INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Ohio. The CFSR is the Federal Government’s program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies in 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 Ohio CFSR was conducted the week of August 18, 2008. The period under review was from April 1, 2007, to August 22, 2008. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Office for Children and Families
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal year (FY) 2006, FY 2007, and the 12-month CFSR period ending March 31, 2007
- Reviews of 64 cases (40 foster care and 24 in-home services cases) at three sites throughout the State: 30 cases in Franklin County, 17 cases in Lorain County, and 17 cases in Belmont County1
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders, including but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

Background Information

The CFSR assesses State performance on 23 items relevant to seven outcomes and 22 items pertaining to seven systemic factors.

In the Outcomes section (Section A: Outcomes) of the report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) is assigned to each of the 23 items incorporated in the seven outcomes, depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the onsite case review. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as a Strength. Performance ratings for each of the seven outcomes are based on item ratings for each case. A State may be rated as having “substantially achieved,” “partially achieved,” or “not achieved” an outcome. The determination of whether a State is in

1 Originally there were 25 in-home services cases. However, one in-home services case was ineligible for the CFSR because there was not enough information contained in the file to rate the case.
substantial conformity with a particular outcome is based on the percentage of cases that were determined to have substantially achieved that outcome. For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome.

In the Systemic Factors section (Section B: Systemic Factors) of the report, each item incorporated in each systemic factor is rated as either a Strength or an ANI based on whether State performance on the item meets Federal policy requirements. Information relevant to each item comes from the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews conducted during the week of the onsite CFSR. The overall rating for each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in that systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either in substantial conformity with that factor (receiving a score of 3 or 4) or not in substantial conformity with that factor (receiving a score of 1 or 2).

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

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

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

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

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

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

The specific findings in regard to the State’s performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State’s performance in regard to the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR.

**Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes**

The 2008 CFSR identified several areas of high performance in Ohio in regard to achieving desired outcomes for children. Although Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the outcomes, the State achieved overall ratings of Strength for two individual items: absence of repeat maltreatment (item 2) and placing children in close proximity to their parents (item 11).

Despite these areas of strength, the CFSR also identified key areas of concern in regard to achieving outcomes for children and families. Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was substantially achieved in only 30.0 percent of the cases reviewed. Within Permanency Outcome 1, Ohio’s lowest ratings were for item 9 (Adoptions), which was rated as a Strength in 25 percent of the cases reviewed; item 8 (Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives), which was rated as a Strength in 56 percent of the cases reviewed; and item 7 (Permanency goal for child), which was rated as a Strength in 57.5 percent of the cases reviewed.

Concerns also were identified in regard to Safety Outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect), which was substantially achieved in 63.2 percent of the cases; Permanency Outcome 2 (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved), which was substantially achieved in 65.0 percent of the cases; and Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs), which was substantially achieved in 65.6 percent of the cases.

For the CFSR 12-month data period ending March 31, 2007, Ohio did not meet the national standards for the safety data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment in foster care. The State did not meet the national standards for the permanency data composites pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification (Permanency Composite 1), timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2), permanency for children in foster care for extended periods of time (Permanency Composite 3), and placement stability (Permanency Composite 4).
Overall, Ohio achieved some successful results due, in part, to the following initiatives:

- The State implemented the Comprehensive Assessment Planning Model Interim Solution (CAPMIS) to standardize early case planning and needs assessment and to improve child and family engagement in the case planning process.
- The State implemented the Ongoing Case Assessment Investigation Tool and the Family-to-Family approach to reduce repeat maltreatment and improve the continuity of family connections.
- The Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges established a statewide program entitled Beyond the Numbers to increase awareness of statutory timelines and the importance of permanency for children.
- In partnership with its sister agencies, the State child welfare agency implemented the Access to Better Care initiative to improve quality and availability of appropriate mental health services and reduce out-of-home placements for children.
- The State collaborated with Ohio Family and Children First and State governmental partners to promote an integrated network of education-based supportive services and to support joint initiatives to address emotional and behavioral problems that compromise student success.

Despite the success of these initiatives, the State’s low performance in regard to the CFSR outcomes may be attributed, at least in part, to the following key factors:

- In many areas of the State, caseworkers carry high caseloads, and there is a high rate of turnover in the caseworker position.
- The State has difficulty establishing timely and appropriate permanency goals, attributed partly to a lack of early identification of kinship resources, a lack of early involvement of families in case planning, and a lack of consistent concurrent planning.
- Across the State, the number of foster homes and placement resources is insufficient to meet the needs of children.
- The State’s most effective approach to engaging families—family team meetings—is not employed throughout the State.
- The State does not consistently search for or engage noncustodial parents in case planning or services.
- The State has difficulty meeting the service needs of parents of children in foster care.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

In regard to systemic factors, Ohio is in substantial conformity with four of the seven systemic factors: Statewide Information System, Quality Assurance (QA) System, Staff and Provider Training, and Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Ohio is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Case Review System; Service Array; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect
Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two indicators. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment (item 2). Safety Outcome 1 also incorporates two national data indicators for which national standards have been established: the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 63.2 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. For the CFSR 12-month data period ending March 31, 2007, Ohio did not meet the national standards for the two data indicators relevant for Safety Outcome 1 pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Key findings from the 2008 CFSR indicate that Ohio successfully prevents repeat maltreatment for children in foster care. However, the findings indicate that the State does not consistently meet State timeframes for initiating investigations of reports of abuse and neglect, particularly when cases are screened in as non-emergency reports.

Additional findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:
- Item 1 (timeliness of initiating investigations) was rated as a Strength in 63 percent of the cases.
- Item 2 (repeat maltreatment) was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the cases.

Ohio was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:
- Reviewers found that the agency did not consistently conduct timely investigations of maltreatment reports classified as non-emergency reports.
- The State did not meet the national standard for the measure of maltreatment recurrence.
- The State did not meet the national standard for the measure of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:
- Developed and piloted CAPMIS to reduce the incidence of maltreatment recurrence by identifying families in need of ongoing services and prioritizing their service needs
- Developed and piloted a new screening protocol as a component within CAPMIS to increase consistency among counties in screening, classifying, and initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment
- Incorporated a standardized approach to the recording of reports of child abuse and neglect into the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System to improve accuracy of statewide data on maltreatment recurrence
- Worked with local public children services agencies (PCSAs) that did not meet the national standard for maltreatment recurrence to develop and monitor their quality improvement plans
The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period.

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

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

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 75.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.

Key findings from the 2008 CFSR indicate that Ohio is experiencing the following challenges:
- Children remained at risk in the home when, in some cases, services were provided but they did not adequately address the safety issues in the family.
- Children remained at risk in the home when, in some cases, initial and ongoing risk assessments were not conducted consistently and did not consistently identify risk factors.

Additional findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:
- Item 3 (services to prevent removal) was rated as a Strength in 87 percent of the cases.
- Item 4 (risk of harm) was rated as a Strength in 75 percent of the cases.

Ohio was not in substantial conformity with this outcome for the 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:
- Agency practice was inconsistent in conducting comprehensive risk assessments that identified a family’s underlying issues.
- Agency practice was inconsistent in monitoring families to assess progress on reduction of risk of harm to the children.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:
- The State used the CAPMIS model to strengthen caseworkers’ skills in assessing safety and risk and appropriately identifying service needs for children and families.
- The State used the CAPMIS model to ensure that the services being provided are addressing the concerns identified in the safety and/or risk assessments.

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations

There are six indicators incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency’s efforts to prevent foster care reentry (item 5), ensure placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child’s permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency’s efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9) or to ensure that children who have other planned permanent living arrangements (OPPLA) as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10). Permanency Outcome 1 also incorporates four national data composites for which national standards have been established: Permanency Composite 1 (Timeliness and permanency of reunification), Permanency Composite 2 (Timeliness of adoptions), Permanency Composite 3 (Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods), and Permanency Composite 4 (Placement stability).

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

- The outcome was substantially achieved in only 30.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for the CFSR 12-month target data period, the State did not meet the national standards for the four data composites.

Key findings from the 2008 CFSR indicate that Ohio is experiencing the following challenges:

- The State did not consistently prevent foster care reentry (item 5).
- Placement stability continues to be a challenge for the State (item 6).
- The State was not consistent in establishing a child’s permanency goal in a timely manner, particularly in establishing an appropriate permanency goal (item 7).
- The State did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner (item 8).
- The State did not make concerted efforts to finalize adoptions in a timely manner (item 9).
- The State did not make concerted efforts to ensure long-term stable placements for children with the goal of OPPLA and provide necessary services to prepare for independent living (item 10).

Additional findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:

- Item 5 (foster care reentry) was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of the cases.
- Item 6 (stability of foster care placements) was rated as a Strength in 77 percent of the cases.
- Item 7 (permanency goal for child) was rated as a Strength in 57.5 percent of the cases.
- Item 8 (reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives) was rated as a Strength in 56 percent of the cases.
Item 9 (adoption) was rated as a Strength in 25 percent of the cases.
Item 10 (OPPLA) was rated as a Strength in 71 percent of the cases.

Ohio was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:
- The State did not consistently prevent foster care reentries.
- The State did not consistently provide stable foster care placements and overused emergency shelter placements at initial placement, and reviewers noted that there was a lack of appropriate placements for children with behavior problems.
- The State did not consistently use concurrent planning approaches or practices.
- The State did not consistently provide timely reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives due to a lack of access to needed services, waiting lists, and court delays.
- The State did not consistently provide appropriate and timely adoption services, in part, due to court delays.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:
- To reduce the incidence of foster care reentry, the State identified and addressed safety concerns and/or service needs prior to and at the time of reunification through the use of the Reunification Assessment Tool.
- The State participated in the Ohio Child Welfare Training Partnership to develop competencies for early identification, assessment, and involvement of kinship caregivers in placement selection and the case planning process.
- The State developed a promising practices model for expediting permanency planning for children once a county agency has filed for or been granted permanent custody.
- The State worked with the PCSAs that did not meet the national standard for foster care reentry or placement stability to develop and monitor their quality improvement plans.

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

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

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six indicators that assess the child welfare agency’s performance in placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and close relatives (item 11); placing siblings together (item 12); ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13); preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14); seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15); and promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 65.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity.
Key findings in 2008 indicate that children were routinely and consistently placed in close proximity to parents or potential permanent caregivers (item 11).

Despite this area of strength, the findings of the 2008 CFSR indicate that Ohio is experiencing the following challenges:

- Children were not routinely and consistently placed with siblings (item 12).
- There was a lack of consistency in promoting visitation between or among siblings in foster care (item 13).
- The agency did not always make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connection with extended family, culture, and community (item 14).
- There was a lack of consistency in seeking and evaluating relatives as potential placement resources (item 15).
- There was a lack of consistency in efforts to maintain and strengthen the parent-child relationship while children are in foster care (item 16).

Additional findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:

- Item 11 (proximity of placement) was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the cases.
- Item 12 (placement with siblings) was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of the cases.
- Item 13 (visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) was rated as a Strength in 48 percent of the cases.
- Item 14 (preserving connections) was rated as a Strength in 74 percent of the cases.
- Item 15 (relative placement) was rated as a Strength in 56 percent of the cases.
- Item 16 (relationship of child in care with parents) was rated as a Strength in 58 percent of the cases.

Ohio was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:

- The State did not consistently support the preservation of children’s connections to the community (item 14), particularly when children were placed outside of their home communities.
- The State did not consistently make efforts to seek relatives as placement resources (item 15), particularly paternal relatives.

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

- Provided training to local PCSAs to encourage caseworkers to explore visitation and placement with noncustodial parents, particularly fathers, unless it is not in the child’s best interests
- Increased the knowledge of PCSA staff about compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
- Incorporated monitoring the preservation of connections and relative placements into the Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation case record review
- Participated in the Ohio Child Welfare Training Partnership development of competencies for early identification, assessment, and involvement of kinship caregivers in placement selection and the case planning process
Ohio met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period.

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

Well-Being Outcome 1 incorporates four indicators. One pertains to the child welfare agency’s efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator examines the child welfare agency’s efforts to actively involve parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworkers’ contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children’s parents (item 20).

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 65.6 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

The key findings in 2008 indicate that the State is experiencing the following challenges:

- There continues to be a lack of consistency in assessing and meeting the service needs of parents (particularly fathers). However, in the cases reviewed, the agency is consistently assessing and addressing the needs of children.
- There also continue to be inconsistencies in adequately involving families (particularly fathers) in case planning.
- Caseworkers were consistent in maintaining visitation with children in the foster care cases, but there were inconsistencies in caseworker visits with children in the in-home cases.
- The 2008 CFSR specifically differentiated between mothers and fathers in evaluating the frequency and quality of caseworker visits. In general, there were insufficient caseworker visits and challenges associated with the quality of visits with both parents. However, these findings were more pronounced for fathers, as evidenced by inconsistent concerted efforts to visit or engage fathers in either case planning or services.

Additional findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:

- Item 17 (needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents) was rated as a Strength in 69 percent of the cases.
- Item 18 (child and family involvement in case planning) was rated as a Strength in 64 percent of the cases.
- Item 19 (caseworker visits with child) was rated as a Strength in 87.5 percent of the cases.
- Item 20 (caseworker visits with parents) was rated as a Strength in 58 percent of the cases.

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome during its 2002 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:

- The State did not consistently assess needs and provide services for children, parents, and foster parents.
- The State did not consistently facilitate the involvement of children and families in case planning.
- The State did not consistently meet requirements for face-to-face contact with parents.
To address these concerns, Ohio implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Employed a structured decision-making approach to strengthen caseworkers’ skills in assessing the needs of family members and engaging families in the case planning and case review processes to increase parent, caregiver, and child involvement in case plan development and reassessment
- Revised the case plan and semi-annual administrative review (SAR) documents to be more easily understood by families and caregivers and standardized the process of apprising parents of their rights by providing them a pamphlet
- Revised the case plan rules for voluntary cases to provide guidelines on frequency and purpose of caseworker visits with parents and to clarify expectations for visits with absent parents.

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

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

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

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. Key findings in the 2008 CFSR indicate that, in the cases reviewed, the State did not consistently ensure that children’s educational needs were met.

Ohio was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in the 2002 CFSR, and it was required to address this outcome in its PIP. The key concern identified at that time in regard to meeting the educational needs of children was that no assessment of educational needs was completed, and services were not provided in cases in which children showed evidence of school-related behavioral problems, developmental delays, learning disabilities, and/or poor school performance.

To address this concern, Ohio implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Partnered with the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to assist school districts that are or would like to be Community Alternative Funding System Providers
- Provided information to PCSAs about students’ rights and how to request development of Individualized Education Plans
- Worked with Ohio Family and Children First to promote an integrated network of educationally based supportive services
- Supported joint initiatives by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and the Ohio Department of Education to address emotional and behavioral problems that compromise student success

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period.
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs

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

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 82.8 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. Key findings of the 2008 CFSR indicate that there were inconsistencies in assessing and addressing the physical health, dental health, and mental health needs of children receiving both foster care and in-home services.

Additional findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:
- Item 22 (physical health of child) was rated as a Strength in 84 percent of the cases.
- Item 23 (mental health of child) was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of the cases.

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:
- The State did not consistently assess and address the physical health needs of children due to delays in health screenings and a lack of preventive care, as well as findings that some children were not receiving services for identified health needs.
- The State did not consistently assess and address the mental and behavioral health needs of children due, in part, to a lack of service provision addressing identified needs, delays in service availability, and/or insufficient frequency of service provision.

To address these concerns, Ohio implemented the following strategies in its PIP:
- Clarified the responsibilities of public and private child-placing agencies for effectively assessing health-care needs, coordinating the provision of appropriate services to meet health-care needs, and documenting services needed and provided in addition to any services that were not provided
- Worked with the Ohio Department of Health to provide information to PCSAs regarding use of public oral health services
- Increased PCSA awareness of available local health-care services by working with HealthChek to compile and distribute a list of such services
- Provided training to therapists, caseworkers, and foster and adoptive parents regarding the special behavioral health-care needs of children in out-of-home care and adoptive placements by including specialized, issue-specific workshops in ODJFS-sponsored training and other conferences
- Promoted the provision of specialized programming for children of parents who are addicted to alcohol or other drugs

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period.
II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

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

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The 2008 CFSR found that information gained from both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews demonstrated that Ohio’s information systems 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.

