor appointments	7	5
Provide opportunities for therapeutic situations to help the parent and child strengthen their relationship	12	6
Encourage the foster parents to provide mentoring or serve as role models to the parent to assist her/him in appropriate parenting	6	2
Encourage and facilitate contact with incarcerated parents (where appropriate) or with parents not living in close proximity to the child	2	1

Item 16 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the child's relationship with the father (12 out of 17 applicable cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the child's relationship with the mother (10 out of 27 applicable cases).

### Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care in only 41 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CCYA is expected to place children in close proximity to their parents and community. This requirement allows the child to maintain connections with the parents or guardians and siblings through visitation and other contact. Additionally, the Statewide Assessment notes that parents are encouraged to participate in medical and dental care for their child.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the QSR results indicate that maintaining the parent and child relationship was a Strength in 66 percent of applicable cases.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders in Philadelphia County and Northumberland County reported that visitation occurs with incarcerated parents. Additionally, according to Northumberland County stakeholders, incarcerated parents are provided with pamphlets containing information about what they can do for their children while the parent is incarcerated.

## III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

### Well-Being Outcome 1

<b>Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	2	10	11	23	<b>35.9</b>
Partially Achieved	10	7	15	32	<b>50.0</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	5	0	4	9	<b>14.1</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

## **Status of Well-Being Outcome 1**

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. Pennsylvania was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP.

## **Key Concerns From the 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 caregivers 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 their needs
- 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 its PIP implementation period.

### Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 1 during the 2008 CFSR are presented and discussed below.

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

     Strength      X Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 64 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, as these are addressed in later items. The case review results are provided in the following table.

Item 17	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	3	11	15	29	45
Area Needing Improvement	14	6	15	35	55
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 65 percent of Northumberland County cases, 50 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 18 percent of Allegheny County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 46 percent (18 cases) of the 39 foster care cases and 44 percent (11 cases) of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 29 cases 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 ANI in 35 cases 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 table below.

Target person for needs assessment and services	Foster Care			In-Home Services		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Mother's needs assessed and met?	16 (57%)	12 (43%)	<b>28</b>	16 (64%)	9 (36%)	<b>25</b>
Father's needs assessed and met?	6 (32%)	13 (68%)	<b>19</b>	10 (48%)	11 (52%)	<b>21</b>
Child's needs assessed and met?	38 (97%)	1 (3%)	<b>39</b>	22 (88%)	3 (12%)	<b>25</b>
Foster parents' needs assessed and met?	25 (81%)	6 (19%)	<b>31</b>			

### Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the State had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents in only 45 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the QSR findings indicate needs assessment and the provision of appropriate services to meet those needs was rated as a Strength in 59 percent of the applicable cases.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the FSP and child's permanency plan focus on the child and family's strengths, risks assessments, identified challenges, services to address those challenges, and goals. The plans clearly define who is responsible for each task and the timeframes in which they are to be completed. Services needed by the resource family are also included in the plan.

According to the youth participating in the development of the Statewide Assessment, more services similar to IL are needed and IL services need to be offered consistently to youth. Specific IL services, such as financial management, were rated as needing improvement by the youth. Additionally, while financial aid and higher education assistance ends at age 21, many youth are not yet finished with college and need the continued assistance.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that although the State has a wide array of services available and accessible statewide, caseworkers do not adequately assess all family members, particularly fathers. Furthermore, the assessments do not explore the underlying issues and needs of the children and parents.

### Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable for 59 (92 percent) of the 64 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to 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 findings below.

Item 18	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	2	13	10	25	42
Area Needing Improvement	14	4	16	34	58
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>59</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	1	0	4	5	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 76 percent of Northumberland County cases, 38 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 12.5 percent of Allegheny County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 41 percent (14 cases) of the 34 applicable foster care cases and 44 percent (11 cases) of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 25 cases 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 ANI in 34 cases 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. The exclusion of fathers from case planning occurred even when fathers' whereabouts were known and they were involved with or living with the child.

Specific information regarding involvement in case planning is provided in the table below.

<b>Involvement in Case Planning</b>	<b>Evaluation Results</b>		<b>Applicable Cases</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
Mother involved in case planning?	32 (60%)	21 (40%)	53
Father involved in case planning?	16 (40%)	24 (60%)	40
Child (if age appropriate) involved in case planning?	28 (70%)	12 (30%)	40

### **Rating Determination**

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process in only 42 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, QSR findings indicate that the involvement of children and their families in the case planning process was a Strength in 47 percent of applicable cases.

According to the Statewide Assessment, county agencies are expected to actively engage families in case planning, including scheduling case planning meetings at times and locations convenient to the family. Case plan participants are given the opportunity to sign the plan and are provided a copy of the plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the majority of youth commenting on this item during focus group sessions recommended that youth participate in the creation of their case plan because current plans are not accurate and youth involvement will ensure accuracy. Caseworkers, according to the youth, need to visit with the youth at least once a month as this would promote a relationship with the youth and help with case planning.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholder comments on this item indicated that family involvement in case planning varies and provided the following information:

- Youth are not generally involved in case planning (State level and Philadelphia County).
- Case plans sometimes are developed without parental input and presented to the family (Allegheny County and Philadelphia County).
- Although caseworkers develop the plans prior to meeting with the parents, parents have an opportunity for input into the plan before it is finalized (Philadelphia County).

- When the family is involved in case planning, it usually is done as part of the FSP or FGDM meetings (Allegheny County and Northumberland County).
- Philadelphia County contracts with Services to Children in Their Own Homes (SCOH) to provide service provision services to families. SCOH caseworkers tend to make greater efforts to involve parents and children in case planning than CCYA/DHS caseworkers (Philadelphia County).
- Incarcerated parents, according to Northumberland stakeholders, are involved in FGDM meetings by phone.

Additional comments regarding the involvement of parents in case planning are provided in the Systemic Factors section of this report under item 25.

### Item 19. Caseworker visits with child

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 19 was applicable for all 64 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 table below.

Item 19	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	12	15	21	48	75
Area Needing Improvement	5	2	9	16	25
Not Applicable	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of Northumberland County cases, 71 percent of Allegheny County cases, and 70 percent of Philadelphia County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 82 percent (32 cases) of the 39 foster care cases and 64 percent (16 cases) of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 48 cases 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 promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an ANI in 16 cases 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 (three in-home cases, two foster care cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur they were substantive (two foster care 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 (four in-home cases, four foster care cases).
- Visits did not occur during the period under review (one case).

Specific information regarding the frequency of visitation is provided in the table below.

<b>Typical frequency of caseworker visits with child (during the period under review)</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>In-Home Services Cases</b>
Visits occurred at least once a week	6 (15%)	7 (28%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	14 (36%)	6 (24%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	15 (38%)	9 (36%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	3 (8%)	3 (12%)
Visits did not occur	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25</b>

### **Rating Determination**

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 75 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 ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, some CCYAs contract out service provision to families with private agencies although the CCYA retains case planning and management responsibilities. However, the CCYA expects the private providers to conduct most of the visits with the children and parents, and CCYA caseworkers are required to visit only once every 180 days. In fulfilling its case management responsibilities, the CCYA is responsible to see that contacts and visits occur whether the county itself or another provider is making the required contacts. The CCYA is required to visit the child as often as necessary to carry out the service plan regardless of whether services are being purchased from another agency. At a minimum, one visit must be made every 6 months by a CCYA caseworker.

Face-to-face contacts with children must occur as often as necessary for the protection of the child but no less than:

- Once a week until the case is no longer designated as high risk by the county agency, if the child remains in or returns to the home in which the abuse occurred and the county agency has determined a high level of risk exists for the child
- Once a month for 6 months when the child is placed out of the home or in the setting in which the abuse occurred
- Once a month for 6 months when the child is at home and is not determined to be at high risk of abuse or neglect

When a child is placed in foster care outside of Pennsylvania, a CCYA representative visits the child in the home or facility where the child is residing no less than once every 6 months.

The Statewide Assessment reports that QSR data indicate that caseworker visits with children were determined to be a Strength in 82 percent of the applicable cases.

Youth commenting on this item reported that some caseworkers do not visit with the youth once a month as they are required. According to these youth, caseworkers need to conduct visitation once a month as required as this will facilitate trust between the youth and the caseworkers, which will promote better case/service planning for the youth.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the three review sites commenting on this item indicated that quality and quantity of caseworker contacts with children varies based on the caseworker. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that some caseworkers meet privately with children and engaged in relationship building activities with younger children while other caseworkers do not.

Stakeholders in Philadelphia County reported that the SCOH caseworker sees the child monthly and the agency caseworker visits the child once every 6 months. Stakeholders in Philadelphia reported that children generally only see the assigned agency caseworker before a court hearing. Stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency caseworker sees the child at this time only to complete the necessary paperwork in preparation for the hearing. Stakeholders questioned the level of communication between the two caseworkers and indicated that the Philadelphia CCYA/DHS caseworkers are not connected to their children due to the infrequent contact.

### **Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 20 was applicable for 52 (81 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of their 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 table below.

<b>Item 20</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	2	6	7	15	<b>29</b>
Area Needing Improvement	13	6	18	37	<b>71</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>52</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	2	5	5	12	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 50 percent of Northumberland County cases, 28 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 13 percent of Allegheny County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 26 percent (7 cases) of the 27 applicable foster care cases and in 32 percent (8 cases) of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 15 cases 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 ANI when reviewers determined the following with regard to visits with the mothers (24 applicable cases):

- The frequency of visits with mothers was not sufficient and when visits did occur, the quality was not sufficient to meet the needs of the children or further achievement of case goals (six in-home cases, eight foster care cases).
- The frequency of visits with mothers was sufficient, but when visits did occur, the quality was not sufficient (three in-home cases, one foster care case).
- The frequency of visits with mothers was not sufficient, but when visits did occur, the quality was sufficient (one in-home case, one foster care case).
- There were no visits with the mother during the period under review (four cases).

