EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Final Report: Colorado Child and Family Services Review
November 2009

INTRODUCTION

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

The Colorado CFSR was conducted the week of March 16, 2009. The period under review for the onsite case review process was October 1, 2007, through March 20, 2009. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Child Welfare Services (DCWS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children’s Bureau, which provides the State’s child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period Federal fiscal year (FY) 2007
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 32 cases in Denver County, 16 cases in Fremont County, and 17 cases in Larimer County
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

Background Information

The CFSR assesses State performance with regard to its substantial conformity with seven child and family outcomes and seven systemic factors. For the outcome assessments, each outcome incorporates one or more of the 23 items included in the review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on the results of the case reviews. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The evaluation options for these outcomes are “substantially achieved,” “partially achieved,” or “not achieved.” For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to six national
data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met.

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

Overall performance on each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Rating the Systemic Factor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not in Substantial Conformity</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the CFSP or program requirements is in place.</td>
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A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome or systemic factor must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome or systemic factor.

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State’s performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round. Key changes in the process that make comparing performance difficult across reviews are the following:

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

Although Colorado is not in substantial conformity with any of the CFSR outcomes, the State performed at a fairly high level on the outcome pertaining to meeting children’s educational needs (Well-Being Outcome 2); 86 percent of the cases were found to have substantially achieved this outcome. In addition, the State achieved overall ratings of Strength for items pertaining to repeat maltreatment (item 2), foster care reentry (item 5), proximity of foster care placement to family (item 11), and meeting the child’s physical health needs (item 22).

Colorado also meets the national standards for the following national data indicators:
- Absence of maltreatment recurrence
- 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

Despite these areas of strength, the CFSR also found that Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations was substantially achieved in only 37.5 percent of the cases reviewed. Within this outcome, the item pertaining to achieving adoptions in a timely manner was rated as a Strength in only 26 percent of the applicable cases. The State also performed at a low level on Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs, with only 47.7 percent of the applicable cases found to have substantially achieved this outcome. In addition to these case review findings, Colorado did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff and to the placement stability of children in foster care (Permanency Composite 4).

Although there are no clear causal relationships to explain Colorado’s performance with regard to the outcomes assessed through the CFSR, the State’s low performance on key outcomes may be attributed in part to the following issues identified during the CFSR:
- There is a lack of accessibility and quality of some key services throughout the State, particularly mental health services. The lack of services may contribute to delays in achieving permanency and in meeting the service needs of children and families. Concerns also were identified regarding the impact of budget cuts on the availability of services in the future.
- There is a shortage of foster parents in the State that creates challenges in placing children in out-of-home care placements that are carefully matched to their needs. This lack of adequate matching may contribute to placement instability and to delays in permanency.
- The agency is not consistently seeking termination of parental rights (TPR) in a timely manner and judges are not consistent in meeting the timeframes of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) with regard to TPR. This may contribute to delays in achieving permanency, and for some children, increase the possibility that they may age out of foster care without a permanent home.
Caseworkers are not consistently engaging parents, particularly fathers, in case planning, assessment of needs and services, and visitation with their children which may result in delays in both reunifications and in efforts to move forward with TPR and adoption.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

With regard to systemic factors, Colorado is in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Statewide Information System, Case Review System, Quality Assurance (QA) System, Staff and Provider Training, and Service Array and Resource Development.

The specific findings regarding the State’s performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding the well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State’s performance with regard to the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR. In the following section, key findings are summarized for each outcome and systemic factor. Information also is provided about the State’s performance on each outcome and systemic factor during the Federal FY 2002 CFSR.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

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

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two items. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month time period (item 2). Safety Outcome 1 also incorporates two national data indicators for which national standards have been established. These data indicators measure the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 73 percent of the applicable cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 65 percent of Denver County cases, 87.5 percent of Fremont County cases, and 75 percent of Larimer County cases.

The key findings for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR were the following:
The agency was not consistent with regard to initiating investigations of child maltreatment reports within the timeframes established by State policy.

The State did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff members.

Colorado also was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:

- The agency did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the maltreatment of children in foster care.
- The agency was not consistent in responding to reports of maltreatment in accordance with the timeframes established by policy.
- Agency policy did not require face-to-face contact as part of initiating an investigation.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Provided training for county staff and child placement agency staff on assessing foster home safety prior to and during placement
- Revised rules and policies to mandate a face-to-face observance of the child at initiation of all investigations and monitored compliance with the new policy
- Revised the foster parent training curricula (core and advanced) to include information about meeting the needs of special needs children and responding to their behaviors in an appropriate manner

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan 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 items. One item (item 3) assesses State efforts to prevent children’s removal from their homes by providing the family with services to ensure children’s safety while they remain in their homes. The other item (item 4) assesses efforts to manage safety and reduce risk of harm to children in their own homes and in their foster care placements.

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 66.2 percent of the applicable cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of Denver County cases, 94 percent of Fremont County cases, and 47 percent of Larimer County cases.

Key findings for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR were the following:

- In several cases, although services were provided to the family, the services did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home.
In several cases, there was a lack of initial or ongoing safety and risk assessments in the children’s homes during the period under review.

In several cases, there were continued risk concerns in the home that were not addressed and/or monitored by the agency, and the children were at risk in the home.

Colorado also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The primary concern identified in the 2002 CFSR was that the agency did not provide sufficient services to maintain the child safely in the home.

To address this concern, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Mandated that all counties use the Colorado Assessment Continuum to obtain reliable assessments of families in cases that are open to child welfare to ensure that appropriate services are provided.
- Expanded the use of a Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting prior to removing a child from the home, to more counties across the state.
- Modified the caseworker training curriculum to include training on how to incorporate the Safety Assessment into a Safety Plan.