Ohio was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2002 CFSR.

Case Review System

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

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System for 2008.

One strength of the Case Review System noted in the 2008 CFSR was the following:
- Both the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio has an effective periodic case review process, the SAR, and reviews the status of each child at least once every 6 months, either by court or by administrative review (item 26).

Despite this area of strength, the following concerns were noted:
- Although the State has a process in place to ensure that each child has a written case plan, developed jointly with the child’s parents, the onsite findings and data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that practice is inconsistent in child and family engagement in case planning. In addition, item 18, which measures child and family involvement in case planning, was rated as an ANI in 36 percent of applicable cases (item 25).
- Although Ohio does have a process in place to hold permanency hearings for each child in foster care at least once every 12 months, according to the Statewide Assessment, only 70 percent of State child welfare professionals surveyed said that the
Both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that agency practices are inconsistent in filing for TPR within mandated timelines. However, onsite case review findings show that ASFA requirements regarding TPR were met in 23 of the 25 cases (92 percent) for which the requirements were applicable (item 28).

Although Ohio has a policy in place regarding the notification of foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of their right to be notified of and be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to a child in their care, both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that there are inconsistencies in practice in caregiver notification of and participation in court hearings (item 29).

Ohio also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:

- Although the State had a policy to provide written case plans for each child in foster care, they were not consistently prepared in a timely manner and were often *pro forma*.
- Children and families were not consistently involved in the case planning process.
- The State did not have a process to provide timely permanency hearings for children in foster care.

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

- Employed a structured decision-making approach to strengthen caseworkers’ skills in engaging families in the case planning and case review process to increase parent, caregiver, and child involvement in case plan development and reassessment
- Revised the case plan and SAR documents to be more easily understood by families and caregivers
- Employed a Family Law Case Manager to determine if overcrowding of court dockets is contributing to Ohio’s timeliness of reviews, to identify State trends or system barriers that contribute to extensions in case processing, and to provide onsite assistance to communities in implementing effective practices
- Produced *Judicial Benchbook: Arbitration and Mediation Practice and Procedure* for courts handling dependency cases
- Employed the State Supreme Court Office to implement initiatives that affect judicial systems, such as the guardian *ad litem* standards
- Increased judicial opportunities for family law education; examples include sponsoring a national Family Court Forum in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and increasing the number of courses in family law at the Judicial College of the Supreme Court of Ohio

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

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

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The 2008 CFSR identified the following strengths of the State’s QA system:

• The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio has developed and implemented standards that are monitored regularly to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children (item 30).
• The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that the State is operating an identifiable QA system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement efforts (item 31).

Ohio was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR.

Staff and Provider Training

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

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The 2008 CFSR found the following strengths of the State’s training program:

• Ohio operates a State-administered initial caseworker and supervisor development and training program that addresses the key elements of the CFSP (item 32).
• The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that the State operates an ongoing staff development and training program that addresses the key skills and knowledge base of caseworkers and supervisors (item 33).
• The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio provides initial and ongoing training to caregivers to enhance the skills and knowledge base they need to appropriately care for foster and adopted children and that the agency has a process in place to ensure that training requirements are met (item 34).

Ohio was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR.
Service Array

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

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array for the 2008 CFSR. The 2008 CFSR found the following strength in the State’s services:

- The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio has a basic array of services for children and families (item 35).

Despite this area of strength, the 2008 CFSR noted the following concerns:

- Stakeholder interviews indicate that there are waiting lists for services and that services are not sufficiently accessible to all children and families across the State. Key services that are lacking include transportation, Independent Living services, and mental health and substance abuse services (item 36).
- Although the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio strives to individualize services for children and families, multiple stakeholders noted that barriers exist to providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to certain populations in the State, especially Hispanic and Somali families (item 37).

Ohio was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance in regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State’s consultation with external stakeholders in developing the CFSP (items 38 and 39) and the extent to which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The 2008 CFSR found the following strengths in agency responsiveness:

- The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio consistently engages in ongoing consultation with its sister agencies in State government, the Supreme Court’s Office, and other key public and private partnerships at the State and local levels in the development and implementation of the State’s CFSP (item 38).
- The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio consistently engages in ongoing consultation with its sister agencies in State government, the Ohio Supreme Court’s Office, and other key public and private partnerships at the State
The Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews indicate that the State diligently pools funds and coordinates services under the CFSP with the services and/or benefits of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs that serve the target populations (item 40).

Ohio was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2002 CFSR.

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

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

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with the factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The 2008 CFSR found the following strengths in the State’s policies regarding foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention:

- The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards as demonstrated in the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interview comments and confirmed by results from Ohio’s July 2007 title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review (item 41).
- Although the Onsite Review demonstrated that additional foster and adoptive family homes are still needed, the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio has a process in place to diligently recruit potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State who need foster and adoptive homes (item 44).
- The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews confirmed that a process is in place to effectively use cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children both in-State and out-of-State (item 45).

Despite these areas of strength, the 2008 CFSR noted the following concerns:

- Licensing standards are not consistently applied equally to licensed foster homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or title IV-B funds as demonstrated in the Statewide Assessment. The State issues waivers and variances and is not able to ensure at this time that licensing standards are uniformly applied by agencies and counties throughout the State (item 42).
- Although the State generally complies with Federal requirements for criminal background checks related to licensing foster and adoptive parents as indicated in the positive results from Ohio’s July 2007 title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review, the Statewide Assessment includes 2007 data from reviews conducted by the State that show that at least 25 percent of certified foster homes were missing background check information (item 43).

Ohio was in substantial conformity with this factor in the 2002 CFSR.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes and Indicators</th>
<th>Outcome Ratings</th>
<th>Item Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Substantial Conformity?</td>
<td>Percent Substantially Achieved*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety Outcome 1:</strong> Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 1: Timeliness of investigations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2: Repeat maltreatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety Outcome 2:</strong> Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3: Services to prevent removal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4: Risk of harm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permanency Outcome 1:</strong> Children have permanency and stability in their living situations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5: Foster care reentry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 6: Stability of foster care placements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 7: Permanency goal for child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 9: Adoption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 10: Other planned living arrangement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permanency Outcome 2:</strong> The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 11: Proximity of placement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 12: Placement with siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 14: Preserving connections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 15: Relative placement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an ANI. For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of the cases must be rated as a Strength.
Table 2. Ohio CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well-Being Outcomes and Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes and Indicators</th>
<th>Outcome Ratings</th>
<th>Item Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Substantial Conformity?</td>
<td>Percent Substantially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Well-Being Outcome 1:</strong> Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 19: Caseworker visits with child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Well-Being Outcome 2:</strong> Children receive services to meet their educational needs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 21: Educational needs of child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Well-Being Outcome 3:</strong> Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 22: Physical health of child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 23: Mental health of child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an ANI. For an overall rating of strength, 90 percent of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of item 21) must be rated as a Strength. Because item 21 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95-percent Strength rating applies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systemic Factors and Items</th>
<th>In Substantial Conformity?</th>
<th>Score*</th>
<th>Item Rating**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide Information System</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case Review System</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 25: The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child’s parents that includes the required provisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 28: The State provides a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Assurance System</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 30: The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff and Provider Training</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 33: The State provides ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties in regard to the services included in the CFSP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic Factors and Items</td>
<td>In Substantial Conformity?</td>
<td>Score*</td>
<td>Item Rating**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 34: The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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 in regard to foster and adopted children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Array</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 36: The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 37: The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Responsiveness to the Community</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 39: The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports delivered pursuant to the CFSP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 41: The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic Factors and Items</td>
<td>In Substantial Conformity?</td>
<td>Score*</td>
<td>Item Rating**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 44: The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom adoptive homes are needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Items may be rated as a Strength or as an ANI.
Final Report
Ohio Child and Family Services Review
May 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 Ohio. 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 Act 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 Ohio CFSR was conducted during the week of August 18, 2008. The period under review was from April 1, 2007, to August 22, 2008. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Office for Children and Families
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal year (FY) 2006, FY 2007, and the 12-month CFSR period ending March 31, 2007
- Reviews of 64 cases (40 foster care and 24 in-home services cases) at three sites throughout the State (30 cases in Franklin County, 17 cases in Lorain County, and 17 cases in Belmont County)\(^1\)
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

All 64 cases reviewed onsite were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the 64 cases reviewed are presented in the Table of Key Characteristics on the following page. Percentages in this table and in subsequent tables may not total to 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 (e.g., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate.

\(^1\) Originally there were 25 in-home services cases. However, one in-home services case was ineligible for the CFSR because there was not enough information contained in the file to rate this case.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Characteristics</th>
<th>Foster Care Cases</th>
<th>In-Home Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When case was opened/child entered foster care</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opened prior to the period under review</td>
<td>30 (75%)</td>
<td>16 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opened during the period under review</td>
<td>10 (25%)</td>
<td>8 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child entered foster care during the period under review</strong></td>
<td>13 (32.5%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s age at start of period under review</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger than age 10</td>
<td>15 (37.5%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 10 but younger than 13</td>
<td>8 (20%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 13 but younger than 16</td>
<td>11 (27.5%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and older</td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American (Non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>15 (37.5%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Native American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (Non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>21 (52.5%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (of any race)</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races (Non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary reason for opening case</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect (not including medical neglect)</td>
<td>12 (30%)</td>
<td>8 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>9 (22.5%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse by parent</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>6 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical neglect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental/physical health of the parent</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s behavior</td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence in child’s home</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child in juvenile justice system</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Originally there were 25 in-home services cases. However, one in-home services case was determined to be ineligible for the CFSR because there was not enough information contained in the file to rate the case.

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

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

ACF has set very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that, because child welfare agencies work with our country’s most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be 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. The goal of the CFSR is to promote continuous improvement in performance on these outcomes.

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

The second round of the CFSR is intended to assess a State’s current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and consistent, comprehensive case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continuous improvement and the development of PIPs addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior PIP requirements may have been achieved. The goal is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the closing of a PIP.
In the following sections, for each outcome assessed, there is a discussion of how the State performed on that outcome in the first round. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round of the CFSR, there is a discussion of the key concerns identified at that time and the strategies implemented in the PIP to address those concerns.

Because many changes have been made in the onsite CFSR process, based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State’s performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round. This is particularly true regarding comparisons of data indicators or percentages regarding Strength and ANI ratings. Key changes in the CFSR process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews are the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases (see footnote 1, page 2)
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to increase consistency and to ensure an assessment of critical areas, such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents
I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

**Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Achieved or Addressed</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conformity of statewide data indicators with national standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Standard (%)</th>
<th>State’s Percent</th>
<th>Meets Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absence of maltreatment recurrence</td>
<td>94.6 +</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff</td>
<td>99.68 +</td>
<td>99.49</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Status of Safety Outcome 1**

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 63.2 percent of applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in the one applicable Belmont County case, 86 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, and 45 percent of applicable Franklin County cases. In addition to case review findings, for the CFSR 12-month data period ending March 31, 2007, Ohio did not meet the national standards for the two data indicators relevant to Safety Outcome 1 pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

**Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR**

In the 2002 CFSR, the State was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 because both item 1, timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment, and item 2, repeat maltreatment, were rated as ANIs. The following key concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:
• Reviewers found that the agency did not consistently conduct timely investigations of maltreatment reports classified as non-emergency reports.
• The State did not meet the national standard for the measure of maltreatment recurrence.
• The State did not meet the national standard for the measure of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

To address these concerns, Ohio implemented the following strategies in its PIP:
• Developed and piloted the new Comprehensive Assessment Planning Model Interim Solution (CAPMIS) to reduce the incidence of maltreatment recurrence by identifying families those in need of ongoing services and prioritizing their service needs
• Developed and piloted a new screening protocol as a component within CAPMIS to increase consistency among counties in screening, classifying, and initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment
• Incorporated a standardized approach to the recording of reports of child abuse and neglect into the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) to improve accuracy of statewide data on maltreatment recurrence
• Worked with the local public children services agencies (PCSA) that did not meet the national standard for maltreatment recurrence to develop and monitor their quality improvement plans

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

**Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR**

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

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

____ Strength ______ X__ Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 19 (30 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no reports of child maltreatment 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 State child welfare agency policy requirements.

ODJFS policy for report investigation timeframes is as follows:
• For emergency reports, face-to-face contact must be attempted with the alleged child victim within 1 hour of the time the report is screened in.
• For all other reports (i.e., non-emergency reports), within 24 hours of the time the report is screened in, face-to-face or telephone contact must be attempted with the principal or with a collateral source who has knowledge of the alleged victim’s current condition and can provide information about the child’s safety. Face-to-face contact must be attempted with the alleged victim within 3 calendar days.

The case review findings for this item are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in the one applicable Belmont County case, 86 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, and 45 percent of applicable Franklin County cases.

Item 1 was rated as a Strength when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was established with the child within the timeframes required by State policy or law. Item 1 was rated as an ANI when face-to-face contact was not established within the required timeframes. In the seven cases rated as an ANI, the report was screened in as a non-emergency report.

**Rating Determination**

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 63 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with the required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for an overall item 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, ODJFS policy requires that all screened-in reports of abuse or neglect must be investigated within 1 hour if they are designated as emergency reports and within 24 hours if they are designated non-emergency reports. Face-to-face contact is required with alleged victims within 1 hour in cases involving emergency reports and within 3 calendar days in cases involving non-emergency reports. The Statewide Assessment notes that all screened-out referrals are logged for review.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are two main barriers to the timely investigation of reports of abuse and neglect:

• In geographically large counties, caseworkers are unable to travel quickly to all areas of the county.
• In counties with a large Hispanic or immigrant populations, there may be language barriers that lead to delays in investigations when caseworkers do not speak the same language as families in need of services.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS) data for the first half of 2006 indicate the following:
• Non-emergency reports were investigated within 24 hours in small counties 91 percent of the time; in medium counties 87 percent of the time; and in major metropolitan counties 82 percent of the time.
• Emergency reports were investigated within 1 hour in small counties 89 percent of the time; in medium counties 91 percent of the time; and in major metropolitan counties 81 percent of the time.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio has a quality assurance (QA) review process called the Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE). A CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found that county agencies achieved a 98-percent compliance level for appropriately screening in reports of alleged child abuse and neglect, and for appropriately designating priority levels. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that a subsequent case record review found that investigations of maltreatment reports were initiated in accordance with State timeframes in 87 percent of the cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that ODJFS county agencies respond to reports of abuse and neglect promptly and that there are no delays on weekends or for reports received by the 911 emergency response call system. Some stakeholders in Belmont County and Franklin County reported that county child protective services (CPS) and law enforcement jointly conduct investigations. Some stakeholders in Lorain County reported that law enforcement and CPS are housed in the same location.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

__X__ Strength  _____ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 10 (16 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there were no substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine whether there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review and, if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. Information regarding the ratings is provided below.
Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable cases. There were no applicable cases in Belmont County.

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in all 10 applicable cases when there was no indication of two or more substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period.

**Rating Determination**

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 100 percent of the cases reviewed, reviewers determined that there was no recurrence of maltreatment. This percentage meets 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, ODJFS requires the completion of a safety assessment of the family within 4 working days of the date the referral was screened in to identify safety issues and complete a family risk assessment. The Statewide Assessment notes that Ohio implemented the new CAPMIS tool in a four-county pilot program in May 2005 and then expanded it throughout the State in 2007. The CAPMIS, an actuarial risk assessment tool, provides caseworkers with a framework to assess children’s safety and risk, develop safety and service plans, and assess reunification readiness. According to the Statewide Assessment, CAPMIS was automated as part of the State’s new SACWIS, fully implemented in 2008.

The Statewide Assessment notes that factors contributing to the abuse and neglect of children in foster care include inappropriate matching of the child with caregivers, insufficient support and monitoring of placements, and an inadequate supply of placement resources.