Item 20 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined the following with regard to visits with the fathers (29 applicable cases):

- The frequency of visits with fathers was not sufficient, and when visits did occur, the quality was not sufficient to meet the needs of the children or further achievement of case goals (four in-home cases, four foster care cases).
- The frequency of visits with fathers was sufficient, but when visits did occur, the quality was not sufficient (three in-home cases).
- The frequency of visits with fathers was not sufficient, but when visits did occur, the quality was sufficient (two in-home cases).
- There were no visits with fathers during the period under review (six in-home cases, nine foster care cases).

- There were no visits with the father because he lived out of State nor were there other quality communications (one foster care case).

Specific information pertaining to the frequency of caseworker visits with parents is provided in the table below.

Typical frequency of caseworker visits with parents	Foster Care Cases*		In-Home Services Cases*	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	4 (15%)	0	6 (24%)	1 (5%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	1 (4%)	1 (6%)	6 (24%)	3 (14%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	10 (38%)	2 (11%)	7 (28%)	7 (33%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (27%)	5 (28%)	6 (24%)	4 (19%)
Visits did not occur	4 (15%)	10 (56%)	0	6 (29%)
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	26	18	25	21

\*Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Additional findings were the following:

- For the 26 foster care cases and the 25 in-home cases for which visits with mothers were applicable, there were 17 cases (33 percent) in which these visits occurred less than once a month or not at all.
- For the 18 foster care cases and the 21 in-home cases for which visits with fathers were applicable, there were 25 cases (64 percent) in which these visits occurred less than once a month or not at all.

### Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the frequency and/or quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals in only 29 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CCYA caseworker is required to visit the parents as often as necessary to carry out the service plan regardless of whether services are being purchased from another agency. At a minimum, one visit must be made every 180 calendar days. The required case contacts may be made by the CCYA or by another agency with which the CCYA has an agreement to provide services to implement the FSP.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, QSR data indicate that caseworker visits with parents was rated as a Strength in 58 percent of the applicable cases.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Philadelphia County stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that the CCYA/DHS caseworker sees the parents only when the FSP is due or to complete the necessary paperwork for an upcoming court hearing

**Well-Being Outcome 2**

<b>Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	9	12	19	40	<b>81.6</b>
Partially Achieved	2	0	1	3	<b>6.1</b>
Not Achieved	2	1	3	6	<b>12.2</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>49</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	4	4	7	15	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

**Status of Well-Being Outcome 2**

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

**Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR**

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 Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) provided guidance to local agencies and school districts to meet the unique educational needs of children served by the child welfare and 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.

### Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings pertaining to the item assessed under Well-Being Outcome 2 during the 2008 CFSR are presented and discussed below.

#### Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 49 (77 percent) of the 64 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 services were provided to meet those needs. The results of this assessment are provided below.

Item 21	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	9	12	19	40	82
Area Needing Improvement	4	1	4	9	18
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>49</b>	
Not Applicable	4	4	7	15	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 40 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an ANI in nine cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no assessment of educational needs even when there was clear evidence that the child was experiencing school-related problems (three foster cases, one in-home case).
- Educational needs were identified and noted in the case record, but services were not provided to address those needs or the agency did not follow-up to ensure that educational services were provided (two foster care cases, two in-home cases).
- Truancy issues were not addressed by the agency (one in-home case).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 82 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 established for this item because it is the only item assessed for the outcome.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the QSR data indicated that 88 percent of applicable cases were rated as a Strength for this item. The Statewide Assessment reports that State regulations require that the child’s educational information be maintained in the case record. As part of the case planning process and the delivery of services to the child and family, the caseworker assists the family in accessing services to meet the child’s educational needs.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review provided the following information:

- There are 501 school districts in the 67 counties of Pennsylvania, and there is no statewide curriculum, which makes transferring across school districts difficult (State level).
- Children transferring to different school districts because of placement changes often lose credits and fall behind in their education (Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties and State level).
- Obtaining school records after a transfer often is difficult (Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties).
- Educational advocates and services for children in residential placements are lacking, which results in children falling behind in their education and not receiving the appropriate educational services needed to meet their needs (State level and Philadelphia County).
- Foster youth receive little guidance from school officials in applying for college (State level).
- Caseworkers from the IL program assist with college planning and applications (Allegheny County).

- There are not any problems with the school system; regular meetings are held with the school superintendent, and caseworkers attend school meetings (Northumberland County).
- School records are obtained during the investigative stage and throughout the life of a case (Northumberland County).

### Well-Being Outcome 3

<b>Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	10	9	23	42	<b>68.9</b>
Partially Achieved	3	5	3	11	<b>18.0</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	3	2	3	8	<b>13.1</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>61</b>	
Not Applicable	1	1	1	3	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

### Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

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

### Key Concerns From the 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.

### Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 3 during the 2008 CFSR are presented and discussed below.

#### Item 22. Physical health of the child

     Strength        **X**   Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 54 (84 percent) of the 64 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 table below.

Item 22	Allegheny County	Northumberland County	Philadelphia County	Total	Percent
Strength	12	10	21	43	<b>80</b>
Area Needing Improvement	1	5	5	11	<b>20</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>54</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	4	2	4	10	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 92 percent of Allegheny County cases, 81 percent of Philadelphia County cases, and 67 percent of Northumberland County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 82 percent (32 cases) of the 39 foster care cases and 73 percent (11 cases) of the 15 applicable in-home cases.

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 43 cases when reviewers determined that children's health needs (medical and dental) were routinely assessed and identified needs were addressed by appropriate services. Item 22 was rated as an ANI in 11 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Physical health needs were not assessed or met (three in-home cases, three foster care cases).
- Dental needs were not assessed or met (three in-home cases, three foster care cases).
- Physical health needs were assessed but not met (one foster care case).
- Dental needs were assessed but not met (three foster care cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting the physical health needs of children in 80 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for an overall rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that a child receive a medical appraisal by a licensed physician within 60 days of the child's placement in foster care, unless the child had an appraisal within the 90 days prior to entering care. The appraisal includes a review of the child's health history, a physical examination, and laboratory or diagnostic tests as indicated by the physician, including tests to detect communicable disease.

Pennsylvania regulations require that after the initial health appraisal, a medical examination must be completed once every 6 weeks for children birth through 6 months, once every 3 months for children 7 months through 23 months, and once a year for children 23 months and older. The agency also is required to ensure a child's immunizations are current.

Additionally, children 3 years of age and older are required to receive a dental appraisal by a licensed dentist within 60 days of entering foster care, unless the child had an appraisal within the previous 6 months. The appraisal includes taking or reviewing the child's dental history; examination of the hard and soft tissue of the oral cavity; and X-rays for diagnostic purposes, if deemed necessary by the dentist. State regulations require that after the initial appraisal, children must have a dental examination at least once every 9 months during placement.

The agency is required to maintain medical records for each child. Regulations also require that information relating to a child's health status must be reviewed and updated each time a child in foster care changes placement. The most current information is given to the foster parents or foster care provider with whom the child is placed.

Although some youth receive comprehensive health services, the majority, according to the youth perspective, do not receive adequate access to health services. According to the youth, many youth are forced into therapy and to take medications when they misbehave. In some cases, local health facilities take none or only part of the insurance provided for youth, which may require the youth to seek specific medical attention up to 2 hours away. Some youth, according to the Statewide Assessment, have reported having to seek medical attention without the aid of their caseworkers.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the QSR data indicate that the area of child's physical health was rated as a Strength in 77 percent of the applicable cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the State level commenting on this item during the Onsite Review indicated that the consistency of medical and dental services depends on the placement provider and the caseworker. Allegheny County stakeholders reported that children in foster care receive good medical treatment.

According to stakeholders at the State level and in Northumberland County, locating a dental provider who will accept Medicaid can be difficult. Stakeholders in Philadelphia County reported that access to dental services is improving.

Stakeholders in Philadelphia County reported that the DHS staff includes two nurses who assist with assessing children's medical needs. Additionally, there is a Health Management Unit which supports caseworkers in meeting the health/medical needs of children and families.

Stakeholders at the State level voiced concern for the lack of health insurance coverage for youth who age out of foster care. According to stakeholders, youth have little understanding of how to access medical services or how to apply for continued medical coverage.

### **Item 23. Mental health of the child**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 45 (70 percent) of the 64 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 (1) mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and (2) appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 23</b>	<b>Allegheny County</b>	<b>Northumberland County</b>	<b>Philadelphia County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	6	8	18	32	<b>71</b>
Area Needing Improvement	5	4	4	13	<b>29</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>45</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	6	5	8	19	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	

This item was rated as a Strength in 82 percent of applicable Philadelphia County cases, 67 percent of applicable Northumberland County cases, and 55 percent of applicable Allegheny County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 75 percent (21 cases) of the 28 applicable foster care cases and 65 percent (11 cases) of the 17 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 32 cases 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 ANI in 13 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were not assessed or addressed (four in-home cases, three foster care cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but were not met, and in one of these cases services were provided but they were not appropriate to the child’s needs (two in-home cases, three foster care cases).
- Mental health needs were not assessed although required (one foster care case).