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

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

Six items are incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all of the foster care cases reviewed. The items pertain to State efforts to prevent foster care reentry (item 5), ensure placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner as well as seeking TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA (item 7). Depending on the child’s permanency goal, the remaining items focus on an assessment of State efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, or permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or to ensure that children who have a case goal of other planned permanent living arrangement are in stable long-term placements and are adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 37.5 percent of the foster care cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 20 percent of Denver County cases, 45 percent of Fremont County cases, and 67 percent of Larimer County cases. In addition to the case review findings, Colorado met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification (Composite 1), timeliness of adoptions (Composite 2), and permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods (Composite 3). The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicator pertaining to placement stability (Composite 4).
Key findings for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR were the following:

- Many children in the cases reviewed were in multiple placement settings during the period under review or the placement setting was not stable at the time of the review.
- In several cases, the child’s permanency goal was neither established in a timely manner nor was appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child.
- The agency was not consistent with regard to seeking TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, particularly with regard to documenting compelling reasons in the case file for not seeking TPR.
- In several cases, there was a lack of sufficient effort to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner.
- In several cases, there were frequent delays associated with achieving adoptions in a timely manner due to not filing for TPR in a timely manner, not achieving TPR in a timely manner, and not completing the home study process and other paperwork in a timely manner.
- The agency was not consistent in providing independent living services to youth who are likely to transition from foster care to independent living.

Colorado also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address it in its Program Improvement Plan. The following key concerns were identified in the 2002 review:

- The agency was not consistent in preventing reentry into foster care within 12 months of discharge.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to ensure placement stability for children in out-of-home care.
- The agency was not consistent in establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- In some cases, the goal of long-term foster care or emancipation was established without sufficient efforts to explore other permanency options such as adoption or guardianship.
- The agency was not effective in achieving the goal of adoption in a timely manner for the cases reviewed.
- The agency was found to be more diligent in promoting permanency for children who are 6 years old or younger than they were in promoting permanency for older children.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Expanded the implementation of the Family to Family principles and core strategies
- Utilized TDM prior to the child returning home to prevent reentry into foster care
- Utilized TDM to support placement stability when a placement change was imminent
- Clarified rules for the timelines for determining an appropriate permanency plan
- Revised the section of the training curriculum pertaining to adoption issues

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six items that assess State performance with regard to placing children in foster care near 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 relationships between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 75 percent of foster care cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 75 percent of Denver County cases, 64 percent of Fremont County cases, and 89 percent of Larimer County cases.

Key findings for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR case review were the following:
- The agency was not consistent in placing siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate.
- The agency was not consistent in ensuring sufficient visitation between children and their mothers, fathers, and siblings in foster care.
- The agency was not consistent in making diligent efforts to preserve the child’s connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care.
- The agency was not consistent in making diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care.
- The agency was not consistent in making diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation.

Colorado also was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2 during its 2002 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:
- The State was not consistent in ensuring sufficient visitation between children in foster care and their fathers.
- The State was not consistent in supporting the relationship of children in foster care with their noncustodial fathers.
- The State was not consistent in preserving children’s connections with their extended families.

To address the identified concerns, the State revised its core and ongoing training for caseworkers to ensure an increase in knowledge and skills pertaining to preserving children’s connections to extended family and to engaging noncustodial fathers in the lives of their children in foster care through visitation and other activities.

Colorado met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs

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

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 47.7 percent of cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 44 percent of Denver County cases, 69 percent of Fremont County cases, and 35 percent of Larimer County cases. The outcome also was substantially achieved in 50 percent of foster care cases and 44 percent of in-home services cases.

Key findings for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR were the following:

- There was inconsistent practice in the cases reviewed with regard to assessing and addressing the service needs of fathers, mothers, children, and foster parents.
- Children, mothers, and particularly fathers were not consistently involved in case planning.
- Caseworkers were not consistent with regard to visiting children with sufficient frequency and ensuring that the visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.
- Caseworkers were not consistent with regard to visiting parents (particularly fathers) with sufficient frequency and ensuring that visits with parents focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.

Colorado also was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 during its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:

- The State is not consistent in its efforts to identify and provide for the service needs of families or to involve them in case planning.
- In many cases, the frequency of face-to-face contact between agency caseworkers and the children and parents in their cases was not sufficient to meet the needs of the children and families.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Modified rules to require caseworkers to have monthly face-to-face contact with the child in the child’s home and every other month with parent or guardian
- Strengthened the training curriculum to have a greater focus on assessment and treatment planning

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs

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

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 86 percent of the 43 applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85 percent of Denver County cases, 100 percent of Fremont County cases, and 60 percent of Larimer County cases. Also, the outcome was substantially achieved in 91 percent of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 73 percent of the 11 applicable in-home services cases.

The key finding for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR was that children’s educational needs were not appropriately assessed, or if assessed, services were not provided to meet those needs.

Colorado was in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 during its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

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

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

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 82 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 84 percent of Denver County cases, 86 percent of Fremont County cases, and 73 percent of Larimer County cases. Also, the outcome was substantially achieved in 90 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 67 percent of the 21 applicable in-home services cases.

The key finding for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR was that the agency was not consistent in assessing children’s mental health needs and providing mental health services to meet those needs.

Colorado also was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3 during its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:

- In many cases, children did not receive either routine preventive dental services or treatment dental services, sometimes due to issues with Medicaid cards.
In many cases, children’s mental health needs were not adequately assessed and when mental health services were recommended, the agency did not always follow up to ensure that children received these services.

To address the identified concerns, the State revised the training curriculum for foster parents and caseworkers to emphasize the importance of the child’s health and mental health assessment needs.

Colorado met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

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

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System in the 2009 CFSR. The key finding for this systemic factor during the 2009 CFSR is that although the State has a statewide information system that can track and readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, and goals of children in foster care, the State cannot readily identify the placement of every child who is in foster care due to delayed data entry of placement changes in some areas of the State.

Colorado was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Case Review System

Five items are included in the assessment of State performance for the systemic factor of Case Review System. The items examine development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the timeframes established in ASFA (item 28), and notification of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers about case reviews and hearings to be held regarding the children in their care and about their right to be heard in those proceedings (item 29).

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System.
The 2009 CFSR found that in general the agency develops case plans in a timely manner and holds 6-month and 12-month case reviews in a timely manner. In addition, the State is effective in notifying caregivers about case reviews and hearings and allowing caregivers to be heard in those proceedings. The key concerns identified are that the State is not consistent in the involvement of parents, especially fathers, in case plan development, and is not consistent in seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements.

Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:

- Parents were not consistently engaged or involved in the case planning process.
- The State was inconsistent in holding the required 12-month permanency hearings in a timely manner.
- For Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) children in foster care placements, permanency hearings were not held by the court or by an administrative body that is not a part of the State child welfare agency. (This does not meet the definition of a permanency hearing as established in the Federal 45 CFR 1355.20.)
- There was inconsistent implementation of the process for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.

To address these identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Denver and El Paso counties used TDM strategies to involve children and families in case planning.
- The State and Court Improvement Program created and delivered training for judicial officers regarding ASFA timelines and permanency hearings.
- The State implemented a revision in the Trails application to capture children in foster care for 15 of the previous 22 months, and the Administrative Review Division began monitoring whether cases contained necessary ASFA documentation and actions.
- The State revised caseworker initial and ongoing training curricula to emphasize timelines required for permanency hearings.
- For children committed to DYC who are in foster care placements, permanency hearings were conducted by an administrative law judge from the Office of the Administrative Courts in the Department of Personnel and Administration.

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

**Quality Assurance System**

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

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The 2009 CFSR found that the State had developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care. However, the CFSR also found that although the State
has a case review process that assesses performance on key indicators, the process is not integrated into a larger QA system, and it is focused primarily on the State’s 10 largest counties.

Colorado was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Staff and Provider Training**

The systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training incorporates an assessment of the State’s training provided to new caseworkers (item 32), the ongoing training provided to agency staff (item 33), and both initial and ongoing training provided to foster and adoptive parents (item 34). This systemic factor does not assess the training of service providers other than child welfare agency staff unless the service providers are private agency caseworkers, operating under a contract with the State, who have full case management responsibilities.

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. Key concerns identified for this systemic factor were that although the State requires both pre-service and ongoing training for foster parents, many of the county-certified foster parents are not participating in ongoing training, and although the State operates an initial training program that supports the goals and objectives in its CFSP, there are delays in caseworkers receiving the initial core training and insufficient availability to meet the demand. However, the CFSR also found that the State’s ongoing training for caseworkers is effective in preparing them for their jobs.

The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Service Array and Resource Development**

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

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. Key concerns identified in the 2009 CFSR were the following:

- Although improvements in service accessibility have been made since the 2002 CFSR, stakeholders indicated that there are long waiting lists for services in many areas of the State and services are not accessible in rural areas of the State.
• Although flexible funds are available at both the State and county levels for specialized services, general limitations in funding for both specialized and basic services results in inconsistencies with regard to the ability of the agency to meet the unique needs of children and families.

The 2009 CFSR determined that the State has an adequate array of services in place to meet the needs of children and families, despite inconsistency in the assessment of needs and provision of services.

The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

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

Colorado is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Key findings for this factor in the 2009 CFSR were the following:

- DCWS engages in ongoing consultation to develop and update the CFSP through surveys, special studies, and collaborative efforts with internal and external partners.
- The State consults with community stakeholders to update the CFSP annually and develop the Annual Progress and Services Report.
- The State has mechanisms in place to ensure the coordination of services and benefits.

Colorado also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

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

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State’s standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State’s compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State’s efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State’s activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children (item 45).
Colorado is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention in its 2009 CFSR. Key strengths identified in the 2009 CFSR were the following:

- The State has established and implemented clear standards for approving foster family homes and licensing child care institutions.
- The State applies consistent standards for all licensed child-placing agencies, child care institutions, and foster family homes.
- The State is in compliance with the Federal requirements for criminal background clearances and safety requirements for prospective foster and adoptive parents.
- The State has a process in place for the use of cross-jurisdictional resources.

Despite these positive findings, the 2009 CFSR also found that the State does not have a statewide, informed process in place to ensure diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive homes that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. In addition, the State does not require, fund, or monitor county plans for recruiting foster and adoptive families.

Colorado was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.
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<th>Outcome Ratings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Safety Outcome 2:</strong> Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3. Services to protect children in home</td>
<td>ANI 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4. Risk of harm</td>
<td>ANI 68</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>37.5</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>ANI 67.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 7. Permanency goal for child</td>
<td>ANI 75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives</td>
<td>ANI 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 9. Adoption</td>
<td>ANI 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 10. Other planned living arrangement</td>
<td>ANI 87.5</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>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 11. Proximity of placement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 12. Placement with siblings</td>
<td>ANI 68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care</td>
<td>ANI 69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 14. Preserving connections</td>
<td>ANI 77.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 15. Relative placement</td>
<td>ANI 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents</td>
<td>ANI 68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.
** Items may be rated as Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of the cases must be rated as a Strength.
Table 2. Colorado 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>47.7</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>86.0</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>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 22. Physical health of child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 23. Mental/behavioral 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 the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.
** Items may be rated as Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of item 21) must be rated as a Strength. Because item 21 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95-percent Strength rating applies.

Table 3. Colorado CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systemic Factors and Items</th>
<th>Substantial Conformity?</th>
<th>Score*</th>
<th>Item Rating**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide Information System</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ANI</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 parent(s) 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>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>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>Strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act</td>
<td>ANI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>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>Strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Assurance System</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>No, 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff and Provider Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>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>No, 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>ANI</td>
<td></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 Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systemic Factors and Items</th>
<th>Substantial Conformity?</th>
<th>Score*</th>
<th>Item Rating**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Array and Resource Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the strengths and needs of children and families and determine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other service needs, address the needs of families in addition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFSP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the unique needs of children and families served by the agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Responsiveness to the Community</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports delivered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pursuant to the CFSP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 40. The State’s services under the CFSP are coordinated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with services or benefits of other Federal or federally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assisted programs serving the same population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with recommended national standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV-E or IV-B funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>criminal background clearances as related to licensing or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a case planning process that includes provisions for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></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 Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI).
Final Report
Colorado Child and Family Services Review
September 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 Colorado. The CFSR is the Federal Government’s program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the 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 of the Administration for Children and Families within HHS.