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers use the Ongoing Case Assessment Investigation Tool (OCAIT) to assess and document new reports on open protective services cases taking into account the agency’s in-depth knowledge of the family’s strengths and needs. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that caseworkers do not consistently accept new reports on open cases but, instead, manage the reports through ongoing case contact. Caseworkers consider the OCAIT process to be cumbersome.
The Statewide Assessment notes the following barriers to the prevention of maltreatment recurrence:

- Adequate service resources are not available consistently throughout the State, particularly placement resources and relative support services.
- There is a high rate of caseworker turnover, particularly in the smaller counties, resulting in a high number of caseworkers who lack experience in engaging families in services.
- There are limited transportation alternatives.

The Statewide Assessment reports that FACSIS data showed that there was a reduction in the percentage of children with repeat maltreatment from 8 percent in 2003 to 7 percent in 2006.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that the parent aide program is effective in preventing repeat maltreatment. Some stakeholders indicated that reports of repeat maltreatment on open cases are subject to the same timelines as new reports and that information regarding a new report is captured using the OCAIT.

**Safety Outcome 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Status of Safety Outcome 2**

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 75.0 percent of cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 94 percent of Lorain County cases, 82 percent of Belmont County cases, and 60 percent of Franklin County cases.
Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The State was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2 in the 2002 CFSR. Although both item 3 (services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal and item 4 (risk of harm to child were rated as Strengths, the number of cases in which both items were rated as a Strength (83 percent) was not sufficient to meet the 90-percent requirement for substantial conformity with this outcome. The following key concerns were noted during the 2002 CFSR:

- Agency practice was inconsistent with regard to conducting comprehensive risk assessments that identified a family’s underlying issues.
- Agency practice was inconsistent with regard to monitoring families to assess progress on reduction of risk of harm to the children.

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

- Utilized the CAPMIS model to strengthen caseworkers’ skills in assessing safety and risk, and appropriately identifying service needs for children and families
- Utilized the CAPMIS model to ensure that the services being provided are addressing the concerns identified in the safety and/or risk assessments

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings of the onsite 2008 CFSR pertaining to the specific items assessed 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 37 (58 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 an identified risk of harm to the children (including children reunified from foster care) 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 ensuring their safety. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below.
Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, 90 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, and 76 percent of applicable Franklin County cases.

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:
- Services were provided to the parents and child to prevent removal (21 cases).
- The child was removed from the home without service provision to ensure the safety of the child (seven cases).
- The family received post-reunification services to prevent the child’s reentry into foster care (four cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. These included, but were not limited to, caseworker visits, case management, substance abuse treatment, anger management, parenting, psychological evaluation and treatment, counseling, domestic violence education, independent living, housing assistance, financial assistance, information and referral, family team meetings, the Help Me Grow program, and transportation.

Item 3 was rated as an ANI in when reviewers determined the following:
- No services were provided and the children remained at risk in the home (three cases).
- Some services were provided, but they did not adequately address the safety issues in the family and the children remained at risk in the home (two cases).

**Rating Determination**

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 86 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, CAPMIS currently provides caseworkers with the framework to continually assess safety and risk of harm to children, and to design service plans to meet the needs of families. The Statewide Assessment notes that Ohio’s title
IV-E Waiver Demonstration project, ProtectOhio, includes the use of family team meetings to prevent removal of children from their homes. ProtectOhio has been implemented in 18 counties.

The Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers routinely assess relatives for placement to maintain stability for children who must be removed from their homes due to safety concerns. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that Ohio’s CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, indicated that counties provide inconsistent services and supports to relative caregivers who are often unprepared for the challenges of caring for their relatives, affecting the ability of ODJFS to prevent foster care placements.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that kinship placements prevent children from entering foster care. Some stakeholders in Belmont County reported that CPS offers post-reunification services for at least 6 months to prevent reentry into foster care. Belmont County stakeholders also noted that family team meetings are used to support and assist families in providing a safe environment for their children while the children remain at home.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Area Needing Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belmont County</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorain County</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>75%</strong></td>
<td><strong>25%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 94 percent of Lorain County cases, 82 percent of Belmont County cases, and 60 percent of Franklin County cases.
Item 4 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through (1) conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children’s home or in the children’s foster home and (2) addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment. Additional findings from the case review were the following:

- In 21 cases, reviewers noted that the semiannual administrative review (SAR) was used to assess and monitor risk and safety.
- In five cases, reviewers noted that family team meetings were used to assess and monitor risk and safety.
- In five cases, reviewers noted that the CAPMIS was used to assess and monitor risk and safety.

Item 4 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined the following:

- There was risk of harm to the children when the services necessary to reduce that risk were not provided or were not sufficient (seven cases).
- There was risk of harm to children due to insufficient ongoing risk assessment (three cases).
- There was risk of harm to the children when the case was closed before all risk concerns were resolved and the services necessary to reduce those risks were not provided (three cases).
- There was risk of harm to children because risk and safety were not assessed for all children in the home (three cases).

**Rating Determination**

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had appropriately addressed the risk of harm to the children. 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, CAPMIS focuses on child safety while continuously assessing risk. The Statewide Assessment notes that CAPMIS incorporates multiple dimensions of safety including risk, threats of harm, history of maltreatment, protective capacities, child vulnerability, caseworker observations, and family strengths. For example, the Statewide Assessment notes that a reunification assessment tool was added to CAPMIS to emphasize a reassessment of safety, risk, family strengths, and protective factors at the time of reunification. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that CAPMIS was adjusted to incorporate a Specialized Assessment and Investigation Tool to address safety and risk issues with children in out-of-home care, an area identified as lacking within the model.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found that overall compliance with the completion of the Family Decision Making Model, the precursor to CAPMIS, was at 92 percent.
However, the Statewide Assessment notes that counties throughout the State are struggling with the implementation of new initiatives such as CAPMIS and SACWIS. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that CPOE review discussions revealed that some caseworkers feel overwhelmed with assessing and ensuring child safety issues.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders interviewed across the sites and at the State level reported that caseworkers complete a safety assessment at the first visit with a family and at each subsequent monthly visit. Stakeholders reported that caseworkers conduct ongoing risk assessments during regular family visits, develop safety plans for the family, and record and monitor the plans in SACWIS. Stakeholders in Belmont County and Lorain County reported that family team meetings provide a framework for evaluating safety and risk. Stakeholders in Franklin County and Lorain County reported that CAPMIS provides a structured process for evaluating risk and safety focusing on the strengths and protective capacity of the family.

**II. PERMANENCY**

**Permanency Outcome 1**

| Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement | Belmont County | Franklin County | Lorain County | Total |
| Substantially Achieved | 4 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 30.0 |
| Partially Achieved | 6 | 12 | 5 | 23 | 57.5 |
| Not Achieved or Addressed | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 12.5 |
| **Total Foster Care Cases** | **10** | **20** | **10** | **40** |

**Conformity of statewide data indicators with national standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Standard (Scaled Score)</th>
<th>State’s Composite Score</th>
<th>Meets Standard (Yes/No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification</td>
<td>122.6+</td>
<td>118.9</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions</td>
<td>106.4+</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods</td>
<td>121.7+</td>
<td>116.4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite 4: Placement stability</td>
<td>101.5+</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Status of Permanency Outcome 1

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

- The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in only 30.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that, for the 12-month CFSR data period ending March 31, 2007, the State did not meet the national standards for the four data indicators listed in the above table. Performance on the individual measures included in all composites is presented in the discussion of the items related to each measure.

Permanency Outcome 1 was substantially achieved in 50 percent of Lorain County cases, 40 percent of Belmont County cases, and 15 percent of Franklin County cases.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The State was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 during the 2002 CFSR. In addition, the State did not meet any of the four national standards for the data composites for this outcome. The following key concerns were identified at that time with regard to achieving permanency for children in foster care:

- The State did not consistently prevent foster care reentries.
- The State did not consistently provide stable foster care placements, overused emergency shelter placements at initial placement, and reviewers noted that there was a lack of appropriate placements for children with behavior problems.
- The State did not consistently utilize concurrent planning approaches or practices.
- The State did not consistently provide timely reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives due to a lack of access to needed services, waiting lists, and court delays.
- The State did not consistently provide appropriate and timely adoption services, in part due to court delays.

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

- To reduce the incidence of foster care reentry, the State identified and addressed safety concerns and/or service needs prior to and at the time of reunification through the use of the Reunification Assessment Tool
- Participated in the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) to develop competencies for the early identification, assessment, and involvement of kinship caregivers in the placement selection and case planning process
- Developed a promising practices model for expediting permanency planning for children once a county agency has filed for or been granted permanent custody
- Worked with the PCSAs that did not meet the national standard for foster care reentry or placement stability to develop and monitor their quality improvement plans
The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

**Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR**

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

**Item 5. Foster care reentries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Belmont County and Lorain County cases and 71 percent of applicable Franklin County cases.

Item 5 was rated as a Strength when the entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode.

Item 5 was rated as an ANI in two cases when the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of the child’s discharge from a prior foster care episode.
Rating Determination
Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. The item was rated as a Strength in 85 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 Composite 1 Measure Relevant to the Permanency of Reunification
State performance for the 12-month CFSR data period ending March 31, 2007, on the individual measure of foster care reentry (Measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: 15.6 percent of the children discharged from foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of discharge. This percentage is above the national median of 15 percent. For this measure, lower percentages are associated with higher levels of performance. These data are presented to provide additional information about foster care reentry. There is no national standard for this measure. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite scores.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, the CAPMIS safety and risk assessment tool includes a reunification assessment designed to assess a family’s readiness to reunify and identify service interventions necessary to support reunification. The Statewide Assessment notes that ODJFS supports relative placements by using family team meetings and assisted guardianship placements as strategies to reduce reentries and increase permanency for children. The Statewide Assessment also notes that caseworker turnover rates contribute to inconsistent assessment and service provision throughout the State, especially in smaller counties where turnover rates are higher; for example, turnover rates ranged from 14 percent to 16 percent in 2006.

As a result of CPOE reviews to measure foster care reentry, the Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio implemented the following strategies in the PCSAs’ quality improvement plans: post-placement services, safety planning, family team meetings, enhanced kinship program, and the development of a reunification procedure including staff training.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that FACSIS data for 2000 through 2006 showed that the highest reentry rates of 17 percent were found in major metropolitan counties and medium counties, while the lowest reentry rates of 11 percent were found in large counties (the term “large county” is distinct from the term “major metropolitan county”).

The Statewide Assessment indicates that cases remain open longer to ensure the safety of children and reports that there was an increase in the number of open cases from 27 percent in 2004 to 29 percent in 2006, while over the same period there was a smaller increase in the percentage of children entering foster care (from 15 percent in 2004 to 16 percent in 2006).

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item in Belmont County reported that because CPS offers post-reunification services for at least 6 months in combination with continuing family team meetings, families are supported during the transition to independence reducing the likelihood of foster care reentry.
Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

_____ Strength  ___X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
All 40 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 6</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 6 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Lorain County cases, 90 percent of Belmont County cases, and 60 percent of Franklin County cases.

Item 6 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:
- The child did not experience a placement change during the period under review, and the current placement was stable, the child was discharged from foster care, or the child was adopted during the period under review (25 cases).
- The placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests and were intended either to promote achieving the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services to the child (six cases).

Item 6 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined the following:
- The child experienced multiple placements and at least one placement change was not planned or in the child’s best interests (six cases).
- The child experienced multiple unplanned placement changes and the current placement was not stable (three cases).

Additional findings of the case review were the following:
- Children in 25 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in eight cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in seven cases experienced three to five placements during the period under review.
Rating Determination
Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 77.5 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. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 4: Placement stability
Ohio’s performance for the 12-month CFSR data period ending March 31, 2007, on the three individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability is presented below.

- **C4.1**: 86.8 percent of the children in foster care for 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**: 66.1 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 64.4 percent.
- **C4.3**: 34.7 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 median of 33.9 percent but not as high as the national 75th percentile of 41.8 percent.

These data 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 scores.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS policy requires that caseworkers must provide pre-placement counseling services to the child, parent, and/or guardian when substitute care placements occur. Pre-placement services include counseling with the family to explore feelings about separation and a discussion of expected communication patterns between the PCSA, child, family, and caregivers to ease the placement transition. PCSAs must provide at least one pre-placement visit with the caregiver prior to a child’s placement.

The Statewide Assessment notes that efforts to increase foster parent recruitment will yield more stable foster care placements for children. The Statewide Assessment notes that county agencies experiencing a higher rate of multiple placements are instituting additional measures to increase placement stability including: crisis matching protocols, matching forms, relative placement protocols, level-of-care assessments, family team meetings, multidisciplinary staffing, quarterly reviews, and increased collaboration with courts and hospitals.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that barriers to achieving stable placements for children include: a lack of involvement of families in case planning, a lack of early identification of relatives for placement, a lack of appropriate assessment of family strengths, and a
lack of placement supports. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that the population of juvenile delinquents in agency custody has a higher rate of multiple placements than the general population of State wards.

The Statewide Assessment reports that FACSIS data show the following:
- The percentage of children with stable placements has remained relatively constant but has declined slightly from 87.5 percent in 2000 to 86.8 percent in 2006. The State defines a stable placement as two or fewer placement settings for children who are in foster care less than 12 months.
- Smaller counties had a higher rate of placement stability than other counties at 90 percent.
- Children 1 to 6 years old had higher rates of placement stability than children of other ages at 90 percent.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that children do not generally experience multiple placement moves. Some stakeholders suggested that caseworkers generally attempt to match children to appropriate foster homes. However, the lack of foster home resources undermines the matching process. Some stakeholders in Franklin County reported that the county agency collects data on placement disruptions and placement moves, and uses the data to improve placement stability for children in foster and adoptive placements.

**Item 7. Permanency goal for child**

| _____ Strength _____ | __X__ Area Needing Improvement |

**Case Review Findings**
All of the 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 7. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the agency had established a permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and whether the most current permanency goal was appropriate. In addition, reviewers determined whether termination of parental rights (TPR) was sought in accordance with Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) requirements. The results of this assessment are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 7</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of Lorain County cases, 70 percent of Belmont County cases, and 40 percent of Franklin County cases.
Item 7 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and that the agency had adhered to the ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR. The case was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined one or more of the following:
- The child’s permanency goal was not appropriate to the needs of the child (11 cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (seven cases).
- TPR was not sought in accordance with ASFA timelines and compelling reasons were not noted in the case file (two cases).

Case review findings pertaining to case plan goals were as follows:
- 16 children had a single goal of reunification (including living with other relatives). More information on children with this goal is presented under item 8 below.
- One child had a single goal of guardianship. More information on children with this goal is presented under item 8 below.
- 16 children had a single goal of adoption. More information on children with this goal is presented under item 9 below.
- Six children had a single goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA). More information on children with this goal is presented under item 10 below.
- One child had concurrent goals of reunification and OPPLA.

At the time of the onsite CFSR, 26 of the 40 children in the foster care cases had been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. ASFA requirements with regard to seeking TPR and documenting compelling reasons when TPR was not sought were applicable for 25 of these foster care cases. In one case, ASFA requirements were not applicable because the child was in a foster care placement with a relative. ASFA requirements were met in 92 percent (23 cases) of the 25 cases for which the requirements were applicable.

Rating Determination
Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Case reviewers determined that in 57.5 percent of the applicable cases, the county child welfare agencies had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements with regard to TPR. 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.

Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods
Ohio’s performance for the 12-month CFSR period ending March 31, 2007, on the individual measures incorporated in Permanency Composite 3: Achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods is presented below.
- C3.1: 22.0 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the FY were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (i.e., via adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the FY. This percentage is less than the national median of 25 percent.
• C3.2: 94.0 percent of the children exiting foster care who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is less than the national median of 96.8 percent.

• C3.3: 42.7 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care 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 national median of 47.8 percent but not as low as the national 25th percentile of 37.5 percent. For this measure, lower scores indicate more positive performance.

These data 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 have been established only for the scaled composite scores.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS policy requires caseworkers to develop permanency goals within 30 days for each child in foster care, consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child and to eliminate with all due speed the need for out-of-home placement so that the child can safely return home. The Statewide Assessment notes that, in addition to family preservation and reunification, permanency goal options include independent living, adoption, and planned permanent living arrangement.