### Ratings Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. 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 required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in Pennsylvania’s 2002 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, there is no specific requirement for a standard mental health assessment for a child coming into foster care; however, requirements for mental health examination and treatment are covered by the same provisions that govern

physical health care and treatment. The agency is required to maintain medical records, including the identification of mental or emotional disabilities for each child. Regulations also require that information relating to a child's health status must be reviewed and updated each time a child in foster care changes placement. The most current information is given to the foster parents or foster care provider with whom the child is placed.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, QSR results indicate that 80 percent of the applicable cases were rated as a Strength on the assessment and provision of mental health services.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

According to stakeholders at the State level commenting on this time during the onsite CFPSR, all 67 counties in Pennsylvania have behavioral health managed care. Stakeholders in Allegheny County and Northumberland County reported wait lists for mental health services.

Stakeholders in Philadelphia County reported that all children who enter care are assessed by Community Behavior Health (CBH) to ensure all behavioral needs are met. CBH reports the findings to the court.

## SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the CFSR Final Report provides information regarding the State’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors examined during the CFSR. Information on the items included under each systemic factor comes from the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFSR. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. 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 (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.

**Rating the Systemic Factor**

<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>In Substantial Conformity</b>	
1	2	3	4
None of the CFSP or program requirements are 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.

It should be noted that ratings for the items included in each systemic factor are not based on single comments from an individual stakeholder; however, these comments are included in the report when they provide important insights or clarification on the State’s performance on a particular systemic factor.

If a State is not in substantial conformity with a particular systemic factor, then that factor must be addressed in the State’s PIP. For each systemic factor, information is provided about the State’s performance in its first CFSR as well as in the current 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.

#### IV. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

#### Status of Statewide Information System

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its PIP.

Specific findings for the item included in this systemic factor and the reason for the item rating are presented below.

**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**

       Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as ANI because 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, time consuming 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. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

#### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, at the State level, OCYF supports the child welfare program using multiple standalone systems that were put into place to comply with data reporting needs or program monitoring. Many of these systems initially were viewed as temporary solutions that would be replaced with a more comprehensive system.

Each county is required to maintain the capacity to determine the status, location, demographics, and goals of all children in foster care. CCYAs are required to establish and maintain a child placement registration index from which up-to-date information about

every child in placement can be readily obtained. CCYAs carry out these requirements through a variety of processes. Approximately 52 counties use the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Interim Solution to report to OCYF; the rest of the counties use a county-specific information system. To meet the Federal requirements for AFCARS data, Pennsylvania has a two-step approach to receive and process 67 county AFCARS text files. These individual county files are submitted from multiple systems, as described above. The county files are then merged into a State file using a process application that was written in 1996 and is no longer supported by the manufacturer. This two-step process is highly resource intensive since it requires manual intervention at various steps to ensure that a State file is submitted in a timely manner. Data quality can only be addressed with counties at the time of their file submission rather than at the time of data entry into a system.

OCYF is currently working in coordination with ACF and the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology on an action plan to address six major issues impacting the quality of Pennsylvania's data. OCYF identified short and intermediate term strategies; long term strategies will be dependent upon the outcome of a feasibility study and alternatives analysis for a statewide system.

The Statewide Assessment also identified other data systems used in the State, including ChildLine Millennium System (the central registry for all pending and investigated reports of child abuse); an ACCESS database to support Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) information; CY-28 (a semiautomated system that collects aggregate data on children and families involved with CCYAs reported from the counties on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet); the Pennsylvania Independent Living Outcomes Tracking System (PILOTS), which supports the IL program and tracks information on children participating in IL programs); and information needs for SWAN that are met through a contract.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that there is no statewide information system that captures the requisite information for this item. Instead, each county in the State maintains an individual database to capture demographics, placement information, and permanency-related data for children in the legal custody of the county. According to a stakeholder at the State level, OCYF staff is unable to obtain current child-specific information, particularly with regard to the current placement or current goal of a child without calling the legal county. They noted that this can create challenges in efforts to track outcomes and monitor county performance.

Additionally, stakeholders reported that obtaining historic information on a family that was previously served in another county is difficult and cumbersome. Case files and supporting documentation cannot be electronically transferred from county to county when a child moves to a new county. Case file and fiscal information must be downloaded, printed, and mailed to the new county agency, which causes delay. Philadelphia County and Northumberland County reported that the agency must rely on families to share any non-CPS history with another county, or caseworkers must initiate contact with the counties where families formerly resided to learn of any GPS involvement. According to a State-level stakeholder, collecting and synthesizing AFCARS data from the counties require

multiple steps, which often results in OCYF returning data to the counties for “clean-up” and then the data being returned to OCYF. In order for data to be sent to Washington for the November deadline, the data deadline is March.

According to stakeholders at the State level, in 2004, it became mandatory for all prospective and current resource parent information to be entered into the Resource Family Registry. In addition to capturing information pertaining to approvals of resource families, the system also captures data on CPS and GPS referrals received on resource families.

## V. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

### Status of Case Review System

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The State was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its PIP.

### Key Concerns From 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 CCYA private provider regulations (partially drafted but never completed) to require family involvement in case plan development. Pennsylvania 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, which 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. Specific findings for each item included in this systemic factor are presented below.

**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 parent(s) that includes the required provisions**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an ANI because information from the Statewide Assessment, stakeholder interviews, and case reviews indicates that case plans are not being consistently developed with input from parents. Item 18, which assesses parent and child involvement in case planning, was rated as a Strength in only 42 percent of the 59 applicable cases.

This item was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

- According to the Statewide Assessment, in 2007 private provider agencies, kinship caregivers, permanent legal custodians, and adoptive and foster parents were asked to comment on the State’s effectiveness in ensuring that children have a written case plan.
- Kinship caregivers rated the State as “very” or “usually effective” in ensuring that children have written case plans.
- The State was rated as “very effective” in case planning by 66 percent of foster parents and 61 percent of adoptive parents.
- The State was rated as “usually effective” or “very effective” in ensuring that children have written case plans by 84 percent of private provider caseworkers, 67 percent by their supervisors, and 60 percent by private provider administrators.
- Several private providers indicated that case planning is not a collaborative process but is treated by CCYA staff as “just another piece of paperwork.”
- Private providers reported involvement and collaboration in case planning varies across the counties.
- Private providers indicated that there continues to be issues with individualizing case plans for the families.

According to the Statewide Assessment, regional OCYF staff conduct licensing inspections of all CCYAs. The inspections process includes reviewing case files to ensure that expected goals are met, particularly with regard to case planning, delivery of services, and transition planning. In order to improve the involvement of families in case planning the State expanded the FGDM process. Additionally, according to the Statewide Assessment, many counties in Pennsylvania have developed an MDT process, which includes the parents, to develop case plans and to coordinate service delivery.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that case plans are being developed in a timely manner. Stakeholders had different opinions about the quality of the case plans, with some indicating that they are individualized for families and others reporting that case plans tend to be generic rather than individualized. Philadelphia County stakeholders suggested that caseworkers do not have a clear understanding of the case planning process.

Most stakeholders also expressed the opinion that parents are not routinely involved in developing the case plan. Some Allegheny County stakeholders reported that case plans are developed without parental input and presented to the family. They noted that FGDM is available in only two Regional Offices within the county and that participation is not mandatory. Many Philadelphia County stakeholders indicated that caseworkers frequently develop the case plan prior to meeting with the parents, but that parents are given the opportunity to provide input.

In contrast to these views concerning parent involvement in case planning, most stakeholders in Northumberland County said that in that county parents are routinely involved in case planning through FGDM initially and on an ongoing basis. Northumberland County stakeholders also reported that incarcerated parents are involved in case planning via the telephone. If a family does not participate in FGDM, they are invited to a meeting to develop the case plan.

### **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**

X Strength            \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength because information provided in the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that judicial reviews occur at least every 6 months. Additional data requested from the State show that, in 2007, more than 94 percent of children had a periodic review/permanency hearing within the previous 6 months. The judicial review satisfies the requirements for both the periodic review and the 12-month permanency hearing. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act mandates that a permanency hearing be held every 6 months. OCYF Regional Office staff review case records during the annual licensing inspections to ensure that hearings are held every 6 months. If hearings are not held as required by the statute, the county agency is cited for statutory noncompliance. Additionally, OCYF monitors case review data to ensure that hearings are held in a timely manner.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, 95 percent of CCYA supervisors and caseworkers surveyed in 2007 indicated that the State is very effective or usually effective in reviewing cases every 6 months.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the youth ambassadors indicated in their focus group that cases are reviewed every 6 months. In addition, focus groups were conducted by youth ambassadors for youth to gather information for the Statewide Assessment. These youth also noted that the court is willing to be flexible with their education schedules so that they may attend reviews. However, according to the youth, because their lawyers speak for them they do not always have the option to speak directly to the judge. According to the youth, this is problematic when they have had only a minute before court to speak with their attorney.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the three review sites commenting on this item during the Onsite Review indicated that all reviews are considered permanency hearings. The State mandated timeframe is a minimum of every 6 months. Stakeholders at the sites reported the following:

- In Northumberland County cases are reviewed through permanency hearings at a minimum of every 6 months.
- In Allegheny County cases are reviewed every 3 months unless the case is continued and then the case may only be reviewed every 6 months.
- In Philadelphia County cases are reviewed through the permanency hearing process every 5 months except for children free for adoption whose reviews occur every 3 months.

Stakeholders reported that each county has an internal review/prehearing conference prior to the actual permanency hearing. Stakeholders also indicated that the reviews/permanency hearings are generally substantive, effective, and assist in moving children to permanency.

It was reported that in a number of cases in one district in Allegheny County, decisions are reached prior to the review hearings with minimal input from case participants and the case is not actually heard by the court.