The Colorado CFSR was conducted the week of March 16, 2009. The period under review for the onsite case review process was October 1, 2007, through March 20, 2009. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Child Welfare Services (DCWS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children’s Bureau, which provides the State’s child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period Federal fiscal year (FY) 2007
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 32 cases in Denver County, 16 cases in Fremont County, and 17 cases in Larimer County
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

All 65 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the children in the cases reviewed are presented in the table at the end of this section. For this table, and for other tables in the report, figures displayed may not total 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. 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.

In reviewing this report, it is useful to know that Colorado has a State-supervised, county-administered child welfare system. The State is responsible for planning, program and policy development, training, and monitoring performance. The counties provide direct supervision of staff and administer child welfare services.
### Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Characteristics</th>
<th>Foster Care</th>
<th>In-Home Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Cases</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date case was opened</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open prior to the period under review</td>
<td>29 (72.5%)</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open during the period under review</td>
<td>11 (27.5%)</td>
<td>17 (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child entered foster care during the period under review</strong></td>
<td>14 (35%)</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>22 (55%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 10 but younger than 13</td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 13 but younger than 16</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and older</td>
<td>9 (22.5%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (of any race)</td>
<td>14 (35%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>16 (40%)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Unable to Determine</td>
<td>0</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>Physical abuse</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional maltreatment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect (not including medical neglect)</td>
<td>14 (35%)</td>
<td>6 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical neglect</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental/physical health of parent</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental/physical health of child</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse by parent</td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s behavior</td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence in child’s home</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child in juvenile justice system</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Information on in-home services cases is not available for these characteristics.*
SECTION A: OUTCOMES

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

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

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

The second round of the CFSR assesses a State’s current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continued Program Improvement Plans addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior Program Improvement Plan goals may have been achieved. The purpose is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the completion of a Program Improvement Plan.
The following sections provide information on how Colorado performed on each outcome in the first round of the CFSR as well as the current CFSR. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round, the key concerns observed at that time and the strategies implemented in the Program Improvement Plan to address those concerns are discussed.

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

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

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 Colorado’s status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State’s first CFSR report, which was held in FY 2002, the State’s status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Performance of individual sites included in the Onsite Review is presented in the tables. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) are identified when appropriate.
I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

<p>| Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect |
| Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Outcome Achievement</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved by Site</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Data Indicators</th>
<th>National Standard (%)</th>
<th>State’s Percent</th>
<th>Meets Standards?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absence of maltreatment recurrence</td>
<td>94.6 +</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff</td>
<td>99.68 +</td>
<td>99.41</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 73 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to the case review findings, the State did not meet the national standard for the national data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. However, the State met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence. Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:
- The agency did not meet the national standard for the measure of maltreatment of children in foster care.
• The agency was not consistent in responding to reports of maltreatment in accordance with the timeframes established by policy.

• Agency policy did not require face-to-face contact as part of initiating an investigation.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

• Provided training for county staff and child placement agency (CPA) staff on assessing foster home safety prior to and during placement

• Revised rule and policy to mandate a face-to-face observance of the child at initiation of all investigations. Compliance with the new policy was included in Administrative Review Division (ARD) reviews.

• Revised the foster parent training curricula (Core and Advanced) to include information about meeting the needs of special needs children and responding to their behaviors in an appropriate manner

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented and discussed 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 37 (57 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to an accepted maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

Colorado policy requires county departments to assign priority and corresponding response times as follows:

• Immediate response reports: The investigation must commence on the same day that the report is received if there is an indication of present danger. If the report is received after regular business hours, a response is required as soon as possible but not later than 8 hours after the receipt of the report. Present danger is defined as an immediate, significant, and clearly observable threat to child safety that will likely result in severe harm to a child.

• Three-day response reports: The investigation must commence within 3 calendar days of the time that the report is received if the report indicates that there may be impending danger to a child. Impending danger is defined as threats to child safety that are based upon specific information or conditions that create an immediate threat to child safety in the near future.
• Five-day response reports: The investigation must commence within 5 working days of the time that the report is received if the report indicates child maltreatment or a risk of maltreatment and also indicates an absence of present or impending danger.

• Twenty-four-hour response reports: The investigation must commence within 24 hours for institutional abuse if the report indicates that without immediate intervention the child is at risk of moderate to severe harm and/or the risk factors based on the child’s vulnerability increase the need for immediate intervention.

Colorado policy states that within the assigned response timeframe, the investigation shall include a face-to-face interview with, or observation of, the child who is the subject of a report of abuse or neglect.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 1 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strength by Site</strong></td>
<td><strong>65%</strong></td>
<td><strong>87.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>75%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 27 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy. It was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes (seven cases) and/or no face-to-face contact was made with the victims (10 cases). In six cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement, the report had been assigned as an “immediate response” report; in four cases, the report was assigned as a 5-day response report.

**Rating Determination**

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 73 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 1 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Colorado’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

The Statewide Assessment reports that counties that receive 50 or more reports of child abuse or neglect in 1 year are required to establish a Child Protection Team (CPT) in the subsequent year. The CPT, which is comprised of agency and community representatives, reviews the actions of the county department to determine the timeliness and appropriateness of the actions taken in response to reports. Summarized findings are given to the county department and made public.
The Statewide Assessment provides data pertaining to timely initiation of investigations from the ARD and from Trails, the State’s automated information system. The ARD is responsible for managing the case review system and the quality assurance (QA) system. ARD collects data through reading case files and conducting face-to-face meetings with children in placement for 6 months or longer. ARD also conducts reviews of cases involving children in placement for less than 6 months and children served in their own homes by reading a stratified random sample of cases. Additionally, ARD conducts issue specific reviews in coordination with DCWS.

The ARD review for the first quarter of State fiscal year (SFY) 2008 reported that timeliness of investigation was rated as a Strength in 82.5 percent of the 177 cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that DCWS generally initiates investigations of child maltreatment reports in a timely manner. They noted that caseworkers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to respond to reports of abuse or neglect. According to a few stakeholders, even when caseworkers are not able to make face-to-face contacts with families to initiate investigations, they usually have made diligent efforts to establish face-to-face contact. Stakeholders reported that supervisors handle investigations when caseworkers are not available and also monitor caseworkers during the investigation process to ensure they are complying with agency policy.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

___ X ___ Strength  ____ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 18 (28 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine if 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. The results of the assessment of item 2 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 2 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</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 Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 2 was rated as a Strength when there was only one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family within a 6-month period. Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when there were at least two substantiated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period.