The Statewide Assessment reports that permanency goals are reviewed every 6 months during the SAR process and a permanency plan must be submitted to the court if a child is still in out-of-home placement after 1 year. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that ODJFS requires that a petition for TPR be filed when a child has been in temporary custody for 12 or more months of a consecutive 22-month period, unless compelling reasons are noted. The Statewide Assessment also reports that a child’s permanency goal does not change to adoption until permanent custody is awarded to the agency after TPR of both parents. The Statewide Assessment notes that concurrent planning is not mandated in Ohio. However all caseworkers who work with adoptive children and families receive mandatory training in concurrent planning to assist in the development of permanency options.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE review of 1,417 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found that overall compliance with filing the case plan within 30 days was at a 62-percent level; however, compliance with review of the case plan was at a 94-percent level. According to the Statewide Assessment, barriers to the timely establishment of appropriate permanency goals for children include a lack of early identification of kinship resources, a lack of early involvement of families in case planning, and a delay in the implementation of concurrent planning. The Statewide Assessment notes that barriers specific to the timely establishment of a goal of adoption included children’s unwillingness to be adopted, court continuances for permanency hearings, inadequately addressed children’s mental and behavioral health issues, and high caseworker caseloads.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the Supreme Court of Ohio, in conjunction with ODJFS and the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges, established a statewide program entitled Beyond the Numbers to increase awareness of timelines and the importance of
permanency for children. As a result of this effort, the Statewide Assessment notes that there was a 4-percent reduction in the number of abuse/neglect/dependency cases reported as exceeding time guidelines and a 14-percent reduction in TPR cases reported as exceeding time guidelines between 2003 and 2006.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting in this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that the SAR, which occurs every 6 months, provides a routine forum for examining permanency goals and changing them, if appropriate. Some stakeholders noted that OPPLA is only used for older youth and only after other options (including reunification, relative placement, and adoption) are ruled out. Some stakeholders in Lorain County reported that concurrent planning is used in that county in cases of children placed with relatives to provide clarification to families regarding permanency options and to provide stability for children placed in post-adoptive homes.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>_____</th>
<th><strong>Strength</strong></th>
<th>_____</th>
<th><strong>Area Needing Improvement</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Case Review Findings**
Item 8 was applicable for 18 (45 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, 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, 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 8</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, 60 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, and 33 percent of applicable Franklin County cases.
Item 8 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the goal of reunification, guardianship, or placement with relatives had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency was making concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. The item was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined the following:

- Services necessary to support the goal of reunification were not provided (six cases).
- The agency did not make sufficient efforts to locate a suitable relative for reunification (two cases).

**Rating Determination**
Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Case reviewers determined that in 56 percent of the applicable cases, the county child welfare agencies had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives 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 Pertaining to Timeliness Included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification**
Ohio’s performance in the 12-month CFSR data period ending March 31, 2007, included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification measures are as follows:

- **C1.1**: 72.4 percent of the reunifications occurred in at least 8 days but less than 12 months after the child’s entry into foster care. This percentage is higher than the national median of 69.9 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 75.2 percent.
- **C1.2**: The median length of stay in foster care for children in foster care for at least 8 days who were discharged to reunification was 6.8 months. This length of stay is longer than the national median of 6.5 months. For this measure, a lower number of months indicates higher performance.
- **C1.3**: 52.3 percent of children entering foster care in the last 6 months who were in foster care for at least 8 days were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is higher than the national 75th percentile of 48.4 percent.

These data are presented to provide additional information about permanency of reunification. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite scores.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, PCSAs must facilitate safe reunification of children with their families and provide supportive services outlined in the case plan, including visits (at a minimum of one per month) with the family, child, and substitute caregiver. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that a reunification assessment is required when considering reunification to document reunification readiness and provide supportive services. The Statewide Assessment notes that reunification is supported by family team meetings, monthly case conferences, caseworker visitation, court collaboration, relative supports, and the CAPMIS assessment process.
The Statewide Assessment reports that FACSIS data showed that Ohio’s overall rate of reunification within 12 months was 76 percent in 2006, representing an improvement of 1 to 2 percent from the previous 4 years. The Statewide Assessment notes that barriers to successful reunification include limited service availability in certain areas of the State, a lack of early involvement of families and relatives in case planning, a lack of appropriate assessment of family strengths, large numbers of incarcerated parents, and a lack of adequate post-reunification services.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that counties showing a longer median time to reunification also show lower reentry rates, while counties showing a shorter median time to reunification show higher reentry rates. The Statewide Assessment indicates that cases remain open longer to ensure the safety of children and reports that there was an increase in the number of open cases from 27 percent in 2004 to 29 percent in 2006, while over the same period there was a smaller increase in the percentage of children entering foster care (from 15 percent in 2004 to 16 percent in 2006).

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item in Franklin County expressed the opinion that delays in reunification may be due, in part, to the challenges facing parents with intensive needs in completing needed services within a limited timeframe. In addition, some stakeholders noted that waiting lists for key services prevent families from moving toward reunification in a timely fashion.

**Item 9. Adoption**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Area Needing Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case Review Findings**
Item 9 was applicable for 16 (40 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been made or were being made to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. The results are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 9</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 9 was rated as a Strength in 40 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, 20 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, and 17 percent of applicable Franklin County cases.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in four 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 when reviewers determined that the State had not made diligent efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner due to one of the following circumstances:

- Delays caused by a lack of services available for a child with special needs (four cases)
- Delays in court hearings and appeals (three cases)
- Delays on the part of the agency in filing for TPR (two cases)
- Delays caused by a disruption in a preadoptive placement (two cases)
- Lack of concerted efforts on the part of the agency to locate an adoptive family (one case)

Case review findings pertaining to the goal of adoption were as follows:

- There were 16 cases with a goal of adoption.
- Adoption was finalized in 10 of the 16 cases, 3 of which were finalized within 24 months of the child’s entry into foster care.
- In two cases, children were placed in pre-adoptive homes.

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Case reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had made diligent efforts to achieve adoptions in a timely manner in only 25 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 following information describes Ohio’s performance on the individual measures included in Data Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions:

- C2.1: 34.9 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 higher than the national median of 26.8 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 36.6 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 29.8 months. This median length of stay is less than the national median of 32.4 months but more than the national 25th percentile of 27.3 months. For this measure, a lower number of months indicates a higher level of performance.
- C2.3: 18.5 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the target period were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the target period. This percentage is below the national median of 20.2 percent.
- C2.4: 9.0 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the target period became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the target period. 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: 45.8 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is equal to the national median of 45.8 percent.

These data are presented to provide additional information about timeliness of adoption. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite scores.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, the courts must award permanent custody to the local PCSA before adoption is pursued for a child. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the agency holds matching conferences every 90 days to review potential permanent families for each child in permanent custody. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that families can be certified as both a foster and adoptive home and that expedited applications for adoption are available for foster parents.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that ODJFS requires that a petition for TPR be filed when a child has been in temporary custody for 12 or more months of a consecutive 22-month period, unless there are compelling reasons noted. The Statewide Assessment also reports that, although a child’s permanency goal does not change to adoption until permanent custody is awarded to the agency, many county agencies review permanency options before the 12-month hearing and involve adoption caseworkers in the initial out-of-home placement selection process.

The Statewide Assessment notes that ODJFS maintains the AdoptOHIO Kids website, partners with Wendy’s Wonderful Kids, and participates in the Adopt America Network to increase the number of children adopted. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that the State-funded Post-Adoption Special Services Subsidy assists families with family preservation services to meet the child’s treatment needs.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio achieved 1,661 adoptions in 2007 and 1,857 adoptions in 2006, 169 fewer than the previous year. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that 60 fewer children entered permanent custody in 2006. According to the Statewide Assessment, barriers to the timely achievement of adoption for children in permanent custody include a lack of readiness planning for youth, delays resulting from differences between court and agency recommendations for continued reunification efforts or other permanency options, and an insufficient number of adoptive homes.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item in Franklin County expressed the opinion that delays in adoption may be due, in part, to agency practices of a second case review before filing for adoption, appeals, and a lack of agency support for assisting prospective adoptive families in negotiating financial and legal barriers. Some stakeholders in Belmont County indicated that the dual foster/adoptive license facilitates the transition from foster care to adoption. Some stakeholders noted that courts expedite TPR appeals to hasten permanency.
Additional information on stakeholder perceptions of the adoption process is provided under items 27 and 28 in the Systemic Factors section of the report.

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

_____ Strength \____X__ Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 10 was applicable for 7 (17.5 percent) of the 40 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 10</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Lorain County and Belmont County cases and 60 percent of applicable Franklin County cases.

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in five cases when reviewers determined that the child was in a long-term, stable placement, and was receiving the necessary services and supports to promote a successful transition from foster care to independent living once the child reaches the age of emancipation.

Item 10 was rated as an ANI in two cases when reviewers determined that the placement at the time of the onsite CFSR was unstable and/or the agency was not making concerted efforts to provide Independent Living (IL) services.

Case review findings pertaining to the age of children with the goal of OPPLA at the time the goal was established were as follows:

- Three children were 16 or older.
- Two children were at least age 13 but younger than age 16.
- Two children were under the age of 12.
**Rating Determination**

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 71 percent of the 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. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS may assign the goal of planned permanent living arrangement if a court determines there is evidence to suggest that it is in the best interests of the child due to: the physical or mental health needs of the child, the physical or mental health needs of the parents, or if the child is 16 years or older and refuses other permanency options. The Statewide Assessment notes that children who are 16 years or older with the goal of OPPLA are required to participate in an IL program to prepare them for the transition from foster care to independent living.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from FACSIS show that in 2006, 4 percent of children entering State custody were assigned a goal of OPPLA and 12 percent of all children in custody had the goal of OPPLA. The Statewide Assessment notes that barriers to the appropriate use of the goal of OPPLA include a lack of quality placement options for older youth with significant behavioral health issues. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that county attorneys in some areas of the State prefer to support a goal of OPPLA to TPR. The Statewide Assessment notes that, although counties have reduced the use of OPPLA as a permanency goal, statewide data indicate that this disposition is granted at times for very young children.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level reported that caseworkers are generally diligent in their identification of youth eligible for or in need of IL services. Some stakeholders at the State level indicated that the State has the capacity to track youth who are eligible for IL services. These stakeholders indicated that this tracking is a part of the State’s monitoring process and that youth advisory board members and mentors have access to the information. Some stakeholders noted that State support for post-secondary education is available for youth who are in or have been in foster care.

Despite reports from other areas of the State, some stakeholders in Belmont County reported that IL services are no longer available in that county.
Permanency Outcome 2

| Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Substantially Achieved          | Belmont County | Franklin County | Lorain County |
| 6                               | 7              | 65.0            |
| Partially Achieved              | 9              | 32.5            |
| Not Achieved                    | 1              | 2.5             |
| Total Foster Care Cases         | 10             | 20              | 10             |

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 65.0 percent of cases, which does not meet the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 70 percent of Lorain County cases, 65 percent of Franklin County cases, and 60 percent of Belmont County cases.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The State was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2 in the 2002 CFSR and was required to address it in the PIP. The 2002 CFSR found the following key concerns at that time:
- The State did not consistently support the preservation of children’s connections to the community (item 14), particularly when children were placed outside of their home communities.
- The State did not consistently make efforts to seek relatives as placement resources (item 15), particularly paternal relatives.

To address these concerns, Ohio implemented the following strategies in its PIP:
- Provided training to local PCSAs to encourage caseworkers to explore visitation and placement with noncustodial parents, particularly fathers, unless they are not in the child’s best interests
- Increased the knowledge of PCSA staff about compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
- Incorporated monitoring of the preservation of connections and relative placements into the CPOE case record review
- Participated in the OCWTP development of competencies for the early identification, assessment, and involvement of kinship caregivers in the placement selection and case planning process

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.
Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings of the onsite 2008 CFSR pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

**Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement**

__X__ Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 11 was applicable for 25 (62.5 percent) of the 40 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 11</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 11 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable cases.

This item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:
- The child was placed in the same community or county as his/her parents or the child’s placement was not in the same community or county but was still in close proximity (16 cases).
- The child’s placement was not in close proximity to the parents but the placement was necessary to meet the child’s needs (nine cases).

**Rating Determination**

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 100 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies placed children in foster care placements that were in close proximity to their parents’ or relatives’ homes or that met their
special needs. This percentage is higher than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS requires all placements to be in close proximity to the home in which the child will be permanently placed. The Statewide Assessment notes that some counties have incorporated the Family-to-Family approach to reduce the number of children placed away from their homes and develop foster care placements within the child’s neighborhood or community. The Statewide Assessment also notes that placements may be made outside the child’s community if the child has more intensive treatment needs, is older, or in cases where the residential county does not have enough placement resources.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found that the State placed children in close proximity to the home from which they were removed in 89 percent of the cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item in Belmont County reported that the agency’s goal is to place children in their same communities; however, there are not enough local placement resources to meet the diverse needs of children in the county.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

___ Strength  __X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 12 was applicable for 17 (42.5 percent) of the 40 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 service or safety needs of one or more of the children. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 12</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 12 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Belmont County and Lorain County cases and 78 percent of applicable Franklin County cases.

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:
- The child was in a placement with all siblings (nine cases).
- The child was not placed with all siblings, but the siblings were separated due to the special needs of one or more of the siblings (six cases).

Item 12 was rated as an ANI in two cases when reviewers determined that the separation was not necessary to meet the children’s safety or service needs.

**Rating Determination**
Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 88 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**
According to the Statewide Assessment, county agencies are required to place siblings together unless it is not in the child’s best interests. The Statewide Assessment notes that State limits on the number of children who can be placed in a single foster home can be increased to accommodate large sibling groups. The Statewide Assessment also notes that genograms are used to identify relative placement resources to facilitate family connections and accommodate sibling groups. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that it is difficult to place large sibling groups together and to place sibling groups that include older children. The Statewide Assessment reports that FACSIS data for 2006 indicate that 63.5 percent of children in foster care were residing in the same placement as their siblings in foster care.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that ODJFS works diligently to keep siblings together. However, some stakeholders noted that a large sibling group or the diverse needs of siblings may require them to be placed separately.

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

_____ Strength  _____X___ Area Needing Improvement
**Case Review Findings**

Item 13 was applicable for 27 (67.5 percent) of the 40 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: 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 visitation with a parent was considered to be not in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings in foster care, and whether these visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 13</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 50 percent of applicable Belmont County and Franklin County cases and 40 percent of applicable Lorain County cases.

Item 13 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children, or that the agency made concerted efforts to promote more frequent visitation, if appropriate.

Item 13 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined one or more of the following:
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the mother (five cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father (10 cases). In two of the cases, the agency did not make sufficient efforts to locate the absent father.
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings (three cases).

Specific information from the case reviews is presented in the table below.
### Typical Frequency of Visitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Child and Mother</th>
<th>Child and Father</th>
<th>Child and Siblings in Foster Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred on at least a weekly basis</td>
<td>11 (46%)</td>
<td>3 (21%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less than weekly but at least twice a month</td>
<td>5 (21%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less than twice a month but at least once a month</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a month</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>5 (36%)</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits never occurred</td>
<td>3 (12.5%)</td>
<td>5 (36%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In only 48 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had 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 was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the court-approved case plan outlines the frequency, duration, location, and supervision of visitation among family members when a child is placed out of the home. The Statewide Assessment notes that court monitoring of visitation leads to more consistent visitation practice than when visitation is monitored only by the agency. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that visitation plans are reviewed with families frequently to ensure that reunification efforts are successful and safety needs are met. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that agencies provide transportation assistance to support visitation and flexible visitation options for parents, including attendance at school and extracurricular activities, as a part of the case plan. The Statewide Assessment also illustrates specific State efforts that have been dedicated to improving caseworker practice around visitation, including the development and provision of the visitation skill-enhancement training for caseworkers and supervisors by the OCWTP and specific county quality improvement plans focused on visitation efforts.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found that visitation with fathers complied with agency requirements in 90 percent of the cases and visitation with mothers complied with agency requirements in 94 percent of the cases, compared to visitation with siblings, which complied with agency requirements in 86 percent of the cases. The Statewide Assessment notes that barriers to frequent and quality visitation among family members include a lack of service options for families with severe mental health or substance abuse concerns, a lack of transportation resources, and scheduling barriers.
Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item in Franklin County indicated that children in foster care typically visit with their siblings and parents but that visitation may be limited due to limited transportation. Some stakeholders in Belmont County reported that visitation occurs in visitation centers and echoed the concern of some Franklin County stakeholders that a lack of transportation limits the frequency of visitation. Some stakeholders in Belmont County indicated that the visitation centers have limited hours of operation, presenting a barrier to maintaining regular visitation with families.