Stakeholders in Northumberland County reported that continuances were rare in that county. Philadelphia County stakeholders did not comment on continuances. Allegheny County stakeholders reported that they have a scheduling mechanism in place in the county that

ensures that certain types of cases are provided an adequate amount of time to be heard, and that this process keeps the number of continuances to a minimum.

**Item 27. The State 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 the State has a process in place to ensure that permanency hearings are held no later than 12 months from the child’s entry into foster care and every 12 months thereafter. State statute requires permanency hearings to be held every 6 months. The State provided data indicating that in 2007, over 94 percent of children who were in foster care had a periodic review/permanency hearing within the previous 6 months. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

Information presented in item 26 also is relevant to this item because the permanency hearing and the periodic review are treated as one.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, 98 percent of CCYA supervisors and caseworkers surveyed in 2007 indicated that the State is very effective or usually effective in conducting permanency hearings every 6 months. The respondents reported that the county agencies attempt to ensure timely permanency hearings, and when hearings are not conducted timely, it is usually due to factors beyond the agency’s control.

The Statewide Assessment reports that 21 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties have committed to working with the ABA Barriers to Permanency Project. This project works with CCYAs, the courts, and key stakeholders within the county to develop individualized plans that focus on a county’s specific barriers to achieving permanency. The project not only identifies barriers to the adoption process, but also focuses on the identification of permanency barriers to all children regardless of their court-ordered goal. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, 13 of the 21 counties completed the project and reported a reduction of the overall length of stay of children in foster care by 9.3 months.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at three review sites commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has placed emphasis on the timeliness of permanency by mandating that permanency hearings be held at a minimum of every 6 months. Stakeholders reported that hearings are timely.

Stakeholders in Allegheny County had differing opinions on the effectiveness of permanency hearings. Some stakeholders reported that permanency hearings move the case toward goal achievement but not enough to be really considered effective. Other stakeholders in Allegheny County reported that the permanency hearings are effective in moving the case forward. Stakeholders in Northumberland County and Philadelphia County reported that permanency hearings are generally effective in moving the case to permanency.

Stakeholders in the three review sites reported that while continuances do occur, they are infrequent. Allegheny stakeholders indicated that continuances are generally related to parents not receiving notification. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that delays in hearings occur due to heavy court dockets and limited court time for hearings.

Stakeholders at the State level commenting on this item reported that the ABA Barriers to Permanency Project has been effective in decreasing the time to achieving permanency in several jurisdictions of the State. These stakeholders reported that the average reduction of the overall length of stay of children in foster care was 9.3 months. According to the State-level stakeholders, the project has been completed in 12 counties and is active in 9 others. The project also will be conducted in other jurisdictions. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that the Barriers to Permanency Project was successful in improving the timeliness of permanency for children in Northumberland County.

**Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as an ANI. Stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding whether TPR is filed in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. The State provided requested data, but those data did not specify that TPR was filed in a timely manner or that compelling reasons were noted. In addition, findings from the onsite CFSR pertaining to TPR were as follows:

- At the time of the onsite CFSR, 28 of the 39 children in the foster care cases had been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. An additional case met ASFA requirements for filing TPR prior to 15 months under specified circumstances.
- ASFA requirements were not met in 8 (28 percent) of the 29 cases for which the requirements were applicable.

This item was rated as an ANI in the State's 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCYF monitors TPR filings during its annual licensing inspection of the counties. Additionally, OCYF tracks the filings of TPR through a State database but did not provide data pertaining to TPR in the Statewide Assessment.

The Statewide Assessment reports that SWAN offers the CCYA the LSI, which currently is funded in 14 counties through the SWAN prime contract. However, several other counties have joined the project by allocating funding through their Needs Based Plan and Budget (NBPB). The primary objective of the LSI is to shorten the length of stay for children in foster care with the goal of adoption by utilizing paralegals hired through the SWAN prime contractor to act as liaisons among the attorneys, caseworkers, and courts to bridge the gap between child welfare and legal practice. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, 66 percent of key stakeholders surveyed in 2007 indicated that LSI is very effective or usually effective.

The Statewide Assessment reports that, according to State data, LSI has resulted in a decrease in the length of stay for children in foster care with a goal of adoption by an average of 339 days. The decrease has been demonstrated in two areas:

- The average number of days from goal change to TPR has decreased by an average 157 days.
- The average number of days from TPR to adoption finalization has decreased by an average 182 days.

### **Stakeholder Interview**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the following opinions:

- Northumberland County and Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that, in general, CCYAs and the courts follow Federal guidelines with regard to filing for TPR in a timely manner, holding TPR hearings in a timely manner, and documenting compelling reasons when a TPR petition is not filed.
- Philadelphia County stakeholders said that some caseworkers will not file for TPR until an adoptive resource has been identified.
- Allegheny County stakeholders reported that an adoptive resource must be identified before a TPR petition can be filed.

According to stakeholders in the three counties reviewed, the most common documented compelling reason is children over the age of 12 who do not wish to be adopted. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that the reason children say they do not want to be adopted is not explored thoroughly nor is it discussed with the children in the future as case circumstances change.

Allegheny County stakeholders reported that TPR may be postponed in situations in which the child has special treatment needs and an adoptive home to meet those needs is not available. Examples provided by stakeholders included a child in a sexual offender program and a child who is stepping down from a residential treatment program who is not ready for foster care. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that the county will not file for TPR for poverty-related issues.

Additional delays in the TPR process, according to stakeholders in Philadelphia County, are due to the court allowing parents numerous opportunities to meet reunification goals with minimal success. According to the stakeholders, judges will continue with reunification planning, even when there are findings of “aggravated circumstances.” Stakeholders in Philadelphia County voiced frustration with the court for the length of time a child must wait for a finalized adoption.

According to stakeholders in Northumberland County, the TPR petition is filed within 2 to 3 months of the goal change to adoption. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that adoption is achieved within 12 to 15 months of the TPR hearing. Allegheny County stakeholders reported that a delay in the adoption process is due to the difficulty in locating permanent homes for older children.

**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**

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as a Strength because there is a process in place for foster parents, relatives, and pre-adoptive parents to be notified of and have an opportunity to be heard in hearings. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Pennsylvania law follows the Federal mandate to provide foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers with notice of meetings and court proceedings and of their right to be heard at all meetings and court proceedings involving the child placed in their home for foster care services. The required notices are sent either by the court, and/or CCYA, or JPO.

As casework files are being examined during the annual licensing inspection, the Regional Office staff members check to see if children, youth, family members, and caregivers are appropriately notified and involved in hearings and permanency reviews. The CCYA is required to submit a plan of correction to address all areas of noncompliance. TA and training are available if agencies are not in compliance with Federal and State mandates.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that relatives, foster parents, and pre-adoptive parents are receiving notification of reviews and permanency hearings on a consistent basis. The method of notification is generally through a written notice from the agency in Allegheny County and Philadelphia County and from the court in Northumberland County.

Stakeholders in Allegheny County reported that foster parents are provided an opportunity to speak in court. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that foster parents testify in TPR and permanency hearings and indicated that there is an expectation that foster parents attend court hearings. Stakeholders in Philadelphia County reported that although caregivers receive notification of hearings, some caregivers have been told they do not need to attend the hearings. These stakeholders also reported that when caregivers attend

hearings, their input is not sought or, when given, is not used to make the best decision for the child. Stakeholders indicated that when caregivers do not attend the hearings, the caseworker will usually inform them of the outcome.

## VI. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

### Status of Quality Assurance System

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance (QA) System. The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its PIP. Specific findings for each item included in this systemic factor and the reasons for item ratings are presented below.

#### **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 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided with quality services to address their needs. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Pennsylvania has a statewide licensing system that evaluates all 67 CCYAs, private service providers, and child care facilities for compliance with State and Federal law, regulations, and policy. When county and private agencies are not in compliance, regional staff conduct case reviews and interviews with stakeholders to identify Strengths and ANIs. Additionally, this process may occur as a result of a complaint or a child fatality.

The Statewide Assessment reports that to improve the quality of services to children receiving placement services, OCYF, the CCYA, and private providers use a web-based system to process certain incidents including, but not limited to, child fatalities, serious injuries,

violation of a child’s rights, hospitalizations, children who run away, and suicide attempts. The web-based system directly transmits the required notification to all necessary parties.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that there are clear standards to ensure that children in foster care receive quality services that protect their safety and health. Allegheny County stakeholders, for example, reported that the Contract Monitoring Department in that county ensures that safety is maintained by conducting QA checks on each provider. The physical site is checked, records are reviewed, and children and staff are interviewed to ensure that regulations are met. Allegheny County stakeholders also noted that foster care providers are required to have, at a minimum, monthly face-to-face contact with the children they serve. Agency caseworkers also must see the children twice a month. Finally, kinship homes and agency foster homes are trained and certified/licensed by the agency and monitored monthly by the agency by in-home visits.

Northumberland County stakeholders also reported that monthly visits must be made to ensure that children in foster care receive quality services. Additionally, when an incident involving a foster child occurs in a facility or foster home (accidental or otherwise), an incident management report is completed. These reports are reviewed and a corrective action plan developed, if needed.

According to stakeholders in Philadelphia County, there are extensive performance standards for providers based on the level of service. There is an annual evaluation to ensure the provider is conforming to standards. If there is a deficit in performance, the provider will receive additional monitoring and frequent reevaluations. Additionally, complaints on providers are thoroughly investigated. The agency conducts consumer satisfaction surveys for each provider agency. The surveys are reviewed with the providers on a monthly basis.