In addition to the recurrence of substantiated maltreatment reports, reviewers reported the following findings with regard to the number of maltreatment reports on the family during the life of the case ("life of the case" refers to the time from the date of the first allegation of abuse or neglect to the time of the Onsite Review):

- In 17 cases, there were two or fewer reports.
- In 15 cases, there were between three and four reports.
- In 33 cases, there were five or more maltreatment reports.

**Rating Determination**

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of a Strength. In 100 percent of the cases, there was no recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month period. Item 2 also was rated as a Strength in Colorado’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to data provided in the Statewide Assessment, Colorado attributes its success on the national data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence to the consistent use of assessment models, particularly the safety assessment/safety plan instrument and the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS), and to the engagement of service providers in the provision of aftercare services to children transitioning home.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that repeat maltreatment is not an issue in Colorado.

**Safety Outcome 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Outcome Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved by Site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Status of Safety Outcome 2

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 66.2 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2002 CFSR was a lack of sufficient services to maintain the child safely in the home. To address this concern, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Mandated that all counties use the Colorado Assessment Continuum (CAC) to obtain reliable assessments of families in cases that are open to child welfare to ensure that appropriate services are provided
- Expanded the use of a Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting prior to removing a child from the home, to more counties across the state. This had initially been implemented only in Denver County and El Paso County.
- Modified the caseworker training curriculum to include training on how to incorporate the Safety Assessment into a Safety Plan

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

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

Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or reentry into foster care

___ Strength __X_ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 44 (68 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home, or if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For applicable cases, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families that would prevent placement of children in foster care and at the same time ensure their safety. The results of the assessment of item 3 are presented in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 3 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:
- Although no services were provided when the child was removed from the home, the removal was necessary to ensure the safety of the child (seven cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal (28 cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. This included (but was not limited to) the following services that are provided through the Core Services Program: home-based intervention, intensive family therapy, life skills, day treatment, sexual offender treatment, special economic assistance, mental health, substance abuse treatment, and aftercare. Additional services provided to families included parenting support and instruction, day care, domestic violence services, transportation to appointments, housekeeping services, educational assessments, forensic sexual abuse interviews, interpreter services, anger management classes, and a fatherhood enrichment program.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:
- Although services were provided to the family, the services did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home (eight cases).
- No services were provided to the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (one case).

**Rating Determination**
Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 80 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 3 was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, Colorado’s rules were rewritten and expanded to require that reasonable efforts be made to prevent out-of-home placement, unless an emergency exists, and to maintain the family unit. The Statewide Assessment notes the following alternatives to removing the child from the home:
• Providing in-home and Family Preservation Program services, if appropriate and available
• Removing the maltreating adult from the home rather than the child
• Moving the non-maltreating parent and children to a safe environment
• Placing children in a kinship placement, if available and appropriate

The Statewide Assessment reports that stakeholders interviewed as part of the Statewide Assessment process said that appropriate services are being provided to prevent removals.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency generally makes concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their homes rather than removing children when services may have prevented the removal. Stakeholders noted that various programs and strategies have been implemented in the counties to prevent removals, such as the Family to Family (F2F) model, TDM, and Family Group Conferencing (FGC).

**Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management**

___ Strength ___X__ Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**
An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. The results of the assessment of item 4 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 4 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- There were no ongoing safety and risk assessments in the child’s home during the period under review, including assessments prior to reunification or following incidents that put the child at risk (13 cases).
- Although ongoing safety and risk assessments were completed, there were continued risk concerns in the home that were not addressed and/or monitored by the agency, and the children were at risk in the home (six cases).
- There was no initial safety or risk assessment (two cases).
- There were no ongoing safety and risk assessments in the foster home during the period under review (one case).

**Rating Determination**

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 68 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assess and address the risk of harm to the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 4 was rated as a Strength in Colorado’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires completion of the Colorado Family Risk Assessment for all investigations of reports of abuse or neglect, except institutional abuse, third-party investigations, fatality investigations when there are no surviving siblings, or when caregivers have abandoned the child. The Statewide Assessment also notes that State policy requires use of the CAC throughout the life of the case. This tool includes a safety assessment plan, a risk assessment, a risk re-assessment, and the NCFAS.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the ARD case review for the first quarter of SFY 2008 found that the child’s safety needs were adequately addressed in 97.2 percent of the 214 cases reviewed.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that although there has been improvement in assessing safety and risk over the past few years, the quality of the assessments is not consistent across counties. Some stakeholders attributed poor quality assessments to insufficient caseworker training and others attributed it to a county philosophy regarding appropriate safety levels. A few stakeholders expressed concern that the risk assessment and safety assessment tool is geared toward abuse and neglect of younger children by their caregivers and does not adequately assess risk when the child’s behavior is the predominant issue.

Some Denver County stakeholders indicated that, in that county, safety and risk assessment tools are not used to assess safety or risk of harm in foster homes. They noted that when a child is in a foster home, caseworkers assess risk and safety issues through monthly face-to-face contact with the child, including a private interview with the child during home visits.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Outcome Achievement</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved by Site</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Data Indicators</th>
<th>National Standard (Scaled Score)</th>
<th>State Score (Scaled Score)</th>
<th>Meets Standards?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification</td>
<td>122.6 +</td>
<td>125.3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions</td>
<td>106.4 +</td>
<td>118.4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods</td>
<td>121.7 +</td>
<td>124.0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite 4: Placement stability</td>
<td>101.5 +</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 37.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, Colorado did not meet the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to Composite 4: Placement stability. However, the State met the national standards for three of the national data indicators as shown in the table above. Colorado also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:

- The State was not consistently effective in preventing reentry into foster care within 12 months of discharge.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to ensure placement stability for children in out-of-home care.
- The agency was not consistent in establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
In some cases, the goal of long-term foster care or emancipation was established without sufficient efforts to explore other permanency options such as adoption or guardianship.