Item 14. Preserving connections

% Strength % Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 14 was applicable for 39 (97.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if the child entered foster care as a newborn, was immediately placed in a pre-adoptive placement, or if connections with the biological family were determined not to be in the child’s best interests. 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, cultural heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment are provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 14</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of Lorain County cases, 74 percent of applicable Franklin County cases, and 60 percent of Belmont County cases.

Item 14 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined one or more of the following:
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members and siblings not in foster care (22 cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with school, friends, and community (13 cases).
The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the child’s religious or cultural heritage (three cases).

The agency explored connections, but determined that maintaining connections was not in the best interests of the child (two cases).

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

- The agency did not facilitate the child’s connections to extended family members and siblings who are not in foster care (four cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the child’s religious or cultural heritage (two cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections to school or community (four cases).
- The agency did not explore the child’s connections (two cases).

**Rating Determination**

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that in 74 percent of the applicable cases, county child welfare agencies made concerted efforts to ensure that children in foster care maintained their connections to extended family, communities, schools, and cultural heritage. 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, ODJFS requires that case plans include information on facilitating connections to family and friends while the child is in foster care. To assist in preserving a child’s connections with friends, relationships, family, and community, the Statewide Assessment notes that agencies must create a lifebook, which is to be developed and updated while the child is in foster care. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers develop genograms to identify critical support systems important to each family.

The Statewide Assessment notes that children of American Indian Heritage must be placed in accordance with ICWA. The Statewide Assessment also notes that ODJFS provides guidelines and training to caseworkers in complying with ICWA. The Statewide Assessment also notes that some counties have incorporated the Family-to-Family approach to develop foster care placements within the child’s neighborhood or community to maintain important connections.

The Statewide Assessment reports that barriers to maintaining important connections for children in out-of-home placement include resistance from families to case plans, a lack of consistent involvement of families in initial case planning, and a lack of basic resources such as transportation.
Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that ODJFS county agencies attempt to ensure that children in foster care remain in their home schools, but that it is sometimes a challenge to do so. Some stakeholders noted that when children must change schools, there is often a lengthy delay in transferring academic records.

Item 15. Relative placement

____ Strength  __X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 15 was applicable for 29 (72.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 15</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, 50 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, and 40 percent of applicable Franklin County cases.

Item 15 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:
- The child was placed with relatives (three cases).
- Despite diligent efforts made by the agency, the child was not placed with relatives (10 cases).
- Despite diligent efforts made by the agency to place the child with relatives, the child’s intensive needs required a more specialized setting (two cases).
Item 15 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined the following:
- The agency did not make diligent efforts to search for either maternal or paternal relatives (six cases).
- The agency made efforts to search for maternal relatives but did not make efforts to search for paternal relatives (three cases).
- The agency did not make efforts to search for maternal relatives and seeking paternal relatives was determined not to be applicable for assessment (three cases).

Rating Determination
Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 56 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. 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, ODJFS requires that children who cannot live at home be placed with a relative as the first option and with a suitable non-relative as the second option. Only if no relative or suitable non-relative is available may a child be placed in the temporary custody of the agency. The Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers complete a genogram for each child and conduct a thorough initial and ongoing search for both maternal and paternal relatives throughout the life of the case to expand placement resources for the child and maintain important family connections. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program is designed to help relatives and kinship caregivers become guardians and custodians of minors. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Kinship Navigator Program operates in 38 counties to address the specific needs of kinship caregivers by partnering with community resource agencies.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in January 2006, 17,112 children were in out-of-home placements and, of these, 3000 (17 percent) were placed with approved kin. For FY 2007, the Statewide Assessment reports that 14.8 percent of children in out-of-home care were placed in relative foster family homes. The Statewide Assessment notes that some kinship placements are certified and licensed, while others are approved by county agencies. The Statewide Assessment notes that there is a lack of funding to support kinship caregivers who are not licensed.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that caseworkers prefer to place a child with a relative before considering a foster care placement. Some stakeholders in Belmont County noted that caseworkers complete a genogram for each child at the beginning of the case and that relatives can be located through the use of family team meetings. Some stakeholders in Franklin County noted that financial support is not available for kinship caregivers who are not licensed.
Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents  

____ Strength    __X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 16 was applicable for 26 (65 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. A case was not applicable if (1) parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child or (2) a relationship with the parents was considered to be not in the child’s best interests throughout the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of this assessment are provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 16</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 67 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, 62.5 percent of applicable Franklin County cases, and 25 percent of applicable Lorain County cases.

Item 16 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children. Examples of agency efforts to promote bonding between the child and parents included one or more of the following:

- Promoting family therapy and counseling
- Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as role models
- Supporting visitation with supervision and suggested activities
- Encouraging the parents’ participation in school activities and extracurricular activities
- Encouraging and facilitating the parents’ participation in the child’s medical care
- Providing or arranging for transportation to facilitate visitation

Item 16 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support a positive relationship with the child’s mother (six cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support a positive relationship with the child’s father (eight cases).
Rating Determination
Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 58 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. 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
According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS requires that case plans be developed in collaboration with parents to ensure that children have opportunities for multiple forms of communication with their parents on a regular basis. The Statewide Assessment indicates that barriers to supporting family relationships for children in out-of-home placements include a lack of initial involvement of families in case planning and a reluctance of family members to participate in activities together.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, some stakeholders in Belmont County expressed the opinion that biological parents are allowed and are sometimes encouraged to participate in the child’s medical and education-related activities, but that the parents experience difficulties in finding transportation to attend those activities.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved or Addressed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1
Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 65.6 percent of cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 82 percent of Lorain County cases, 71 percent of Belmont County cases, and 53 percent of Franklin County cases.
cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 65 percent (26 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 67 percent (16 cases) of the 24 in-home services cases.

**Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR**

The State was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 in the 2002 CFSR. The following key concerns were identified at that time with regard to the enhanced capacity of families to provide for their children’s needs:
- The State did not consistently assess needs and provide services for children, parents, and foster parents.
- The State did not consistently facilitate the involvement of children and families in case planning.
- The State did not consistently meet requirements for face-to-face contact with parents.

To address these concerns, Ohio implemented the following strategies in its PIP:
- Utilized a structured decision-making approach to strengthen caseworkers’ skills in assessing the needs of family members and engaging families in the case planning and case review process to increase parent, caregiver, and child involvement in case plan development and reassessment
- Revised the case plan and SAR documents to be more easily understood by families and caregivers, and standardized the process of apprising parents of their rights by providing them an explanatory pamphlet
- Revised the case plan rules for voluntary cases to provide guidelines on frequency and purpose of caseworker visits with parents and to clarify expectations for visits with absent parents.

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

**Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR**

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Area Needing Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Case Review Findings**

Item 17 was applicable for all 64 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents and provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of children’s (but not parents’) needs pertaining to education, physical health, and mental health. These issues are addressed in later items. The results of this assessment are provided in the table below.
Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of Lorain County cases, 71 percent of Belmont County cases, and 57 percent of Franklin County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 65 percent (26 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 75 percent (18 cases) of the 24 in-home services cases.

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

Specific information from the case reviews is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment and Services Evaluations</th>
<th>Foster Care Cases</th>
<th>In-Home Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s needs assessed and met</td>
<td>18 (75%)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s needs assessed and met</td>
<td>8 (53%)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s needs assessed and met</td>
<td>38 (95%)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parents’ needs assessed and met</td>
<td>31 (89%)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating Determination**
Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 69 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children and parents. 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, caseworkers use the case planning process to engage families in a structured needs assessment and service plan. The Statewide Assessment notes that the CAPMIS planning process focuses on collaboration with the family in identifying strengths and needs and protecting children’s safety. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers receive core training in family assessment and that monthly visitation is designed to monitor progress on case plan objectives.
The Statewide Assessment indicates that caseworkers struggle to both ensure the safety of children and build relationships with family members to appropriately assess the needs of all family members. This challenge may be due, in part, to the insufficient number of experienced caseworkers throughout the agency.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that caseworkers assess family strengths and needs as required by CAPMIS, and conduct reassessments every 3 months. Some stakeholders in Belmont County noted that family team meetings and the family drug courts provide important opportunities to identify needed services for children and families. Some stakeholders across the sites indicated that respite services are available for foster parents; stakeholders at the State level expressed concern that supportive services for foster parents were put in place for treatment foster homes, but were not available to non-treatment foster homes.

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

___ Strength ___X___ Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 18 was applicable for 58 (91 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 case planning and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child’s best interests. 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. Findings from this assessment are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 18</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 69 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, 64 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, and 61 percent of applicable Franklin County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 74 percent (25 cases) of the 34 applicable foster care cases and 50 percent (12 cases) of the 24 in-home services cases.
Item 18 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in case planning or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in case planning. The item was rated as an ANI 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.

Specific information from the case reviews is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Involved in Case Planning</th>
<th>Involved</th>
<th>Total Applicable Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>42 (87.5%)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>23 (61%)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>32 (73%)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating Determination**

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 64 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children, when appropriate, in the case planning process. 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, county agencies are required to work with the child’s parent, guardian or custodian, and pre-adoptive parent in the development of the case plan for a child. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers review case plans with families during monthly visits and that families are often involved in 6-month reviews of case plans. The Statewide Assessment notes that ProtectOHIO supports a family team meeting model to improve family engagement in case planning in eight of the 18 demonstration counties.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found that caseworkers documented that the agency provided parents and the child, if appropriate, an opportunity to participate in the development of the case plan in:

- 87 percent of in-home services cases
- 69 percent of protective supervision cases
- 70 percent of substitute care cases

The Statewide Assessment indicated that performance measured during the CPOE review varied across the counties, but only 18 of 88 counties achieved strong compliance ratings of 90 percent or above across all three types of cases.
The Statewide Assessment reports that caseworkers struggle to engage families in ongoing case planning due, in part, to a lack of early efforts to identify and engage families.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that parents, youth, and foster parents are routinely engaged in case planning and that children over the age of 14 participate in case planning. Some stakeholders in Belmont County noted that family team meetings offer families the opportunity to be involved in case planning. Stakeholder responses were mixed regarding the level of youth involvement, with some stakeholders responding that youth generally participate in case planning once they reach the age of 14, while other stakeholders indicated that youth are not routinely involved in the case planning process.

Additional information on stakeholder perceptions of the case planning process is provided under item 25 in the Systemic Factors section of the report.

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 19</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of Belmont County and Lorain County cases and 87 percent of Franklin County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 93 percent (37 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 79 percent (19 cases) of the 24 in-home services cases.
Item 19 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s safety and well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined that 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.

Specific information from the case reviews is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child</th>
<th>Foster Care Cases</th>
<th>In-Home Services Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred on at least a weekly basis</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less than weekly but at least twice a month</td>
<td>9 (22.5%)</td>
<td>8 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less than twice a month but at least once a month</td>
<td>27 (67.5%)</td>
<td>10 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a month</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating Determination**

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 87.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. 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**

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are required to visit with children in both in-home and protective supervision cases at least monthly to monitor safety and progress on case plan objectives. The Statewide Assessment notes that when safety plans are required for children who remain in their homes, they are to be monitored with weekly caseworker visits. Safety plans for children in out-of-home placements are to be monitored by caseworkers with a visit to the child during the first week, again within the first 4 weeks, and monthly thereafter. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that core training has been developed and is provided to caseworkers on improving the quality of visitation and contact with children in substitute care.

The Statewide Assessment reports that, for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, a CPOE review found the following:

- Visits with children were conducted monthly in 72 percent of 964 in-home services cases.
- Visits with children were conducted monthly in 74 percent of 1,187 protective supervision cases.
- Visits with children were conducted monthly in 85 percent of 1,417 substitute care cases.

The Statewide Assessment lists several potential reasons for poor compliance with visitation rules, including inadequate caseworker documentation, insufficient local placement resources, and high turnover rates. However, several strengths of the State also were noted in the Statewide Assessment, including the following:
Training is available through OCWTP and other venues to assist caseworkers in learning how to conduct visits. Some counties provide county vehicles to caseworkers to conduct visits, reducing financial hardship on caseworkers. With SACWIS fully implemented, “ticklers” alert caseworkers and supervisors when visits are required.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that caseworkers visit with children on at least a monthly basis. Some stakeholders noted that caseworkers discuss school, case plan goals, and safety with children at every visit.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents

___ Strength ___X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 20 was applicable for 48 (75 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 the children. All cases that were not applicable were foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker’s face-to-face contact with the children’s mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and/or ensure the children’s safety and well-being. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 20</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 73 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, 64 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, and 50 percent of applicable Franklin County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 46 percent (11 cases) of the 24 applicable foster care cases and 71 percent (17 cases) of the 24 in-home cases.

Item 20 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined one or more of the following:
• Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency (11 cases).
• Visits with the mother were not of sufficient quality (14 cases).
• Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency (12 cases).
• Visits with the father were not of sufficient quality (five cases).
• There were no visits with the father (eight cases).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents</th>
<th>Foster Care Cases</th>
<th>In-Home Services Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred on at least a weekly basis</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less than weekly but at least twice a month</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less than twice a month but at least once a month</td>
<td>7 (30%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a month</td>
<td>9 (39%)</td>
<td>4 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits never occurred</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating Determination**

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 58 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. 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, caseworkers are required to visit with parents in both in-home and protective supervision cases at least monthly to monitor safety and progress on case plan objectives. The Statewide Assessment notes that the CAPMIS model uses family visits as a basis for development and review of the case plan, improving both the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents.

The Statewide Assessment reports that a review of 964 in-home services cases showed that visits with parents were conducted monthly in 66 percent of the cases, a CPOE review of 1,187 protective supervision cases for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, showed that visits with parents were conducted monthly in 62 percent of the cases, and a CPOE review of 1,417 substitute care cases showed that visits with parents were conducted monthly in 60 percent of the cases.
The Statewide Assessment indicates that poor compliance with visitation rules results from inadequate caseworker documentation, a lack of adequate caseworker training in family engagement, and high turnover rates. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that the ProtectOHIO visitation project, Family to Family, and family team meeting strategies improve the quality of visits with families.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that caseworkers visit monthly with parents of children in foster care, and often more frequently with parents receiving in-home services. Some stakeholders in Belmont County noted that ongoing searches are conducted to locate absent parents throughout the life of a case.

**Well-Being Outcome 2**

<p>| Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs |
| Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Status of Well-Being Outcome 2**
Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 87.5 percent of applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 100 percent of applicable Belmont County and Lorain County cases and 75 percent of applicable Franklin County cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 89 percent (31 cases) of the 35 applicable foster care cases and 85 percent (11 cases) of the 13 applicable in-home services cases.

**Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR**
The State was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 in the 2002 CFSR because item 21 (education needs) was rated as an ANI. The key concern identified at that time with regard to meeting the educational needs of children was that no assessment of educational needs was completed and services were not provided in cases in which children showed evidence of school-related behavioral problems, developmental delays, learning disabilities, and/or poor school performance.
To address this concern, Ohio implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Partnered with the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to assist school districts that are or would like to be Community Alternative Funding System Providers
- Provided information to PCSAs regarding student rights and how to request development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Worked with Ohio Family and Children First (OFCF) to promote an integrated network of educationally based supportive services
- Supported joint initiatives by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and the Ohio Department of Education to address emotional and behavioral problems that compromise student success

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

**Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR**

The findings of the onsite 2008 CFSR pertaining to the specific item assessed under Well-Being Outcome 2 are presented below.