**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 implemented**

  X   Strength                   Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength because the State has a number of processes in place to monitor the quality of services and to identify the child welfare system’s strengths and needs. The processes include:

- The QSR
- The annual licensing review of each CCYA
- The NBPB process

- The Practice Standards
- Individual CCYA QA systems

This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Pennsylvania's QSR is similar to the Federal CFSR and provides a way to assess the quality of casework practice and to help improve outcomes for children, youth, and families by identifying the strengths and needs within each CCYA. Every county participated in a QSR between October 2003 and May 2007. During the QSR process 632 (298 substitute care cases, 47 shared case management cases, and 287 in-home cases) randomly selected cases from the 67 CCYAs were reviewed. Reviewers responded to a series of questions about the case for each of the 23 Federal CFSR items. Additionally, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders for each case reviewed. OCYF has developed training and transfer of learning (TOL) services to address identified statewide outcomes, including family and youth engagement, safety assessment, and permanency/concurrent planning.

As a result of the QSR, many CCYAs implemented practice improvement initiatives based on the results of their reviews, including permanency planning, systems integration, and family and youth engagement work. Also, many CCYAs implemented their own QA processes, including the standard use of the QSR tool to review cases and the creation of a QA staff position or unit.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in August 2007, 51 CCYA administrators responded to a web-enabled survey. Of the 51 respondents, 45 percent rated the State's QA system as sometimes effective. Additionally, many reported that they believe that the QSR process is an effective means to assure quality.

During September 2007, 30 CCYA administrators responded to a web-enabled survey that was administered to further quantify QA efforts since the 2002 CFSR. According to the Statewide Assessment, respondents indicated the following:

- 82 percent of the respondents did not have a QA process or staff prior to 2002.
- 74 percent of respondents based their QA processes on the Federal outcomes.
- 66 percent of respondents have implemented or changed practice initiatives and standards of services as a result of the CCYA QSR.
- 80 percent of respondents have changed or implemented policies as a result of the CCYA QSR.
- 50 percent of respondents indicated they have made changes based on feedback from consumers.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that the State has numerous QA processes in place to monitor the quality of services and the strengths and needs of the system. Stakeholders' descriptions of the QSR process are consistent with the information provided in the Statewide Assessment. Stakeholders suggested that the QSR process has resulted in changes in the training curriculum and increases in FGDM, concurrent planning, and TOL.

According to State-level stakeholders, the CWTP has increased the number of practice improvement staff members to help counties implement and sustain organizational change. The staff assist the county in completing an organizational needs assessment to gauge readiness for change. Upon completion of the assessment, a plan is developed. Ongoing assistance and assessment are provided to CCYAs by the practice improvement staff.

Stakeholders at the State level also discussed the Quality Improvement Committee (QIC), whose members are relevant stakeholders from across the State. The QIC looks at QA issues and practice standards. Additionally, stakeholders at the State level reported that the State identifies ANIs in each county and the NBPB process requires CCYAs to focus on these areas.

In addition to State-level QA processes, many counties have created their own QA units. Allegheny County stakeholders reported that Case Practice Specialists evaluate permanency issues and ensure that staff follow casework standards. These stakeholders noted that quarterly record audits and random record reviews are held in the county. Furthermore, the Case Practice Specialist investigates the validity of complaints made against caseworkers and the agency.

Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that the county has its own QA staff who conduct internal QSRs. These stakeholders also reported the use of COGNOS, a web-based tool that allows management to access data that are beneficial to their service area. Additionally, the Youth Roundtable meets with the Philadelphia CCYA commissioner on a quarterly basis to share concerns.

Philadelphia County stakeholders indicated, however, that at the time of the Onsite Review, the county contracts all in-home services through SCOH and that more clarification and accountability are needed on the roles and responsibilities of the DHS caseworker and supervisor relative to overseeing these cases. Also, stakeholders in Philadelphia County expressed the opinion that the provision and quality of the services provided by SCOH are not sufficiently evaluated. Stakeholders indicated, however, that enhanced monitoring of provider agencies is in the process of being implemented.

#### IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

#### Status of Staff and Provider Training

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

Specific findings for each item included in this systemic 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 Pennsylvania has in place a comprehensive staff development and training program that requires new caseworkers to complete 120 hours of competency-based training and that adequately prepares them for their jobs. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

#### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CWTP, which is a collaborative effort among DPW, the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Social Work, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) Association, trains caseworkers, supervisors, administrators, and foster parents in providing social services. The training is a competency-based training and certification program.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the core 120-hour curriculum for caseworkers, called Charting the Course (CTC), is offered throughout the State and usually is completed 8 months after attending the first training but must be completed within 18 months of being hired. According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers may be assigned a caseload during the training process.

During the State FY 2006/2007, 224 caseworkers completed CTC and were certified. An additional 111 caseworkers completed CTC through the Philadelphia DHS. CWTP tracks all participants who attend training through an automated database. Additionally, 48 supervisors completed the Supervisory Series and were certified.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, survey results indicate that 76 percent of CCYA administrators and 64 percent of caseworkers said that CTC was usually or very effective.

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCYF collaborates with the university system to provide child welfare-focused educational opportunities for prospective and current staff in CCYAs. The CWEB program focuses on the recruitment of new workers among students attending 1 of the 14 State universities. Students in their senior year enroll and complete child welfare coursework and field work in a public child welfare agency. Students complete civil service applications and enroll in competency-based training to prepare for immediate employment with a CCYA upon graduation. Students have a legally binding agreement to work a minimum of 1 year in public child welfare. The Statewide Assessment reports that 455 CWEB graduates have been employed by CCYAs in 97 percent of the counties.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

According to stakeholders at the State level commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR, the State has made a big investment in training new caseworkers. The State has made a shift from knowledge-based to skills-based training with a focus on TOL. State-level stakeholders also reported that the CWTP is focusing on engaging supervisors in the training of new caseworkers. Stakeholder descriptions of training requirements were consistent with Statewide Assessment information. Most stakeholder reported that the new caseworker training is adequate to prepare caseworkers to carry out the responsibilities of their jobs.

Stakeholders in Allegheny County and Philadelphia County reported that the training departments in their counties supplement the State training with additional training topics. Northumberland County and Philadelphia County stakeholders, however, reported that although CTC is offered across the State, caseworkers often have to wait several months to begin training. According to stakeholders at the State level and in Northumberland County, caseworkers frequently have a caseload during training. However, stakeholders in Allegheny County and Philadelphia County noted that generally caseworkers are not given cases during training and that the caseload increases over time.

Stakeholders indicated that when caseworkers complete training, the trainer sends a completion certificate to the CCYA. The CCYA makes the certification decision based on the new caseworker's demonstration of skills. Stakeholders at the State level reported that all training is tracked through the training computer system, Encompass.

Stakeholders at the State level indicated that the CWEB and CWEL programs, which are presented in item 33, have been successful in recruiting and maintaining staff. Studies of these programs, according to stakeholders at the State level, indicate that 75 percent of

staff who participated in these programs remain employed with CCYAs/OCYF for at least 5 years after their commitment ends. These programs have required that the social work programs in the State's universities and colleges improve and expand the child welfare curriculum. The CWTP is collaborating with the social work programs to teach FGDM and other best practices as part of their child welfare curriculum.

According to stakeholders at the three review sites and the State level, supervisor training is mandated through the CWTP for new supervisors. According to stakeholders in Allegheny County, the supervisor training focuses on general management issues and not on managing in social services. Stakeholders at the State level indicated that there needs to be more focus on training supervisors in order to establish the supervisor as the child welfare expert at the local level. Stakeholders at the State level also reported that supervisor training is beneficial to new supervisors as it helps develop valuable resources and skills and assists in establishing strong connections with peers. Allegheny County stakeholders reported that supervisors sometimes have to wait to participate in supervisor training because it is only offered once a quarter. In addition to the mandated supervisor training, Northumberland County stakeholders reported that supervisors must complete the same training as direct delivery staff.

**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**

  X   Strength      \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania provides a comprehensive, mandatory ongoing training program for staff. In addition there are a variety of staff development opportunities that are available to staff. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CWTP utilizes the Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) tool to assess staff training needs. In consultation with the supervisor, each staff member completes an ITNA every 3 years, and the ITNA is used to develop an Individual Training Plan (ITP). CWTP enters the ITNA and ITP data into Encompass, a database that is used to develop training workshops and recruit trainers with appropriate training experience and background.

The CWTP also developed an Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA) to align individual training needs with agency outcomes and develop training, TOL, and TA plans that support specific agency outcomes. ONAs are developed with consideration to outcomes addressed in each county's NBPB. This process has enabled the expansion of TOL and practice improvement services and providers.

The CWTP expanded to include an Organizational Effectiveness (OE) Department. It provides TA in the areas of family engagement, youth engagement, IL, systems of care (SOCs), FGDM, case weight system, OE, integrated children service planning, and risk/safety

assessment. The OE Department was designed to meet the needs of the counties by providing intensive, onsite TA regarding promising approaches and best practice standards. More than 2,500 hours of OE support have been provided to counties since 2005. Additionally, 65 of the 67 counties have received TA from CWTP.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the CWTP developed TOL services to provide workers with opportunities to participate in certain activities before, during, and after trainings to help them better apply knowledge and skills to their work. Kinship care, visitation, and engaging fathers were three specific practice areas identified in the 2001 CFSR as needing improvement. In response to these needs, the CWTP created TOL packages. The packages involve a 6-month process of training and TA. Practice Improvement Specialists make agency visits and meet with caseworkers and supervisors to discuss the progress and/or barriers to the application of new knowledge and skills. Additionally, throughout the 6 months, support is provided to supervisors in the areas of coaching, mentoring, modeling, and supervision. Self-assessments that measure the level of transfer are completed intermittently by participants during this process. Supervisors also complete intermittent assessments on the caseworkers.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Leadership Academy, a collaborative effort among PCYA, OCYF, and the CWTP, offers high quality management and leadership training. The Academy provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences and includes quarterly training, an annual administrator conference, and an Administrator's Resource Handbook. The Academy serves new and experienced administrators and their management teams. Participants receive a certification after completing the 27 hours of required curriculum. One hundred and eighty management team members have attended training through the Leadership Academy.