The agency was not effective in achieving the goal of adoption in a timely manner for the cases reviewed.

The agency was found to be more diligent in promoting permanency for children who are 6 years old or younger than they were in promoting permanency for older children.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Expanded the implementation of the F2F principles and core strategies
- Utilized TDM prior to the child returning home to prevent reentry into foster care
- Utilized TDM to support placement stability when a placement change was imminent
- Clarified rules for the timelines for determining an appropriate permanency plan
- Revised the section of the training curriculum pertaining to adoption issues

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

**Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

**Item 5. Foster care reentries**

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

**Case Review Findings**

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 14 (35 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of the assessment of item 5 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 5 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 5 was rated as a Strength when the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when the child’s entry into foster care occurred within 12 months of the date of discharge from a prior foster care placement episode.

Rating Determination
Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 93 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Performance on the Composite 1 Measure Relevant to the Permanency of Reunification
The data below are presented to provide additional information about foster care reentry. There is no national standard for the measure of foster care reentry. National standards with regard to permanency have been established only for the scaled composite scores. The measure of foster care reentry is part of Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification. The State’s performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

Colorado’s performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: In the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period for the data indicators, 15.2 percent of the children exiting foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is greater than the national median of 15.0 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires the use of the NCFAS for Reunification at least twice during the case lifetime in all child protection cases where the goal is reunification or maintenance of the child in the home. In addition, the Colorado Family Risk Assessment is required prior to case closure.

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

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 most recent placement setting. The results of the assessment of item 6 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 6 Ratings</th>
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<th>Larimer County</th>
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<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 6 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s current placement was stable and that the child either did not experience a placement change during the period under review or that the placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests (i.e., they were intended to further achievement of the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services for the child).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 13 cases when reviewers determined one of the following:
- The child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to further attain the child’s permanency goal (10 cases).
- The child’s placement setting at the time of the onsite CFSR 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 seven cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in eight cases experienced three or more placements during the period under review.

**Rating Determination**
Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 67.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 4: Placement stability**
The data below are presented to provide additional information about placement stability. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State’s performance on Composite 4 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.
For the 12-month CFSR target period established for the data indicators, Colorado’s performance on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability was as follows:

- **C4.1:** 85.9 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national median of 83.3 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 86.0 percent.
- **C4.2:** 63.4 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 greater than the national median of 59.9 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 65.4 percent.
- **C4.3:** 35.7 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national median of 33.9 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 41.8 percent.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires the following:

- Counties must make all reasonable efforts to return the child home or to place the child in a permanent setting prior to moving a child from one short-term emergency placement to another.
- No child in foster care is to be moved more than twice unless the move results in a permanent placement or is determined to be in the child’s best interests.
- Counties are required to review all cases in which a child has been placed in four different placements excluding a return home.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the first quarter of SFY 2008, ARD reviewed 842 cases and found that 452 of the placement changes (53.7 percent) were planned to achieve case goals and/or to meet other needs of the child. The Statewide Assessment identified the following barriers to achieving placement stability:

- Lack of services and supports for kinship and foster care providers, including respite care
- Lack of thorough planning with kinship care providers when the children are initially placed in their homes
- Lack of clear communication between agency staff and caregivers
- A shortage of trained and experienced foster parents to meet the needs of many children in the foster care system, resulting in inappropriate matches between foster parents and children

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the State began using the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) home study process for all foster and adoptive home studies in January 2006, and developed a modified SAFE assessment for non-certified kin placements. The Statewide Assessment suggests that the SAFE tool may result in better assessments and therefore decrease placement changes that are due to the inability of the provider to adequately parent the child.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that although the agency has a process for matching children with an appropriate foster home, there are not enough foster homes available, especially for children with
behavioral issues. Some stakeholders suggested that foster parents are not given sufficient information about the child at the time of placement to be adequately prepared for parenting the child. Stakeholders also noted that generally, foster parents do not receive the supports they need when a placement is in jeopardy of disruption. However, Larimer County stakeholders suggested that in that county, foster care caseworkers who are assigned to assist foster parents are effective in ensuring that the foster parents receive the supports they need to prevent placement disruptions.

**Item 7. Permanency goal for child**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, if relevant.

Item 7 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child’s permanency goal at the time of the onsite CFSR was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (three cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (five cases).
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, particularly with regard to documenting compelling reasons in the case file for not seeking TPR (five cases).
- The child’s current permanency goal was not specified in the case file although the child had been in foster care for 9 months at the time of the review (one case). The child’s current goal was ascertained through interviews with the caseworker and supervisor.
ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 76 percent of the 21 applicable cases.

The following case goals were identified for the 40 foster care cases:
- Adoption only (14 cases)
- Reunification only (including reunification with relatives) (12 cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and reunification with relatives (one case)
- Concurrent goals of guardianship and adoption (one case)
- Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) only (eight cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and adoption (four cases)

**Rating Determination**
Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 7 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

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

For the 12-month CFSR target period established for the data indicators, Colorado’s performance on the individual measures included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods was the following:
- **C3.1:** 20.7 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is less than the national median of 25.0 percent.
- **C3.2:** 97.0 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is greater than the national median of 96.8 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 98 percent.
- **C3.3:** 32.4 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is less than the national 25th percentile of 37.5 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)
Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that a permanency goal be established within 60 days of placement and that counties document actions being taken to implement the case plan. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the ARD review for the first quarter of SFY 2008 found that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate in 90.8 percent of the 2,327 cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State is consistently effective with regard to establishing appropriate case goals in a timely manner. Most stakeholders said that the agency implements concurrent planning by establishing a secondary permanency goal as soon as it is appropriate and discussing the secondary goal with the parents and other family members. However, a few stakeholders noted that the State is unlikely to seek TPR for older children.

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

___ Strength ___X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 8 was applicable for 17 (42.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of the assessment of item 8 are presented in the table below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item 8 Ratings</th>
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<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 8 was rated a Strength when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner.