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

____ Strength ____X__ Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 21 was applicable for 48 (75 percent) of the 64 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if either of the following applied: children were not of school age, or 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 21</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Belmont County and Lorain County cases and 75 percent of applicable Franklin County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 89 percent (31 cases) of the 35 applicable foster care cases and 85 percent (11 cases) of the 13 applicable in-home services cases.
Item 21 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency assessed the child’s educational needs and maintained contact with the child’s school to monitor the child’s performance (20 cases).
- The agency assessed the child’s educational needs and ensured that specialized services, tutoring, or an IEP was in place (25 cases).

Item 21 was rated as an ANI in six cases in which educational needs were identified and noted in the case record, but the agency did not follow up to ensure that recommended services were in place.

**Rating Determination**

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 87.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of Strength for this item. A 95-percent standard is set for this item because it is the only item assessed for the outcome. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the family assessment process includes educational information, and caseworkers outline educational services in the case plan. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that several counties monitor educational success as a key benchmark for children in out-of-home care; for example, Hamilton County implemented Kids in School Rule, a program to encourage foster children to stay in school and achieve academic success. The Statewide Assessment notes that placement transitions often result in school transitions and that agencies have developed partnerships with school districts to ease these transitions.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that child welfare agencies are required to complete a form (JFS 01443) detailing the child’s educational and health information and review and update the form at each 6-month review, placement change, or change in educational or health information. The Statewide Assessment reports that a CPOE review for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, indicates that 85.5 percent of the PCSAs completed the JFS 01443 for the most recent substitute care placement, and that 81 percent of the PCSAs provided information to the custodian, parent, guardian, and substitute caregivers.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that educational progress is routinely monitored by caseworkers for children in foster care. Some stakeholders across the sites noted that there are efforts to keep children in their same schools when they enter foster care. Some stakeholders in Belmont and Franklin Counties noted that caseworkers attend IEP meetings at the schools, although stakeholders also reported that there can be friction in the relationship between schools and PCSAs. Some stakeholders in Lorain County noted that the School Success program provides
children in foster care with tutors and computers to boost performance; however, stakeholders indicated that the program is being phased out due to financial constraints. Some stakeholders reported that financial support for higher education is not available for former foster youth.

Well-Being Outcome 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belmont County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved or Addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 82.8 percent of applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87.5 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, 82 percent of applicable Franklin County cases, and 79 percent of applicable Lorain County cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 33 (82.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases and 15 (83 percent) of the 18 applicable in-home services cases.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The State was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3 during the 2002 CFSR and was required to address it in the PIP. The 2002 CFSR noted the following key concerns with respect to the State’s ability to meet the physical and mental health needs of children:

- The State did not consistently assess and address the physical health needs of children due to delays in health screening and the lack of preventive care, as well as findings that some children were not receiving services for identified health needs.
- The State did not consistently assess and address the mental and behavioral health needs of children due, in part, to a lack of service provision addressing identified needs, delays in service availability, and/or insufficient frequency of service provision.
To address these concerns, Ohio implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Clarified the responsibilities of public and private child-placing agencies (PCPAs) for effectively assessing health-care needs, coordinating the provision of appropriate services to meet health-care needs, and documenting services needed and provided in addition to any services that were not provided.
- Worked with the Ohio Department of Health to provide information to PCSAs regarding utilization of public oral health services.
- Increased PCSA awareness of available local health-care services by working with HealthChek to compile and distribute a list of such services.
- Provided training to therapists, caseworkers, and foster and adoptive parents regarding the special behavioral health-care needs of children in out-of-home care and adoptive placements by including specialized, issue-specific workshops in ODJFS-sponsored training and other conferences.
- Promoted the provision of specialized programming for children of parents who are addicted to alcohol or other drugs.

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings of the onsite 2008 CFSR pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 3 are presented below.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 91 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, 86 percent of applicable Franklin County cases, and 75 percent of applicable Lorain County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 85 percent (34 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 80 percent (4 cases) of the 5 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 22 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children’s medical and dental health needs were routinely assessed and services provided as needed. Item 22 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined the following:
- The agency noted medical and dental needs but did not follow up appropriately (one case).
- The agency provided neither medical nor dental assessments (two cases).
- The agency did not assess dental needs but did assess medical needs (two cases).
- The agency did not assess medical needs but did assess dental needs if they were applicable (two cases).

Rating Determination
Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 84 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies had adequately addressed the 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 the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, the family assessment process includes information regarding an initial and ongoing assessment of physical and dental health needs and caseworkers outline these services in the case plan. The Statewide Assessment notes that medical screenings are required for children in substitute care within 5 days of placement. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that child welfare agencies are required to complete the form JFS 01443 detailing the child’s educational and health information, to be reviewed and updated at each 6-month review, placement change, or change in medical information.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found the following:
- 76 percent of children had medical examinations in accordance with State timeframe requirements.
- 84 percent of required evaluation forms were filed regarding medical assessments for children in substitute care.
- Completed JFS 01443 forms were provided to parents and substitute caregivers in 81 percent of the cases.

The Statewide Assessment notes the following barriers to the sufficient provision of medical services to children:
- Increasing competing demands regarding covered Medicaid services and/or populations
- Budgetary constraints at both State and local levels
- A limited number of Ohio dentists willing to accept Medicaid
- A growing number of uninsured Ohioans
- Unmet transportation needs, particularly in rural areas
Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that ODJFS ensures that medical and dental screening for children in foster care is performed in a timely fashion.

Item 23. Mental health of the child

___ Strength ___X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 23 was applicable for 48 (75 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 mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and whether appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 23</th>
<th>Belmont County</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Lorain County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of applicable Lorain County cases, 87.5 percent of applicable Belmont County cases, and 82 percent of applicable Franklin County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 87.5 percent (28 cases) of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 81 percent (13 cases) of the 16 applicable in-home services cases.

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

- Mental health needs were assessed but not properly addressed (four cases).
- Some services were provided, but the agency did not provide for a comprehensive assessment (two cases).
- Mental health needs were neither assessed nor addressed (one case).
Ratings Determination
Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 85 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the county child welfare agencies 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 the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, the family assessment process includes information regarding an initial and ongoing assessment of mental health needs and caseworkers outline these services in the case plan. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program, known as HealthCheck in Ohio, provides prevention and treatment services to children. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that the Access to Better Care (ABC) project has developed collaborative partnerships with community agencies to improve the availability and quality of mental health care for children and families with the primary objective of reducing out-of-home placements.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the 484 project (a collaboration between ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services to prioritize substance abuse services for families in the child welfare system) and the Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) project have improved the availability and quality of alcohol and drug abuse treatment services for families. The Statewide Assessment reports that families participating in the START program showed a higher rate of reunification—86 percent in 2005—than the general population did—79 percent. The Statewide Assessment indicates that substance abuse is a factor in up to 80 percent of all foster care cases.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that each county protective services agency must negotiate a separate agreement with each county mental health agency and that the coordination of cross-jurisdictional mental health resources is extremely difficult. In addition, the Statewide Assessment noted that State legislation passed in 2005 made significant changes to Ohio’s tax code that impacted State behavioral health-care funding. Stakeholders consulted in the development of the Statewide Assessment noted that there is a need for additional outpatient mental health services in most communities and that high turnover rates among mental health service providers is a barrier to achieving reunification, placement stability, and permanency.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that counseling services and psychological evaluation services are available. However, some stakeholders noted that there are insufficient mental health and drug treatment programs to meet the needs of children, and that there are waiting lists for the services that are available.
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. It should be noted that ratings for the systemic factors are not based on single comments from an individual stakeholder; however, these comments are included in the report when they provide important insight or clarification regarding the State’s performance on a particular systemic factor.

A score for substantial conformity is established for each systemic factor. Scores of 3 and 4 represent substantial conformity. Scores of 1 and 2 mean that the State is not in substantial conformity with the requirements of that systemic factor. Specifically, a score of 4 is given when all of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement. A score of 3 is given when 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. A score of 2 indicates that 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. A score of 1 indicates that none of the CFSP or program requirements are in place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating the Systemic Factor</th>
<th>Not in Substantial Conformity</th>
<th>Substantial Conformity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>None of the CFSP or program requirements are in place.</td>
<td>All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information also is provided regarding the State’s performance on each systemic factor for the State’s first CFSR. If the systemic factor was part of the State’s PIP, the key concerns addressed in the PIP and the strategies for assessing those concerns are noted.
I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Statewide Information System

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. Ohio also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2002 CFSR and, therefore, the State was not required to address this factor in the PIP.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings of the 2008 CFSR for the item assessed for this factor are presented below.

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

__X__ Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as a Strength because information gained from both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews demonstrated that Ohio’s information systems 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. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

At the time of the Onsite Review, Ohio was using two information systems: the new information system, SACWIS, was active in 86 of 88 counties, and the legacy information system, FACSIS, was active in the remaining two counties. Although Ohio’s transition to the new information system has been primarily successful, stakeholders reported frustration and challenges with the conversion process. The main concern expressed by stakeholders at all three sites was the difficulty in the ability to change or revise information previously entered into the system.
Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, Ohio has finalized the implementation of a new information system, SACWIS, which replaced FACSIS at the end of 2008. According to the Statewide Assessment, both SACWIS and FACSIS had the ability to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is in foster care. SACWIS includes assessment tools such as CAPMIS, generates management reports, tracks case plan status, provides financial eligibility and payments, includes provider information regarding placements and services, matches children with appropriate placements, and exchanges data with other State systems. The Statewide Assessment notes that Ohio’s former system, FACSIS, provided data regarding case tracking, management tracking, compliance, evaluation, and licensing.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level reported that the SACWIS system was operating in 86 of the 88 counties in Ohio. Stakeholders reported that SACWIS captures the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for every child in foster care, including for children placed by PCPAs. Some stakeholders statewide noted that because SACWIS captures the different practices in different counties, it offers a consistent way to capture data across the State and to standardize practice. Some stakeholders noted that SACWIS is comprehensive and holds promise for easily tracking children, services, and family history. Some stakeholders at the State level noted that county agencies have the flexibility to merge data with partner agencies.

Despite positive impressions expressed by stakeholders of SACWIS, some stakeholders noted significant frustration in transitioning to SACWIS, and some stakeholders in each site observed that it is difficult or impossible to change data once it has been entered. Moreover, several stakeholders in Franklin County commented on the stress and anxiety generated by the sequence requirements of the system. Specifically, stakeholders noted that certain data cannot be entered or edited unless staff involved early in the case process had input their information first.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</th>
<th>Not in Substantial Conformity</th>
<th>Substantial Conformity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63
Status of Case Review System

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

Ohio also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and, therefore, was required to address this factor in the PIP. Item 25 (written case plan) and item 27 (permanency hearings) were rated as ANIs due to the following concerns:

- Although the State had a policy to provide written case plans for each child in foster care, they were not consistently prepared in a timely manner and were often pro-forma.
- Children and families were not consistently involved in the case planning process.
- The State did not have a process to provide for timely permanency hearings for children in foster care.

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

- Employed a structured decision-making approach to strengthen caseworkers’ skills in engaging families in the case planning and case review process to increase parent, caregiver, and child involvement in case plan development and reassessment
- Revised the case plan and SAR documents to be more easily understood by families and caregivers
- Employed a Family Law Case Manager to determine if overcrowding of court dockets is contributing to Ohio’s timeliness of reviews, to identify State trends or system barriers that contribute to extensions in case processing, and to provide onsite assistance to communities in implementing effective practices
- Produced *Judicial Benchbook: Arbitration and Mediation Practice and Procedure* for courts handling dependency cases
- Employed the Supreme Court Office to implement initiatives that impact judicial systems, such as guardian *ad litem* (GAL) standards
- Increased judicial opportunities for family law education; examples include sponsoring a national “Family Court Forum” in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and increasing the number of courses in family law at the Judicial College of the Supreme Court of Ohio

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings of the 2008 CFSR with regard to the specific items assessed for this 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Area Needing Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td><em><strong>X</strong></em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 25 is rated as an ANI. Although the State has a process in place to ensure that each child has a written case plan, developed jointly with the child’s parents, the onsite findings and data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that practice is inconsistent in the area of child and family engagement in case planning. In addition, item 18, which measures child and family involvement in case planning, was rated as an ANI in 36 percent of applicable cases. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, county agencies are required to prepare and maintain a case plan for any child and family receiving services from that agency, except when a PCPA is providing services to a child who is subject to a voluntary permanent agreement and that child is younger than 6 months old. The Statewide Assessment notes that, through CAPMIS, for both in-home and out-of-home services cases, case plans are reviewed with the family and the caseworker during monthly visits and are formally reviewed every 90 days by the agency. For the counties that have not yet implemented CAPMIS, formal case plan reviews occur at the SARs. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the agency must work together with parents and Tribes, if relevant, in the development of the case plan. According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers receive core training in family assessments and case planning.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found that caseworkers documented that the agency provided parents and, if appropriate, the child an opportunity to participate in the development of the case plan in:
- 87 percent of in-home services cases
- 69 percent of protective supervision cases
- 70 percent of substitute care cases

The Statewide Assessment reports that barriers to effective and regular case planning include caseworker turnover, high caseloads, and a lack of early involvement of families in case planning.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level reported that case plans are prepared for every child and that they are completed within 30 days of case opening. Some stakeholders noted that there is a “tickler” in SACWIS that indicates when the original and subsequent case plans are due. Some stakeholders indicated that caseworkers convene family team meetings every 90 days to discuss and update case planning with a supervisor, parents, other family members, individuals
offering support, service providers, and children, if appropriate. Some stakeholders across the sites noted that parents are consulted about and participate in case planning activities, while others stated that parents are not always engaged in the process.

Some stakeholders in Franklin County noted that caseworkers prepare case plans based on the family’s strengths and needs and that, as a result, they are individualized. Some stakeholders in Franklin County also noted that each case plan is reviewed every 6 months during the SAR. Some stakeholders at the State level and in Lorain County mentioned that courts are beginning to use mediation to engage families in the case planning process.

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 both the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio has an effective periodic case review process, using the SAR, and reviews the status of each child at least once every 6 months, either by court or by administrative review. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, the agency uses CAPMIS to conduct regular assessments of case plan progress. Each case is reviewed every 90 days and the SAR takes place every 6 months. The Statewide Assessment notes, however, that the lack of parental participation in the SAR can be a barrier to an effective case review process.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE review of 2,531 cases statewide for the 2-year period ending December 31, 2007, found that:

- County agencies conducted a SAR on time in 90 percent of the court-supervised protective supervision cases.
- County agencies conducted a SAR on time in 89 percent of the substitute care cases.
- County agencies prepared a summary of progress toward goals in 91 percent of the court-supervised cases.
- County agencies prepared a summary of progress toward goals in 93 percent of the substitute care cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level reported that the SAR is completed every 6 months consistently. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the SAR provides a routine forum for examining permanency goals and changing them, if appropriate.
Some stakeholders in Franklin County reported that the SAR is conducted by the agency and that the court is not involved. Some stakeholders in Lorain County reported that the agency conducts SARs for in-home cases and that the court conducts SARs for foster care cases.

Some stakeholders in Belmont County reported that the SAR is usually coordinated with the scheduled family team meeting. Some stakeholders in Franklin County noted that the SAR places an emphasis on parental involvement and that invitation lists are prepared 2 months in advance of the scheduled SAR to ensure parent and stakeholder participation. Some stakeholders in Lorain County also expressed the opinion that parents are encouraged to be involved in the process, including participation by telephone if they are out of town or incarcerated.

Some stakeholders in Belmont County noted that the court sets the date for the SAR and that the judge or a court liaison participates in the SAR, which is held before the formal 6-month review hearing. However, some stakeholders in Belmont County noted that there are an insufficient number of attorneys available to manage child welfare cases, resulting in delays in court hearings.

**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**

_____ Strength  ____X__ Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as an ANI. Although Ohio does have a process in place to hold permanency hearings for each child in foster care at least once every 12 months, according to the Statewide Assessment, only 70 percent of State child welfare professionals surveyed said that the hearings occurred in a timely manner. The Statewide Assessment cited the court practice of granting continuances as the most common barrier to the timeliness of permanency hearings. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the courts are required to hold a permanency hearing for every child in foster care every 12 months until permanency is achieved. The Statewide Assessment reports that agencies are required to file a reunification assessment with the court in advance of the permanency hearing to assist the court in determining whether appropriate goals have been set and met. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the Supreme Court of Ohio has been active in addressing critical needs related to timeliness of permanency hearings and additional information regarding court-agency collaboration is listed in item 26 above.