The CWEL program, according to the Statewide Assessment, provides an opportunity for public child welfare employees who are providing, supervising, or administering services to title IV-E eligible clients to advance their skills through professional education. Employees may attend 1 of the 10 accredited graduate schools of social work either full-time or part-time. Employees commit to return to or remain at a CCYA for a period of time equal to the period for which they received financial support. The CWEL program has a loss rate of less than 3 percent per year for the life of the program.

The Statewide Assessment notes that youth have expressed the opinion that additional training is needed for some caseworkers in effective communication with youth about the case planning and the court process. According to youth, this might help youth and professionals communicate better and result in better outcomes.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

According to State level stakeholders responding to this item during the Onsite Review, OE is integrated into the training program. The CWTP has expanded practice improvement staff to assist counties in completing an organizational needs assessment to help gauge the needs of CCYA staff and the readiness for change. The CWTP staff will then assist counties in implementing changes and

sustaining organizational changes. The CWTP staff provides TA and TOL services. The CWTP has many TOL packages that include training and TA on various topics, including visitation, case planning with adolescents, and concurrent planning. In addition to the organizational needs assessment, the State also utilizes QSR results to determine what TOL is needed in a CCYA.

Stakeholders at the State level reported that an ITNA is completed for each staff member every 3 years, and based on the ITNA, an ITP is developed. Additionally, stakeholders in Philadelphia County reported that the training needs of staff are assessed by training evaluations and by the needs identified by the organizational needs assessment.

Most stakeholders said that CCYA staff are required to attend 20 hours of ongoing training a year. They noted that ongoing training is available through the CWTP, the local community, CCYAs, and private providers.

Stakeholders in Allegheny and Northumberland Counties reported that ongoing training and the time to attend the training is available. Allegheny County stakeholders reported that there are numerous internal and external resources that offer training to meet the staff's needs, but all training must be approved by the county's Training Department. Additionally, these stakeholders reported that when there is a new policy or a new program the Training Department develops new training to introduce the policy or program to CCYA staff.

Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that caseworkers cannot participate in training that would enhance their skills because of the State-mandated training. Additionally, these stakeholders reported that work commitments frequently interfere with training opportunities.

Stakeholders at the State level indicated that the Leadership Academy focuses on high-level management issues including the use of data. According to stakeholders at the State level, more than 700 students have graduated from the CWEL program since it began in 1995. At the time of the Onsite Review, according to State-level stakeholders, about 10 percent of CWEL graduates are county administrators

**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**

  X   Strength      \_\_\_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania provides mandated pre-service and ongoing training for current and prospective foster and adoptive parents and staff of State-licensed or approved child care facilities. This item was rated as a Strength in Pennsylvania's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CCYA set standards that meet or exceed regulatory requirements for staff qualifications, in-service training, and continuing education requirements to effectively perform title IV-E program functions. Private and public agencies are licensed by OCYF and comply with the State and program-specific regulations and practice standards.

The Statewide Assessment reports that private agencies and CCYAs develop and conduct much of the foster parent training. The CWTP supplements this training by providing 10 days of foster parent training per region each year and an additional 10 days of training for Philadelphia County. Many agencies exceed the 6-hour minimum requirement before certifying foster families. SWAN set a guideline in 2003 of at least 24 hours of training for all resource families requesting a family profile.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that youth participating in the assessment process reported that there is inconsistency with regard to the rules and regulations that govern youth behavior among providers and foster parents across the State. According to the youth, they sometimes find very different rules in different placements, and when they are moved a lot this becomes difficult. The youth suggest that there be continued efforts to provide consistent, coordinated training among providers, foster parents, and staff and that the State provides standardized initial foster parent training statewide.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the State level commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that foster, adoptive, and relative foster parent training requirements depend on the CCYA and on the provider agency. Allegheny County provides a 6-week modified Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) curriculum. In addition to MAPP, prospective foster parents are required to complete CPR and universal precautions classes. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that 12 to 15 hours of pre-service training is required for all prospective foster parents; however, stakeholders indicated that CPR and first aid were not required but needed. Additional pre-service training is required for foster parents who wish to mentor biological parents in Northumberland County. Philadelphia County requires 12 to 24 hours of pre-service training. Stakeholders in the three review sites reported that training requirements also apply to kinship families. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that children may be placed in kinship families prior to training; however, the training must be completed within 60 days.

According to stakeholders, all resource families are required by the State to obtain at least 6 hours of ongoing training a year; however, stakeholders across the review sites indicated that the CCYA generally requires more ongoing training. Allegheny County stakeholders reported that foster parents are required to obtain 15 hours of ongoing training a year. However, long-standing foster parents in Allegheny County are only required to obtain 9 hours of ongoing training a year. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that 15 to 20 hours of ongoing training is required annually, and Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that 24 to 26 hours of ongoing training is required. Stakeholders at the State level and the three review sites indicated that ongoing training is readily available through the community, CCYA, and annual SWAN conferences.

Stakeholders at the State level and in Philadelphia County indicated that the quality of pre-service training for foster parents could be improved.

**V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

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

**Status of Service Array and Resource Development**

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

**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**

  X   Strength      \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania has a wide array of services that assess the needs of families and provide appropriate services to meet those needs.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State’s strength is in the partnerships built among State, county, and private providers. Stakeholders reported that there has been an increase across the State of services available to maintain children safely in their homes. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the following services are available statewide.

- Child preparation for permanency
- Post-permanency services
- IL services for youth who are discharged from care up to age 21

- Functional family therapy
- Multidimensional treatment foster care
- Multi-systemic therapy
- Services provided by SWAN
- Autism services

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that Pennsylvania has an array of services available to assist families. They identified the following services available across the State:

- Mental health services: although Northumberland County and Philadelphia County stakeholders reported wait lists for services
- IL services: although the perception of the quality of the services varied depending on location
- Medical services
- Numerous services for in-home cases
- Parenting skills classes
- Adoption subsidies: although the amount of the subsidy depends on the negotiation with individual counties
- SWAN

In spite of the availability of services, many stakeholders reported that the lack of service providers, particularly dentists, is a continuing problem. According to several stakeholders, it is difficult to access dental services for children who are on Medicaid. As a result, the State began Operation Smile to recruit new dentists and to encourage dentists to provide services to children on Medicaid. Stakeholders reported that although the recruitment of new dentist was less than expected, many people received dental services as a result of Operation Smile. Additional incentives to attract dental providers included increased compensation and a disease management program in which dentists receive an additional payment for conducting a full dental exam and services on a new patient. If the patient returns to this dentist, the dentist receives a bonus. Also, the State has a program in place to increase payment to the dentist for more complicated dental services.

Stakeholders at the State level reported that the State is investing in evidence-based services and demanding more community-based service from providers. As a result of the evidence-based services funding, providers are coming forward to offer the needed services. Additionally, the State is looking at adding more specialized evidence-based practices that decrease safety issues in out-of-home care. The State, according to State-level stakeholders, is implementing programs at the local level such as multisystemic therapy, functional family therapy, and multidimensional foster care. These stakeholders noted that the counties want to implement these programs and will receive funding to do so. The State, according to State-level stakeholders, also is providing families with funds for housing when the lack of housing is preventing a reunification or preventing a successful transition for youth aging out of foster care.

According to stakeholders at the State level, the child welfare funding system is more flexible now than it was in past years. The State, according to State level stakeholders, hopes to use the Integrated Children's Services Plan (ICSP) to access more funding.

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

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an ANI because although there is a wide range of services across the State, there are challenges to ensuring that all areas of the State have access to the full array. Additionally, barriers such as transportation hinder accessibility in some areas. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, there is a lack of meaningful data that measure the effectiveness of many services. Focus groups interviewed as part of the Statewide Assessment process indicated that there is a need for more mental health services. Also reported was a shortage of child psychiatrist, counseling/therapeutic care for sex offenders/victims, counseling for couples, and domestic violence services. Additionally, there is a lack of resources for children with high-level special needs. Also, transportation is a challenge for agencies and families in rural areas of the State and affects the ability of families to access services.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the availability of services is reviewed each year during the annual licensing inspection through the case record review. Each county must identify in the annual plan how it will arrange for any needed service that is not provided in the county. Through the NBPB process, counties assess and identify service needs specific to the families and children in their community, outline strategies to institute those services, and develop a supporting budget. The title IV-B plan provides the overall framework for counties to respond to service needs and the NBPB accomplishes the tasks.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Family Centers (FCs) provide a variety of locally determined programs and services to families and children in 65 service sites across 29 counties. Services are provided in ways that are accessible for families, including direct contacts at the centers and home visitation. The main focus is providing early childhood education services and support to parents and young children. Examples of other optional services and programs offered are the following:

- Child support services
- Parent/family support
- Health services
- Mental health services
- Adult self-sufficiency services

- Services for fathers
- Emergency services

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

State-level stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that it is very difficult to achieve a continuum of care in the rural areas of the State. According to State-level stakeholders, the State has established the Continuum of Care Committee to assess the State's needs. The State is investing in evidence-based services and is asking the providers for community-based services. Additionally, the annual NBPB assesses the needs and gaps in services for each county. In addition, many State-level and county-level stakeholders reported that the ability to access services in a timely manner is an issue in both urban and rural areas.