Rating Determination
Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 65 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a
timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. Item 8 was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

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

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

For the 12-month CFSR target period established for the data indicators, Colorado’s performance on the individual measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was the following:

- **C1.1:** 76.4 percent of the reunifications occurred in at least 8 days but less than 12 months of the child’s entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 75.2 percent.
- **C1.2:** The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification was 5.7 months. This length of stay is less than the national median of 6.5 months, but greater than the national 25th percentile of 5.4 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflect a higher level of performance.)
- **C1.3:** 56.5 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in more than 7 days but less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 48.4 percent.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
The Statewide Assessment did not provide information on this item other than a description of State performance on the national measures of timeliness of reunification.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State works diligently to achieve reunification with parents, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.

**Item 9. Adoption**

_____ Strength   _____ X __ Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**
Item 9 was applicable for 19 (47.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The results of the assessment of item 9 are presented in the table below.
Item 9 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers identified one or more of the following:

- Delays in filing for TPR (two cases)
- Delays in the TPR process after filing (three cases)
- A lack of concerted effort to achieve an adoption goal when it was a concurrent goal (one case)
- Delays in completing or approving home studies and/or other adoption-related paperwork (eight cases)
- Poor preparation of the adoptive families and poor matching of adoptive families for the child, resulting in multiple disruptions (one case)
- No concerted effort to find an adoptive family for a waiting child (one case)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 19 children with a goal of adoption, 8 achieved the goal during the period under review.
- Of the eight children who had a finalized adoption during the period under review, two had been in foster care for less than 24 months.
- Of the 11 children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, 4 had been in foster care for at least 24 months.

**Rating Determination**

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 26 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 9 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

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

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of adoptions. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State’s performance on Composite 2 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.
For the 12-month CFSR target period established for the data indicators, Colorado’s performance on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions was the following:

- **C2.1:** 57.2 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 greater than the national 75th percentile of 36.6 percent.
- **C2.2:** The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 21.9 months. This median length of stay is less than the national 25th percentile of 27.3 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflect a higher level of performance.)
- **C2.3:** 19.5 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the year. This percentage is less than the national median of 20.2 percent.
- **C2.4:** 3.2 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is less than the national median of 8.8 percent.
- **C2.5:** 57.7 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 53.7 percent.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, the ARD reviewed 626 cases for the first quarter of SFY 2008 to determine if reasonable efforts were made to finalize adoptions. Reviewers determined that in 581 cases (92.8 percent), reasonable efforts were made to finalize the adoption. Reviewers also determined that there was an identified adoptive family in 448 (83.6 percent) of 536 cases in which children were legally free for adoption and had a goal of adoption.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State is not consistently effective with regard to achieving adoptions in a timely manner. Various stakeholders identified the following concerns:
- Negotiation of an adoption subsidy can delay finalization of the adoption. Each county sets its own criteria and rate structures for adoption subsidies.
- Adoption subsidy rates are generally lower than foster care payment rates, and some families are granted only the Medicaid coverage without a monetary amount.
- Adoptive home assessment requirements cause delays in adoptions. For example, in some cases, licensed adoptive homes are required to be relicensed using a new assessment tool; licensed foster homes are required to undergo an additional study for adoption of their foster children; and relatives wishing to adopt are required to obtain kinship certification.
- There is inconsistency across the counties in availability of caseworkers for adoption preparation work with the child and/or with the foster families wishing to adopt.
- There is inconsistency regarding recruitment efforts for children without an identified adoptive family.
- Legal continuances and appeals of the TPR decision can delay achieving adoptions in a timely manner.
Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

____ Strength ______ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 10 was applicable for 8 (20 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 of the assessment of item 10 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 10 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
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<th>Larimer County</th>
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<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>87.5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Case</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in seven cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and/or to provide the necessary service to prepare the child for independent living. Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the youth was not in a permanent placement and concerted efforts had not been made to provide the child with services to adequately prepare him for independent living.

The table below provides the ages of the children when the goal of OPPLA was established.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Child When OPPLA Was Established</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 13–15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 16 and older</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating Determination
Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 87.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 10 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Colorado’s 2002 CFSR.
Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy allows for three options relevant to OPPLA: OPPLA through emancipation, OPPLA through relative long-term foster care, and OPPLA through non-relative foster care. All three options must specify the projected date by which the goal is to be accomplished. The county permanency review team must approve the use of any one of these three permanency goals. In addition, policy requires that the permanency goal of OPPLA through emancipation shall be used only for youth ages 16–21.

In the ARD case reviews for item 10, cases are rated as a Strength if the case file contains documentation that all other permanency goals were considered and appropriately ruled out prior to the selection of the permanency goal of OPPLA. The ARD findings for the first quarter of SFY 2008 are as follows:

- The case file contained documentation that all other permanency goals were considered and appropriately ruled out prior to the selection of the permanency goal of OPPLA in 473 (76.3 percent) of 620 cases reviewed.
- For youth age 16 or older, there was a written description of the programs and services that would help the youth prepare for the transition to independent living during the review period in 479 (85.8 percent) of the 558 cases reviewed.
- Provision of independent living (IL) services was sufficient to address the youth’s IL needs during the review period in 508 (92.7 percent) of the 548 cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that, in general, youth are offered adequate IL services. However, several stakeholders noted that both the quantity and the quality of IL services vary considerably across counties. In addition, Larimer County stakeholders reported that IL services in that county are required to be provided only to youth with a goal of emancipation; however, these services also may be provided to youth with a goal of reunification.

Permanency Outcome 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Outcome Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foster Care Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved by Site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 75 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:
- The State was not consistent in ensuring sufficient visitation between children in foster care and their fathers.
- The State was not consistent in supporting the relationship of children in foster care with their noncustodial fathers.
- The State was not consistent in preserving children’s connections with their extended families.

To address the identified concerns, the State revised its core and ongoing training for caseworkers to ensure an increase in knowledge and skills pertaining to preserving children’s connections to extended family and to engaging noncustodial fathers in the lives of their children in foster care through visitation and other activities.