The Statewide Assessment reports that 70 percent of respondents in a survey of stakeholders reported that permanency hearings are held on a timely basis. However, no data were provided in the Statewide Assessment regarding the actual frequency of timely permanency hearings. The Statewide Assessment notes that the barriers to timely permanency hearings include continuances, which in some instances are granted due to a lack of adequate preparation by some or all parties.
**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level expressed the opinion that the 12-month permanency hearing is held in a timely manner for children in foster care and indicated that this issue is a priority for the State. Stakeholders noted that continuances do not generally pose a concern for permanency hearings. However, some stakeholders acknowledged that courts do grant continuances and that there is no statewide system to track the timeliness of permanency hearings.

Several stakeholders in Belmont County and Lorain County remarked that the permanency hearings were effective in moving children to permanency. For example, some stakeholders noted that the permanency hearing features a discussion of goals, placement recommendations, services completed, and services that are still being provided.

Some stakeholders in Belmont County reported that a formal pre-trial hearing is held before the permanency hearing and there is a sense that more is at stake in the permanency hearing than in the 6-month review. Some stakeholders in Franklin County reported that cases are assigned to a single judge for the life of the case. Some stakeholders in Lorain County reported that permanency hearings are scheduled for 11 months after the child is taken into custody and that they are cancelled if there is a new motion for TPR or another dispositional order.

**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 because both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that agency practices are inconsistent with regard to filing for TPR within mandated timelines. However, onsite case review findings show that ASFA requirements regarding TPR were met in 92 percent (23 cases) of the 25 cases for which the requirements were applicable. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Case review findings with regard to achieving adoptions (item 9) show that delays in two cases in filing TPR petitions impeded the timely achievement of adoptions.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the agency must file a petition for TPR on behalf of any child who has been in temporary custody for 12 or more months of a consecutive 22-month period, unless compelling reasons are documented. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the Supreme Court of Ohio has established a pool of experienced juvenile law judges available to be assigned to courts with increased or extended caseloads in response to increased hearing demands created by the ASFA timelines. The Statewide Assessment notes that Ohio expanded the number of exceptions for providing reasonable efforts to reunify families, expanding the population of children who are eligible for another permanent placement. However, the Statewide Assessment found
that child welfare professionals across the State reported widely inconsistent practice in the timely filing of TPR petitions. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that a lack of availability of substance abuse treatment and mental health services contributes to delays in the filing of petitions for TPR.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that county agencies tend to adhere to the State statute regarding the filing of a petition for TPR when a child has been in foster care for 12 of the past 22 months. However, some stakeholders also reported that there are cases where the timelines are not met.

Although stakeholders confirmed that Ohio does not collect data regarding the timeliness of the filing of TPR petitions or the appropriateness of the documentation of compelling reasons, some stakeholders across the sites and at the State level noted that compelling reasons for not filing a TPR petition include cases in which families are still working toward goals, cases in which relatives are involved in supporting reunification for children, and cases involving older youth close to the date of emancipation.

Some stakeholders in Lorain County reported that the lack of an identified adoptive home is not a deterrent to filing a petition for TPR.

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

___ Strength ___X___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an ANI. Although Ohio has a policy in place regarding the notification of foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of their right to be notified of and be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to a child in their care, both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated that there are inconsistencies in practice with regard to caregiver notification of and participation in court hearings. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, either the court or the agency must provide notice of court reviews to substitute caregivers. The Statewide Assessment notes that courts typically provide this notification. The Statewide Assessment also notes that a barrier to increased notification and participation is that caregivers have not received sufficient education regarding their rights.

Foster parents surveyed during the development of the Statewide Assessment had mixed responses with respect to Ohio’s practice in this area. Less than 40 percent of foster and pre-adoptive parents who responded to the Statewide Assessment survey indicated that they always were notified of and participated in reviews and hearings concerning the children in their care.
CPOE results from 84 of 88 counties in 2006 reflected that foster and pre-adoptive parents were notified of SARs in 88 percent of the case record reviews and in 86 percent of the cases if a court hearing took the place of a SAR.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, there were mixed opinions from stakeholders across the State regarding the notification of foster and pre-adoptive parents of their right to be heard. The majority of stakeholders indicated that foster and pre-adoptive parents are receiving timely notification of SARs and permanency hearings, although there were a few stakeholders across the sites and at the State level who indicated that there are inconsistencies in practice regarding the notification of foster and pre-adoptive parents about court hearings.

Some stakeholders statewide noted that the court is responsible for notification regarding court hearings and that the county agency is responsible for notification regarding family team meetings and SARs. Some stakeholders across the State indicated that some jurisdictions welcome the participation of foster parents in court hearings and some jurisdictions do not due to a belief that foster parents are not a party to the case. Some stakeholders across the State indicated that foster and pre-adoptive caregivers routinely participate in SARs.

### III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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**Status of Quality Assurance System**

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The State also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and, therefore, was not required to address this factor in its PIP.

**Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR**

Findings of the 2008 CFSR with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor 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 the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio has developed and implemented standards that are monitored regularly to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, all public and private agencies that care for or place children must be certified by ODJFS, including PCSAs, residential treatment centers, group homes, crisis care facilities, and PCPAs. The Statewide Assessment notes that ODJFS certification requirements are consistent with the Council on Accreditation Standards governing foster care services, adoption services, and group living services and that certification protects the health, safety, rights, and well-being of children. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that ODJFS reviews certification of public and private agencies every 2 years. The Statewide Assessment also notes that certified agencies ensure compliance with relevant requirements by evaluating foster and adoptive placements every 2 years; residential treatments centers and group homes are inspected twice in a 24-month period.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item in Franklin County reported that standards are in place regarding safety and well-being for children in foster care placements, including those delivered through contract agencies, and that they are provided through training and monitored through licensing. Some stakeholders in Franklin County indicated that all case closures are sent to the review staff and that QA staff participate in all legal staffings for children moving to permanency and investigate options for placement. Franklin County stakeholders report that this oversight process ensures that placement providers are meeting their standards, which are based on safety, permanency, and well-being issues. Some stakeholders in Lorain County reported that safety standards for foster parents include provisions regarding babysitters and respite care; babysitters must be approved by the agency. In addition, some stakeholders in Lorain County noted that monthly visits provide ongoing information regarding the conditions for children in foster homes and that Lorain County has a Custody Review Team that reviews each child in foster care to make sure appropriate services are being provided and that the child is moving to permanency.

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

__X__ Strength ______ Area Needing Improvement
Item 31 is rated as a Strength because the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that the State is operating an identifiable QA 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 efforts. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Ohio’s child welfare QA system, CPOE, is based on CFSR outcomes and provides a platform for ODJFS and each county agency to collaboratively evaluate service quality, share information, and develop local improvement strategies. The Statewide Assessment reports that ODJFS reviews each county agency onsite every 24 months and that this review includes case reviews, data reporting, staff discussions, and ongoing monitoring and feedback. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that county agencies conduct a variety of local QA activities. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that the CPOE process results in local quality improvement plans focused on key outcomes.

The Statewide Assessment notes that ODJFS conducts evaluations of major reform initiatives such as ProtectOHIO, Alternative Response, and CAPMIS. The Statewide Assessment reports that ODJFS shares CPOE results with stakeholders including the public, private community agencies, and the courts to improve transparency and collaboration opportunities; CPOE reports are public documents.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that CPOE reviews are conducted regularly to review CFSR outcomes and provide local quality improvement plans. Some stakeholders reported that compliance reviews of the Multiethnic Placement Act occur regularly as well.

However, some stakeholders reported that the CPOE process is not associated with SACWIS, does not include stakeholder interviews, and does not allow for comparability among counties. Some stakeholders expressed the hope that SACWIS will provide a means for identifying practice challenges and developing policy improvements.

Some stakeholders in Franklin County reported that CFSR outcomes are tracked monthly. Some stakeholders in Franklin and Lorain Counties reported that Center for Quality Improvement (CQI) peer reviews take place quarterly to evaluate casework. Some stakeholders in Belmont and Franklin Counties noted that family team meetings provide an opportunity for QA and external scrutiny.

Despite these comments regarding the effective functioning of the CQI and CPOE, State-level stakeholders noted that a barrier to successful CPOE efforts is the reduction in QA staff occurring due to attrition and funding shortages.
IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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Status of Staff and Provider Training

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings of the 2008 CFSR with regard to the specific items assessed under Staff and Provider Training 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. Ohio is operating a State-administered initial caseworker and supervisor development and training program that addresses the key elements of the CFSP. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the OCWTP administers initial and ongoing training for caseworkers and supervisors through eight regional training centers. The Statewide Assessment reports that initial training consists of 102 hours over the first year in eight core modules for caseworkers. The training consists of 72 hours over the first 18 months in six core modules for supervisors. The Statewide Assessment indicates that OCWTP uses a computer software program, TrainTrack™, to track training records for staff and trainer performance. Individual caseworkers’ training records are available to caseworkers and supervisors if they contact the regional training center. The Statewide Assessment notes that some counties provide initial orientation and field training to new staff by assigning caseloads before State-level classroom training is fully completed.
The Statewide Assessment reports that OCWTP conducted a survey of workshop participants in 2007 and found that the average training evaluation score was 4.7 on a 5-point scale. The Statewide Assessment notes that OCWTP conducts evaluations to measure knowledge and skills learned as a result of attending training and then adjusts training curricula regularly.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that new caseworkers must complete training within the first year and that training is competency-based. In addition, some stakeholders reported that training is required for new supervisors. Some stakeholders indicated that county agencies offer orientation and shadowing in addition to required training. Some stakeholders noted that training is offered four times per year in collaboration with the university via eight regional training centers located throughout the State. Some stakeholders indicated that regional training staff meet with county liaisons on a quarterly basis to determine if caseworkers are accessing core training in a timely manner; however, stakeholders also indicated that access to the TrainTrack system is limited to training center staff. Some stakeholders noted that some counties assign caseworkers small caseloads to facilitate field training before classroom training is completed. Some stakeholders noted that the Classroom Performance Center system allows trainees to inform the trainer immediately whether the concept has been understood by clicking a button.

State-level stakeholders remarked that the State has made OCWTP training curricula available to private providers that use the curricula extensively. Some stakeholders in Belmont County noted that caseworkers receive certification upon completion of training. Belmont County stakeholders also commented on the usefulness of learning labs, utilized outside of the core training, which provide caseworkers with the opportunity to practice concepts until they feel more comfortable. Some stakeholders in Franklin County noted that training is reinforced with regular supervision and that the managed care providers in that county are required to attend the same core training county caseworkers do. Franklin County stakeholders also noted that the initial training provided an adequate foundation for caseworkers. Some stakeholders in Lorain County noted that their county runs a duplicate system to TrainTrack to track training attendance of Lorain County 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. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that the State is operating an ongoing staff development and training program that addresses the key skills and knowledge base of caseworker and supervisors. This program includes the Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA), which evaluates ongoing training needs of staff; however, this process can be strengthened by implementing a process to systematically share caseworker completion of ongoing training requirements with supervisors. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, OCWTP administers initial and ongoing training for caseworkers, supervisors, and foster and adoptive parents through eight regional training centers. The Statewide Assessment reports that caseworkers are required to complete 36 hours of annual in-service training and supervisors are required to complete 30 hours of annual in-service training. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that at a minimum of once every 2 years, the caseworker and the supervisor are responsible for completing a caseworker ITNA together to determine the caseworker’s training needs and identify the training or courses the caseworker must complete. Furthermore, supervisors must work with the executive director or other designated person to complete a supervisor ITNA within the same timeframes to determine the supervisor’s training needs and applicable training or courses. The Statewide Assessment states that the PCSAs also are required to ensure completion of ITNAs and submit ITNA data to their respective regional training center.

The Statewide Assessment notes that ODJFS and the OCWTP partnered with seven of Ohio’s public universities to develop specialized child welfare courses and administer a title IV-E child welfare education program.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that the ITNA is a part of each caseworker’s annual performance evaluation. Some stakeholders also indicated that training is geared to locally identified training needs and that counties use supervision and unit meetings to incorporate training into the job. State-level stakeholders indicated that there are two evaluation forms for all 4,000 trainings and that focus groups also are used to gather evaluative information. In addition, stakeholders expressed the opinion that there is no systematic process for sharing information about staff completion of training with supervisors at this time.

Lorain County stakeholders indicated that caseworker training hours are tracked by human resource staff and shared with the employee. Stakeholders in Lorain County also commented that private providers offer good, specialized training, including training in the Reid Technique for forensic interviewing. Some stakeholders in Lorain County also reported that caseworkers are encouraged to pursue a master’s degree and receive substantial financial assistance from the county if they choose to do so. Some stakeholders in Franklin County indicated that caseworkers are conflicted about taking time to participate in ongoing training given the strenuous demands of the job. Some Franklin County stakeholders also reported inconsistency in practice among supervisors regarding tracking of caseworker completion of ongoing training requirements. Some stakeholders in Belmont County expressed general satisfaction with ongoing training, but noted that there are insufficient training opportunities for experienced caseworkers.

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 the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio provides initial and ongoing training to caregivers that address the skills and knowledge base they need to appropriately care for foster and adopted children and that the agency has a process in place to ensure that training requirements are fulfilled. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, OCWTP administers initial and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents through eight regional training centers. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Foster Parent College began to offer online training courses in 2006. The Statewide Assessment reports that OCWTP provides the following training:

- 12 hours preplacement and 24 hours ongoing training during each 2-year certification period for foster families caring for infants only
- 24 hours preplacement and 40 hours ongoing training during each 2-year certification period for family foster care
- 36 hours preplacement and 60 hours ongoing training during each 2-year certification period for specialized foster care

The Statewide Assessment notes that training must be completed before a child is placed in the home or institution. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that pre-service and in-service training is available to kinship caregivers in addition to foster and adoptive parents. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the county certifying agency is responsible for tracking foster and adoptive parent training compliance and for monitoring the training component of re-certification. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that foster caregiver training records are tracked in the State’s Foster Care Resource Education Database, providing another level of oversight.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that training for foster parents is effective and that requests for specialized training are consistently met. Some stakeholders noted that annual training is required to maintain certification. Some State-level and Belmont County stakeholders expressed the opinion that more online training opportunities would be beneficial. Some stakeholders in Belmont County noted that relative caregivers are not required to attend training unless they are pursuing certification. Belmont County stakeholders also indicated that ITNAs were used for foster parents and that there is an annual statewide foster parent conference that provides credit toward ongoing training requirements.
V. SERVICE ARRAY

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Status of Service Array

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in the 2002 CFSR and, therefore, was not required to address this factor in its PIP.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings of the 2008 CFSR with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

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

__X__ Strength ______ Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as a Strength. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio has a basic array of services for children and families. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Ohio provides, at a minimum, the following services in each county: case management, therapeutic services, homemaker or home health aide, counseling, protective day care, diagnostic services, emergency shelter, substitute care, adoption, information and referral, life skills, and single parent services. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that at least three of the following services also must be made available in each county: community education, crisis services, emergency caregiver, employment and training, environmental management, parent aide, parent education, crisis nursery, and day treatment. The Statewide Assessment provides information on several key statewide initiatives to target identified service needs, including ABC, a multiagency initiative targeting prevention and early intervention as well as behavioral health needs. The Statewide
Assessment also identified the following gaps in services in some areas in response to methamphetamine, some of which included follow-up medical testing, housing, substance abuse, mental health, medical services, employment assistance, and specialized services for pregnant addicts.

The Statewide Assessment reports that county agencies develop partnerships and contract with community agencies to provide key services and must request reports from all ongoing service providers at least every 4 months regarding each open case.