Stakeholders identified the following services as having limited availability and accessibility:

- Dental providers who accept Medicaid
- Placement resources for older children; children with specific emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs; and teen mothers
- Services for sexual offenders of all ages and victims of sexual abuse
- Child psychiatrists
- Transportation for families to improve access to services
- Services to assist youth in transitioning from foster care to independent living, including a transitional living program
- Substance abuse treatment for all ages, including treatment programs for mothers
- Services for adolescent girls, particularly those involved with JPO
- Subsidized day care services
- Culturally sensitive and responsive services needed by a growing Hispanic population (Northumberland County)
- Prevention services
- Support services after reunification

Various stakeholders indicated the following with regard to services in their local areas:

- State-level and Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that 29 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties have FCs that provide an abundance of services to the community, including parenting skills, fatherhood initiative programs, prevention services, and child development classes.
- Stakeholders in Allegheny County reported a strong faith-based community that provides services to the community.
- Northumberland County stakeholders indicated that the Child Advocacy Center in Northumberland County is a great resource for families. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that Health Management Services in Philadelphia County ensures that children in out-of-home placements receive needed medical treatment. Stakeholders reported that this service has increased communication between CCYAs and the medical community.

- Philadelphia County CCYA/DHS has two nurses who go on visits with caseworkers and assess the child’s situation.
- The Philadelphia Children’s Alliance provides an MDT of forensic interviewers, law enforcement, and DHS caseworkers to interview children who have allegedly been sexually abused. This was described by stakeholders as an important resource in the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse.

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

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as a Strength because the State has processes in place, such as FGDM and SOC, to facilitate individualization of services to children and families. In addition, the State has flexible funds available to assist local counties in meeting the unique needs of children and families. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

The following practices were indicated in the Statewide Assessment as promoting individualization of services to meet the unique needs of children and families:

- FGDM engages the family in case planning and service delivery.
- The partnership between SWAN and IL services has led to an increase in services for older youth in foster care.
- FCs provide a variety of locally determined programs and services to families and children. Services are provided in ways that are accessible for families, including direct contacts at the centers and home visitation.

The State has also established several evidence-based programs that have been implemented to improve service delivery to families and to collect comprehensive data for the county and the State to use to monitor the effectiveness of the services. CCYAs are using these initiatives to improve the success rate of reunifications and are working in conjunction with the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (OMHSA).

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the three review sites commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is effective in individualizing and tailoring services to the individual circumstances of the family. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that the county is effective in tailoring services to the individual circumstances of the family. They noted that the SOC program operating in the county focuses on individualizing services. An e-mail is distributed via the SOC listserv regarding a family’s needs and the need for resources and the resources are generally found to meet the need. If five or more families are identified with the same need, the FC in the county will develop a community group to address the need. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that in that county, no service is perceived as impossible if it is needed by a family.

Stakeholders in Allegheny County also indicated that the county is effective in meeting individualized family needs. They reported that the SOC program in their area helps facilitate the development of the case plan and provides mentoring services to families.

Stakeholders at the State level reported that funding to meet the needs of child welfare clients is more flexible now than it was in the past. Allegheny County stakeholders indicated that funding allows for tailoring services to meet the needs of the individual families. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that DHS allocates many resources to access concrete services to families for things such as home improvements and utility assistance. Some Philadelphia County stakeholders suggested that too many of Philadelphia County’s CCYA/DHS resources are oriented toward antipoverty efforts rather than addressing child welfare issues. Philadelphia County stakeholders also indicated that flexible funding is available but the funds are quickly exhausted. However, stakeholders in Philadelphia County also indicated that if there is a special need, the agency can generally provide the funding. For example, if a child needs to be enrolled in a club or activity or if the family is in need of a handicap ramp, the funding is available. Additionally, Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that emergency funding is available if the need warrants it.

**VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY**

<b>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</b>				
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>Substantial Conformity</b>	
	1	2	3	<b>4X</b>

**Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

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

Specific findings for each item included in this systemic factor and the reasons for item ratings 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 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. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services (PCCYFS), Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA), and the Juvenile Detention Center Association of Pennsylvania (JDCAP) represent several hundred private provider agencies delivering child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, and community support services. Additionally, PCYA represents the 67 CCYAs and is affiliated with the Pennsylvania County Commissioners' Association. These associations, according to the Statewide Assessment, are routinely engaged with DPW in the planning and development of regulation, policy, and practice standards, as well as implementation of the CFSP. Input for the CFSP also is regularly obtained through reports to DPW from the ABA, CWTP, LSI, and SWAN. These entities work in partnership with DPW, CCYA, and private providers in efforts to improve practice. The State's Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) serves as the CFSP advisory committee.

According to the youth ambassadors involved in the Statewide Assessment process, youth are involved in advocating for positive change in the child welfare system. The youth have made numerous presentations to lawyers, judges, caseworkers, and other youth at the State, region, and county levels in an attempt to facilitate change.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

According to stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR, there are approximately 40 contributing "authors" to the CFSP. These include PCYA and QIC members. Stakeholders at the State level reported that parents do not have input into the title IV-B process, but the State has conducted outreach to parents to get them more involved. Stakeholders indicated that job constraints and child care issues have prevented parents from participating. The State plans to continue to seek parental input and also plans to have a youth representative participate in planning for the CFSP.

According to stakeholders at the State level, the Deputy Secretary of DHS meets quarterly with county administrators on the continuum of care to develop services that match children's needs. It also was reported by State-level stakeholders that there is a close working relationship with the Departments of Mental Health, Medical Assistance, and Income Maintenance. Additionally, there is a meeting at the Secretary level with DOE every 2 weeks.

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

**Strength**       **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 39 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania utilizes community stakeholders in evaluating services and in developing the annual reports of the State's progress in child welfare.

This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State does not have a formal advisory committee. However, the PCCYFS, PCPA, JDCAP, and PCYA are routinely engaged with DPW in the planning and development of regulation, policy, and practice standards. Additionally, input into agency planning and performance is regularly obtained through reports to DPW from the ABA, CWTP, LSI, and SWAN. These entities work in partnership with DPW, CCYA, and private providers in efforts to improve practice.

#### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

According to stakeholders at the State level, PCYA and QIC members are involved in the development of the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR).

#### **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**

  X   Strength      \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because the DPW and CCYA have worked diligently to build partnerships with other Federal or Federally-assisted programs to coordinate services that serve children and families throughout the State. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State's strength is in the partnerships built among State, county, and private providers. Stakeholders participating in the Statewide Assessment focus groups reported strong relationships with service providers including: increased collaboration, implementation of in-home meetings with private providers to discuss mental health and mental retardation and drug and alcohol issues, receipt of progress and evaluation reports in a timely manner from providers, and an increase in the quality of services provided.

DPW, according to the Statewide Assessment, coordinates services through the ICSP with the DOE, Department of Health (DOH), and JPO, as well as numerous other private and State providers. The ICSP has a management team and a 75-member advisory committee. The purpose of the committee is to provide input and recommendations from stakeholders to assist in the development, implementation, and maintenance of service integration. The committee also assists counties with integration of their children's

services at the local level. Family and youth representatives, county staff from all child serving systems, private provider representatives, staff from DOE and DOH, PCYA, PCPA, PCCYFS representatives, juvenile and family court judges, JPO, and other stakeholders provide ongoing feedback on policy development and implementation. A subcommittee of family and youth is involved in assessing progress and planning for the future.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Pennsylvania began the Integrated Children's Services Initiative (ICSI) in 2004 in order to have all child serving systems/agencies collaborate to meet the behavioral and physical health needs of children, enhance access to services funded by DPW, increase accountability of child protecting systems, and maximize the use of Federal funding for eligible services. DPW worked with counties and providers to identify behavioral health treatment services eligible for Medical Assistance funding.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that Pennsylvania Families Incorporated (PFI) is a statewide organization of diverse groups that is partnering with DPW to ensure that direct and meaningful family involvement is developed, organized, and actively supported at all times. The group's purpose is to be the voice for diverse families whose children have emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs and are involved in any child serving system. PFI tracks family support groups in each county and is uniquely positioned to help ensure meaningful family involvement.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that OCYF/CCYA has a strong collaboration with key stakeholders. Stakeholders indicated that CCYA has a positive collaborative relationship with mental health, medical assistance, and Head Start. Stakeholders at the State level reported that the DPW, mental health, public health, and early childhood services collaborate through the ICSI to meet the needs of children and families served by the agencies.

According to stakeholders at the State level, there is a Children's Commission and a Children's Cabinet established by the Governor. The Children's Commission is composed of stakeholders from five regions and includes advocates, providers, and legal groups. The Children's Cabinet consists of the Secretaries of all major systems that touch children, including DPW and DOE, plus budget, natural resources, and policy. The Cabinet focuses on different issues that relate to children, including early maternity care, maternal depression, children with special needs, and education.

Stakeholders in Northumberland County reported that the SOC provides a vehicle for coordinated and collaborative efforts to serve families. The SOC is comprehensive in its membership, including not only traditional child welfare serving agencies but nontraditional agencies, such as adult probation and aging services.

According to stakeholders in Allegheny County, integrated behavioral health, aging, prevention programs, developmental disabilities, community services, early intervention, and child welfare are consolidated under DHS. Stakeholders in Allegheny County expressed the opinion that the consolidation of the agencies allows for better collaboration of services. Additionally, the agency collaborates with external stakeholders such as Court Appointed Special Advocates, court personnel, and parent advocates at monthly collaboration meetings.