The Statewide Assessment reports that, according to the most recent ODJFS Comprehensive Annual Report, released in May 2005, the most frequently planned service for both in-home and out-of-home care cases was case management services, followed by information and referral, and counseling.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Ohio’s CPOE survey of caseworkers for the calendar year 2004 found the most frequently cited barrier to service provision is client refusal, followed by a lack of consistent monitoring. The Statewide Assessment notes that barriers to service delivery include budgetary constraints, insurance issues, and the difficulties of engaging child welfare clients who have complex needs.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that core services are generally available to families. Stakeholders praised the following programs: Help Me Grow, Family-to-Family, Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative, trauma-informed services, the State Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Initiative, the Therapeutic Interagency Program for Preschoolers, and the Parent Advocate Program.

Some stakeholders in Belmont County and Lorain County reported that family team meetings help to identify resources for children and families. Lorain County stakeholders commented positively on the availability of IL services, but they also expressed the need for more services related to domestic violence.

**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 stakeholder interviews indicate that there are waitlists for services and that services are not sufficiently accessible to all children and families across the State. Key services that are lacking include transportation, IL services, mental health, and substance abuse services. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, several counties have developed innovative approaches to providing comprehensive services to children and families. For example:

- Cuyahoga and Hamilton Counties have implemented strong wraparound programs that incorporate the values of giving families a voice in the case planning process.
- Hamilton, Butler, and Clermont Counties are implementing aggressive foster parent recruitment campaigns engaging local service providers in a shared partnership to improve foster care utilization and placement practices.
- ProtectOHIO provides support for select counties to implement one of the following initiatives: family team meetings, structured visitation, kinship support, and managed care and enhanced mental health/substance abuse services.

The Statewide Assessment notes that barriers to the accessibility of services include a lack of transportation in some parts of the State, as well as the limited number of Ohio dentists who are willing to accept Medicaid.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item reported that transportation is insufficient throughout the State. Some stakeholders noted that certain services are less available in rural parts of the State, including mental health and substance abuse treatment. Some stakeholders reported the following gaps in accessing services: child psychiatry, residential psychiatric placements, substance abuse treatment for both children and adults, counseling, parenting classes, and supportive services for youth aging out of foster care. Waitlists for mental health services were noted by stakeholders across the State. State-level stakeholders remarked about the comprehensiveness of Ohio’s dental plan under Medicaid, but also commented about the lack of dental providers in the State who accept Medicaid.

Several Belmont County stakeholders expressed a need for residential treatment for girls. Belmont County and Lorain County stakeholders also mentioned the need for more services for clients with developmental disabilities. Some stakeholders in Lorain County reported that there is insufficient coordination of services with the Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

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

_____ Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as an ANI. Although the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio puts forth effort toward individualizing services for children and families, multiple stakeholders noted that barriers exist to providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to certain populations in the State, especially Hispanic and Somali families. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
The findings of the Onsite Review with regard to assessing and meeting the needs of children and families (item 17) noted that although the needs of children were appropriately assessed and met in 97 percent of cases, the needs of mothers were appropriately assessed and met in 79 percent of applicable cases, and the needs of fathers were appropriately assessed and met in only 68 percent of applicable cases.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, individual service needs are identified with the family during the development of the case plan. The Statewide Assessment states that youth eligible for IL services are required to have individualized life skills assessments, individual evaluations, and are to receive services based on their identified needs.

The Statewide Assessment notes that ProtectOHIO provides flexible funding for select counties to design programs to meet the needs identified in that county including: family team meetings, structured visitation, kinship support, and managed care and enhanced mental health and substance abuse services.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that caseworkers prepare individualized case plans for families and that family team meetings lead to the individualization of service plans.

Some stakeholders in Franklin County reported that flexible funding is needed to support families. Several Franklin County stakeholders reported that there are insufficient bilingual services available for Hispanic and Somali families. Some stakeholders in Franklin County noted that there are insufficient services and placements geared specifically for older youth.

**VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY**

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**Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. In the 2002 CFSR, Ohio also was in substantial conformity with this factor and, therefore, was not required to address this factor in its PIP.
Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings of the 2008 CFSR with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

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

__X__ Strength ______ Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength because the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio consistently engages in ongoing consultation with its sister agencies in State government, the Supreme Court’s Office, and other key public and private partnerships at the State and local level in the development and implementation of the State’s CFSP. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS consults with county agencies, other State-level departments, resource providers, the Supreme Court of Ohio, consumers, stakeholders, and associations representing public and private child and family service agencies to establish and implement the agency’s goals and objectives.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level noted the following collaborative endeavors: the Advisory Committee on Children, Family and the Courts, which is convened by the courts and includes the participation of major social service and education programs; the Judicial College; the Ohio Summit on Children; the OFCF Council, a statutorily mandated body comprised of executives from all child-serving agencies at both State and local levels; and the Childhood Trauma Task Force, which is convened by the Department of Mental Health and includes the participation of representatives from social service programs. Some stakeholders indicated that goals and objectives of the CFSP are discussed throughout the year by these partners, including county directors, as a regular part of the business of these collaborative entities. State-level stakeholders also indicated that there are several plans that feed into the development of the State CFSP.

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

__X__ Strength ______ Area Needing Improvement
Item 39 is rated as a Strength because the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio consistently engages in ongoing consultation with its sister agencies in State government, the Supreme Court’s Office, and other key public and private partnerships at the State and local levels to assess progress on the goals and objectives pursuant to the State’s CFSP, which is incorporated into the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS consults with the entities listed in item 38 above on an annual basis to assess progress toward the agency’s goals and objectives and to develop the APSR. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that ongoing collaboration includes the components of the PIP, which was incorporated into the State’s CFSP.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Some stakeholders indicated that the goals and objectives of the APSR are discussed throughout the year with partners, including county directors, as a regular part of the business of these collaborative entities. State-level stakeholders indicated that there are several plans that feed into the development of APSRs.

**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 Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews indicate that the State diligently pools funds and coordinates services under the CFSP with the services and/or benefits of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the target populations. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS coordinates with Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Youth Investment initiatives, education agencies, rehabilitation and corrections, developmental disabilities, and services funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Statewide Assessment notes that Ohio has made concerted efforts through OFCF to reduce fragmentation in service delivery via improved multidisciplinary collaborative funding strategies and increased consumer involvement in policy development.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the following statewide initiatives have improved court-agency collaborations in Ohio:
- The Advisory Committee on Children, Families and the Courts offers recommendations on court reform and family law.
- Beyond the Numbers provides a forum for judges and agency directors.
Dependency Docket Bench Cards and Caseflow Management Training help teams of agency and court personnel analyze practice and design improvements.

Judicial Training and Cross-Training is supplied by the Ohio Judicial College and a family law specialist.

Unified Family Courts and Family Drug Courts are available.

Collaborations of court-appointed special advocates and GALs provide training.

The Summit on Children was a forum convened by the Chief Justice and the Governor in May 2008.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that the following local initiatives provide models for court-agency collaborative opportunities:

- Hamilton, Lucas, and Cuyahoga counties are designated Model Courts by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.
- Five Child Protection Mediation Programs operate across the State.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item reported that county agencies work in partnership with the following organizations and services: Medicaid, early childhood mental health, aging, mental retardation and developmental disabilities, education, rehabilitation and corrections, legal aid, law enforcement, and the courts. Some stakeholders indicated that OFCF specifically addresses the coordination of Federally-supported programs and services. Several coordinated programs using pooled resources mentioned by stakeholders at the State level include ABC, Help Me Grow, Strengthening Families, and FAST. Some stakeholders in Lorain County noted that there are Memoranda of Understanding with the Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, housing agencies, and child advocacy centers. However, other stakeholders in Lorain County reported that there is insufficient coordination of services with the Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

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

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

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. In the 2002 CFSR, Ohio also was in substantial conformity with this factor and was not required to address this factor in its PIP.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

Findings of the 2008 CFSR with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

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

__X__ Strength ______ Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength because the State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards as demonstrated in the Statewide Assessment, stakeholder interview comments, and confirmed by results from Ohio’s July 2007 Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ODJFS, county agencies, and private agencies are responsible for issuing 2-year certificates to foster homes and institutions. The Statewide Assessment notes that foster and adoptive homes must comply with standards in the following areas: criminal background check, abuse/neglect determination, home study, references, fire inspection, and training. The Statewide Assessment reports that certification requires completion of training for foster and adoptive caregivers provided by the OCWTP prior to placement. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that group homes and children’s residential centers must comply with statewide standards.

According to the Statewide Assessment, PCPAs, and private noncustodial agencies (PNAs) are certified to recommend foster homes, conduct inspections of each foster home at least annually, and re-certify them every 2 years. The re-certification process of foster homes includes an assessment of the home, a safety check of the home, and verification of completion of training requirements. Additionally, ODJFS reviews compliance with certification requirements of PCPAs, PNAs, and children’s residential and group homes twice during each 24-month certification period. Certification requirements incorporate two visits, including at least one unannounced visit in every 24-month period, and a review of the records of both agency personnel and children. The Statewide Assessment also reports that ODJFS makes onsite visits to PCSAs, PCPAs, and PNAs at least once every 2 years to review their adoption practices.
**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that prospective foster and adoptive families must meet requirements regarding fire safety, medical clearance, criminal background clearance, income security, reference checks, and training before they are certified. In addition, some stakeholders reported that multiple home visits are completed for each prospective foster and adoptive family prior to certification. Some stakeholders noted that foster families must complete annual training requirements and are recertified every 2 years, while adoptive families are recertified every 6 years. Some stakeholders noted that families are certified for not more than 10 children. Some stakeholders also noted that families are issued a unified certificate for both foster care and adoption. Stakeholders at the State level noted that ODJFS has a process to close foster homes and institutions that do not comply with certification requirements.

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

___ Strength ___X__ Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as an ANI because licensing standards are not consistently applied equally to licensed foster homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or title IV-B funds as demonstrated in the Statewide Assessment. The State issues waivers and variances and is not able to ensure at this time that licensing standards are uniformly applied by agencies and counties throughout the State. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, certifying agencies may grant waivers or variances to foster homes, children’s residential centers, and group homes. Waivers of certain requirements suspend, temporarily, all or part of a rule in order to give the home or agency time to come into compliance, and variances of certain requirements permanently suspend a specific rule for a specific agency, caregiver, or placement.

The Statewide Assessment notes that because foster care certification functions are carried out across 88 counties and nearly 200 private agencies, the uniform application of licensing regulations is a continuous effort, especially if agencies interpret the rules differently from other agencies; they are understaffed; or licensing specialists have different expectations, education, and experiences pertaining to the child welfare system. An additional barrier noted by the Statewide Assessment is that it is a long process to revoke an application for certification and that agencies are allowed to operate during this process.

The Statewide Assessment notes that ODJFS developed the large family assessment for families who are considering adopting several children in order to evaluate the ability of the family to meet the needs of each child in the home.
Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level reported that foster and adoptive homes are certified prior to the placement of children in the home and that no probationary licenses are issued. Some stakeholders noted that, although kinship placements do not receive certification, the county agency conducts a background check, central registry check, fingerprinting, and home studies prior to approving placement. Some stakeholders noted that training is not required for relative caregivers and stakeholders in Belmont County noted that the supportive services available to foster parents are not available to relative caregivers. Some stakeholders noted that families with multiple children must be approved using the large family protocol wherein the needs of all children are considered prior to certification.

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

___ Strength ___X__ Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as an ANI. Although the State generally complies with Federal requirements for criminal background checks related to licensing foster and adoptive parents as indicated in the positive results from Ohio’s July 2007 Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review, the Statewide Assessment includes 2007 data from reviews conducted by the State that show that at least 25 percent of certified foster homes were missing background check information. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, Ohio requires criminal background checks on all residential child care staff, foster and adoptive applicants, and any other adult residing in the home prior to the home or facility being certified. The Statewide Assessment notes that certifying agencies must request the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) to conduct a criminal records check with respect to each individual being considered for certification.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ODJFS conducted a QA review in November 2006 to determine if there was missing or incomplete FACSIS data for BCII checks for foster caregivers. This review found that 41 percent of foster homes certified by private agencies and 60 percent of foster homes certified by public agencies were missing BCII checks in FACSIS. The Statewide Assessment reports that agencies were then notified that all checks must be updated by February 2007. A subsequent review conducted in January 2007 found improvement as evidenced by the following data: 28 percent of foster homes certified by private agencies and 25 percent of foster homes certified by public agencies were missing BCII checks in FACSIS.

Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level indicated that criminal background checks, including fingerprinting, are conducted for all adults in the home and all adults working in child care institutions.
Stakeholders noted that criminal background checks are conducted prior to certification and again for re-certification. Some stakeholders in Lorain County noted that there is a delay in completing background checks for placements outside the county.

**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**

__X__ Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as a Strength. Although the Onsite Review demonstrated that additional foster and adoptive family homes are still needed, the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that Ohio has a process in place to diligently recruit potential foster and adoptive families reflecting the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State on whose behalf homes are needed. This item was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, county agencies are required to complete an annual recruitment plan that, among other requirements, describes the characteristics of foster and adoptive children served and includes the following:

- Diverse methods of disseminating general information regarding children
- Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community
- Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic communities
- Strategies to address linguistic barriers
- A statement of compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA)

The Statewide Assessment also notes that ODJFS engages in discussion with counties about their recruitment plans during the onsite MEPA compliance visits that occur once every 2 years. During these discussions, ODJFS and the counties review MEPA data reports and compare State data with individual county data to determine what changes are needed to develop and implement the agency’s recruitment plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ODJFS published a report, “An Eye on Recruitment,” in 2005 (updated in 2007) that identified the following characteristics of people who had adopted and characteristics of families who were underrepresented in the pool of prospective parents:

- In 2004, roughly two-thirds of all parents adopting children were white, while nearly all the remainder were African American.
- In 2004, 54 percent of all children adopted were white and 44 percent were African-American.
- In 2004, one-half of all children waiting for adoption were 10 years old or older, and 30 percent were age 5 or under.
- In 2006, 53 percent of all children waiting for adoption were white, and 45 percent were African-American.
- In 2006, 54 percent of all children waiting for adoption were 10 years old or older.
The Statewide Assessment notes that county agencies across the State use the following strategies to recruit foster and adoptive families: foster and adoption parties, adoption fairs, and the Family-to-Family approach in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Wendy’s Wonderful Kids.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level reported that public and private agencies submit annual recruitment plans to ODJFS and that funding is available at the county level for recruitment activities. Several stakeholders noted that counties conduct recruitment activities at churches and county fairs, and utilize media outlets to advertise the need for foster and adoptive homes. Some stakeholders also noted that foster families are the best recruiters. Other stakeholders reported that the racial and ethnic composition of foster and adoptive home resources reflects the racial and ethnic composition of the children in the child welfare system. A few stakeholders indicated that there are insufficient numbers of foster homes and, in particular, therapeutic foster homes.

Some stakeholders in Franklin County noted that the county agency targets recruitment in ZIP Codes from which children are entering foster care. Some stakeholders in Lorain County noted that there are insufficient foster placements for teens.

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

__X__ Strength ______ Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength because the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews confirmed that a process is in place to effectively utilize cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children both in-State and out-of-State. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Ohio participates in the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children and the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance. The Statewide Assessment reports that ODJFS sent 72 requests to other States for adoptive placements in 2007 and received 90 requests from other States. Of these requests, the Statewide Assessment notes that 15 of the requests to other States are still pending and 7 of the requests from other States are still pending.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that ODJFS maintains the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing website, which features more than 100 children who are legally available for adoption. ODJFS is also the AdoptUsKids administrator for Ohio and has trained more than 30 county agencies on how to maintain selected children on the AdoptUsKids website.
Stakeholder Interview Information
During the onsite CFSR, stakeholders commenting on this item across the sites and at the State level reported that caseworkers will
diligently pursue homes in other jurisdictions if it is in the best interests of the child. Some stakeholders noted that children placed
outside the county or State are usually placed with relatives or in adoptive placements. Some stakeholders noted that caseworkers
utilize the AdoptOHIO listing service.

Some stakeholders in Franklin County noted that caseworkers also utilize the AdoptUsKids listing service, and stakeholders in
Belmont County noted that caseworkers use Wendy’s Wonderful Kids and the Dave Thomas Foundation to pursue adoptive
placements for children.