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

<b>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</b>				
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>Substantial Conformity</b>	
	1	2	3X	4

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

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

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

  X   Strength      \_\_\_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania has in place a set of comprehensive standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are routinely monitored for compliance. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, since the 2002 CFSR, the State amended its laws to ensure that standards for approving resource families were strengthened and standardized. In 2004, the State established the Resource Family Registry (RFR), which is a computerized database listing all foster, adoptive, and kinship families that have had home studies conducted to provide care to foster children. All families, approved or rejected, must be registered. The RFR also acts as a matching tool, helping to generate computerized matching between approved adoptive families and children waiting for adoption.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the RFR performs the following functions:

- Cross-references new information with existing registry information about families
- Requires submission of criminal and child abuse clearances every 2 years for all household members age 18 and older
- Requires applicants to submit detailed information about their financial and family histories, including protection from abuse orders, divorce and custody proceedings, and any substance abuse or mental health issues
- Requires foster parents to report information changes or changes in household composition to the approving agency within 48 hours of the change

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Kinship Care Program and emergency caregivers also must meet all approval requirements. Additionally, State regulations apply to both public and private agency providers and are applicable to all child care facilities that serve delinquent and dependent youth.

The results of a survey conducted as part of the CFSR preparation indicated that about 80 percent of respondents (caseworkers, supervisors, and public and private sector administrators; kinship, PLC, foster, and adoptive families) reported that the State was “very” or “usually” effective in implementing standards for resource families. However, the respondents were consistent in the belief that the increased clearance requirements for foster and adoptive families are intrusive and may have a negative impact on attracting potential parents.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the three review sites and at the State level commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that the State has consistent, thorough licensing standards for all foster homes. The standards set by the State are the foundation by which the counties and the private agencies set their standards. State standards for background checks, criminal history, and financial history are reported to be very detailed. Stakeholders did not comment on the licensing of group homes, child care institutions, or child placing agencies.

### **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 Pennsylvania uniformly applies the standards for foster family homes and child care institutions. The State has an annual licensing process for foster home and facilities that ensures compliance. In addition, during the last title IV-E Eligibility Reviews conducted in 2007, there was only one question about a license. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, in 2007, OCYF adopted the licensing protocol for managing agencies in situations in which a provisional license is warranted. This protocol, according to the Statewide Assessment, has strengthened the licensing process by establishing consistent procedures that are implemented statewide in a standardized fashion. The Statewide Assessment reports that as a result of the protocol, standards are applied equitably across the four regions.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that State licensing standards generally are applied equally by CCYAs and by the private providers.

**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**

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength because 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. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, all prospective foster parents and adoptive parents are required to provide fingerprints for a nationwide FBI background check. OCYF also requires extensive criminal and child abuse checks on other adults residing in the resource home. Effective May 28, 2006, all household members age 14 and older are required to obtain criminal and child abuse clearances prior to an initial approval of a resource home.

According to the youth participating in the development of the Statewide Assessment, youth who are able to speak with their caseworkers privately and discuss issues in meetings separate from their caregivers report a much higher satisfaction in their safety and well-being needs being met.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that CCYAs require criminal background clearances for all licensed foster homes. According to Philadelphia County stakeholders, relatives also must pass a criminal

background check prior to child placement in their homes. Northumberland County stakeholders reported that criminal background checks are completed on everyone in the home over the age of 14 every 2 years.

**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        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as an ANI because, 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, SWAN, according to the focus groups, 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.

This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to focus groups interviewed for the Statewide Assessment, recruitment efforts are difficult because there is no statewide initiative for family recruitment. SWAN, according to the focus groups, is doing a good job but is underfunded. Money for training and per diem is limited. Inadequate training, according to the Statewide Assessment, finds many families unprepared for the nature of the work. Consequently, a high turnover rate of foster parents exists. A lack of cultural and ethnic diversity exists and out-of-county placements are necessary to achieve diversity. Additionally, according to the Statewide Assessment, there is a lack of resources for children with a high degree of special needs.

According to the Statewide Assessment, in 2002, African-American children were overrepresented in the population of children in foster care who were free for adoption. According to AFCARS data referenced in the Statewide Assessment, of the 5,575 children available for adoption in 2002, 3,427 were African-American. In 2003, SWAN, in partnership with the Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association, began a statewide foster parent recruitment campaign. This campaign included television and radio commercials and print advertisements that featured African-American and Hispanic children, and printed information in both English and Spanish. According to the Statewide Assessment, the recruitment campaigns continued through 2005 and generated a 124 percent increase in approved adoptive African-American families. For the first time, Pennsylvania had more waiting families than waiting children, a trend that continued through the Onsite Review. According to the Statewide Assessment, the RFR data indicate that at the time of the Statewide Assessment, Pennsylvania had more than 1,200 approved adoptive families and fewer than 900 children with a goal of adoption without an identified adoptive family.

In 2006, SWAN designed and launched a new media campaign to recruit resource families designed to reflect the children in foster care in need of foster and adoptive homes. The campaign consisted of three television commercials: one featuring an African-American sibling group; one featuring a 13-year-old Caucasian girl; and one featuring a 9-year-old African-American boy.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, in 2006, SWAN partnered with Three Rivers Adoption Council (TRAC) to manage the SWAN Older Child Recruitment Initiative. The goal is to increase the number of adoption finalizations for children between the ages of 10 and 18. Since the onset of the initiative, TRAC has matched 17 older youth with permanent families, 13 (76 percent) of whom were of a minority race.

Based on the responses from the youth focus groups reported in the Statewide Assessment, the matching of culturally diverse youth with foster and adoptive homes that meet their needs or reflect similar cultures and values is inconsistent. Youth placed with foster parents from different ethnic backgrounds or cultures often struggle with having simple needs met such as clothing and hair products because the foster family is unaware of the cultural implications. Other youth report excellent relationships with foster parents of different cultural/ethnic backgrounds and indicate that they enjoy learning about both cultures.

In November 2006, SWAN received two Adoption Excellence Awards from HHS:

- One in the category of Increased Adoptions of Older Children for the joint efforts of SWAN and IL programs in recognition of adoption and permanency-related services to older youth in care in danger of aging out without a permanent resource
- One in the category of Support for Adoptive Families for SWAN Post-Permanency Services

In 2007, SWAN received an Adoption Excellence Award from HHS in the category of Support to Adoptive Families.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the State level commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR said that recruitment activities, including radio announcements, websites, and television commercials, have been utilized in an attempt to increase the recruitment of foster and adoptive parents that reflect the needs of the State. Information provided by stakeholders about the results of the media campaigns was consistent with the information contained in the Statewide Assessment. Additionally, Northumberland County stakeholders reported the use of radio broadcasts for recruitment efforts but indicated that the primary source for recruiting prospective foster parents is other foster parents. Philadelphia County stakeholders reported that in addition to State recruitment activities, there has been a community-wide, faith-based initiative to recruit foster parents in their county. Stakeholders in Philadelphia County and at the State level reported the use of the Heart Gallery as an effective recruitment tool. The Heart Gallery has exhibits across the State and has a website.

According to stakeholders at the State level, all resource family, approved and not approved, are registered in the RFR, which contains reports that indicate how many families are in registry at any given time. Stakeholders at the State level reported that at the time of the Onsite Review, they have more families registered as actively interested in adopting than children available for adoption.

All children free for adoption are entered into PAE. The database, using matching criteria, matches children to families. PAE staff forward potential matches to the CCYA.

According to stakeholders at the State level, the SWAN Older Child Recruitment Initiative is an initiative for matching older children and families. Although the State has seen some success with the initiative, this year, according to State-level stakeholders, a contractor is focusing on the older children who have been waiting for a permanent home the longest. Outreach will be conducted with families currently in registered in the RFR to locate a permanent home for these children. Child-specific recruitment will be conducted for children who are not matched with a registered family. Although the State has this older child matching initiative, many stakeholders at the State level and the three review sites expressed the opinion that there are not enough foster homes, particularly for older youth.

**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 Pennsylvania utilizes its Statewide Adoption Network as well as AdoptUsKids to facilitate cross-jurisdictional adoptions. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, there were more than 6,000 active cases of children who were placed into and outside of the State through the ICPC in 2007. The Statewide Assessment reports that judges and caseworkers participating in focus groups expressed the opinion that interstate permanent placements involve a difficult, frustrating, and lengthy process.

In addition to ICPC, the Pennsylvania Heart Gallery was launched in 2006 as an awareness art exhibit that features professional portraits and personal stories of children in foster care who are waiting for a permanent family. The exhibit travels across the State. In the first year, 52 children were featured. Within 1 year, 23 of those children were placed with a permanent family. The Heart Gallery began its second year in May 2007 and featured 50 children, most of whom are older and of a minority race. As of September 25, 2007, 30 of the 77 children featured in the Heart Gallery over the past 2 years were placed in adoptive families.

The State also has a website, [www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org), that allows families who want to adopt to access pictures and histories of children free for adoption. According to the Statewide Assessment, DPW tracks the number of visits to the website. The visits to this website

increased from 22,032 in 2002 to 273,192 in 2006. The most visited page, according to the PAE annual report, is the photo album of the children who are waiting for families. The number of visits to the photo album increased from 15,494 in 2002 to 189,152 in 2006.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders at the State level and in Northumberland County commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that AdoptUsKids, PAE, and the Heart Gallery are utilized to locate permanent and adoptive placements for Pennsylvania children. Additionally, there is a listserv on the Internet that is used to explore families. Northumberland County and Philadelphia County stakeholders reported the use of ICPC to locate and study placements for children. Stakeholders indicated that although the State has an excellent ICPC administrator, the process is cumbersome and time-consuming.