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

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

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

\[ \text{X} \quad \text{Strength} \quad \text{Area Needing Improvement} \]

Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 31 (77.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if TPR was attained prior to the period under review, contact with parents was not considered to be in the child’s best interests, and/or parents were deceased or their whereabouts unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child’s most current foster care setting was near the child’s parents or close relatives. The results of the assessment of item 11 are presented in the table below.
Item 11 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed either in the same community as the parents or near the parents’ community. The item also was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that even though the child was placed out of his or her community, the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the permanency goal.

**Rating Determination**
Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In all applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed children in locations close to their parents or relatives when appropriate. Item 11 also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires that caseworkers include a description in the Family Service Plan (FSP) about the proximity of the foster home to the parent’s home and to the school that the child attended prior to placement in the foster home. If the foster home is not in close proximity to either the parent’s home or the school, the reasons for the placement must be documented.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ARD data for the first quarter of SFY 2008 show that children were placed within close proximity to their parents or permanent caregivers in 94.7 percent of the placements.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Only a few stakeholders commented on this item during the onsite CFSR. These stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State is effective in placing children in close proximity to parents.

**Item 12. Placement with siblings**

___ Strength  ___X__ Area Needing Improvement
Case Review Findings
Item 12 was applicable for 19 (47.5 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 currently, or had been, placed together, and if separated, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children. The results of the assessment of item 12 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 12 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed with siblings, or that the separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs or because placement with siblings was not in the child’s best interests. Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in six cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together.

The sizes of the sibling groups for the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement were as follows:

- In two cases, there were five children in the sibling group.
- In one case, there were four children in the sibling group.
- In two cases, there were three children in the sibling group.
- In one case, there were two children in the sibling group.

Rating Determination
Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 68 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 12 was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that siblings be placed together if the county can find an appropriate and available placement for all children. If children are not placed with all of their siblings, there must be evidence in the case file indicating that placement of siblings together is not in the best interests of one or more of the children. The Statewide Assessment did not provide data relevant to this item from either the ARD case reviews or Trails.
Stakeholder Interview Information
Only a few stakeholders commented on this item during the onsite CFSR. These stakeholders expressed the opinion that the lack of placement resources that will accept large sibling groups is a barrier to placing siblings together.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

___ Strength  ___X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 13 was applicable for 32 (80 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 were deceased; or visitation with a parent was not considered 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 sufficient visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care, and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The results of the assessment of item 13 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 13 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the mother (six cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father (five cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings in foster care (four cases).

Additional information about visitation frequency is provided in the table below.
Typical Frequency of Child’s Visits During the Period Under Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visits occurred at least once a week</th>
<th>With Mother</th>
<th>With Father</th>
<th>With Siblings in Foster Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 (57%)</td>
<td>7 (37%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a month</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
<td>7 (37%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were no visits during the period under review</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>4 (21%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data indicate that children visited with their mothers at least once a month in 71 percent of the cases, with their siblings once a month in 60 percent of the cases, and with their fathers once a month in only 42 percent of the cases.

**Rating Determination**

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 69 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency and quality to meet the needs of the family. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 13 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Colorado’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires the development of visitation plans that address the needs of the child in foster care. Legislation and corresponding rules were passed in 2008 (effective November 1, 2008) requiring each county to provide the opportunity for sibling visitation unless it is not in the child’s best interests. The Statewide Assessment notes that the designation of sibling includes stepsiblings and half siblings as well as full biological siblings.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following ARD data for the first quarter of SFY 2008:

- Children’s visits with mothers were of sufficient frequency to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship in 963 (82.6 percent) of the 1,165 cases reviewed.
- Children’s visits with fathers were of sufficient frequency to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship in 543 (72.5 percent) of the 737 cases reviewed.
- Children’s visits with siblings were of sufficient frequency to maintain or promote continuity of the relationship in 748 (91.8 percent) of 813 cases reviewed.
Stakeholder Interview Information
The few stakeholders commenting on sibling visitation among children in foster care expressed the opinion that although it is agency policy to maintain sibling connections when the children cannot be placed together, sibling visitation may not occur as often as it should due to resistance by foster parents or to the caseworker’s busy schedules.

Fremont County stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review noted that the county has a visitation center; however, it is not open nights and weekends, which limits the times that children and parents can visit.

Item 14. Preserving connections

___ Strength ___X___ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 14 was applicable for all 40 foster care cases. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child’s connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 14 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 14 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 14 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends. Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in nine cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to extended family (eight cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his or her friends, neighborhood, or community (three cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve cultural heritage, religion, or language (four cases).

Rating Determination
Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 77.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections with extended family, culture, religion, community, and school.
This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 14 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires caseworkers to document in the FSP the efforts taken to preserve children’s important connections. The Statewide Assessment provided the following data for the first quarter of 2008 from the ARD case reviews:
- A review of 2,258 FSPs determined that documentation regarding efforts taken to preserve children’s important connections was present in 2,297 (99.2 percent) of the cases.
- A review of 2,316 cases determined that concerted efforts to maintain connections were made in 2,297 (99.2 percent) of the cases.
- A review of 427 FSPs determined that the initial foster care placement considered the location of the child’s school in 383 (81.1 percent) of the cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information
There were no substantive comments from stakeholders regarding this item during the onsite CFSR.

Item 15. Relative placement
_____ Strength  ____X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 15 was applicable for 31 (77.5 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 made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 15 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 15 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Case</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 15 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the child was placed with relatives, or the child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable.

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:
- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (seven cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (10 cases).

**Rating Determination**
Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 65 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 15 was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, since the 2002 CFSR, State statute was changed and now requires that parents provide the court with a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, half sibling, and first cousin of the child within 15 days of the temporary custody hearing. In addition, parents may provide comment as to the appropriateness of each relative for potential placement of the child.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires caseworkers to document in the FSP both initial and ongoing efforts to place children with kin. Initial efforts to locate relatives must begin within 3 working days of placement and must be documented in the FSP. Rules allow children to be placed immediately with relatives or individuals who have a significant relationship with a child. The county may issue a 60-day provisional certification in order to allow time for the provider to meet State requirements for certification. The Statewide Assessment did not provide State level data for this item.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State is making diligent efforts to search for relatives as placement resources both initially and on an ongoing basis.

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

____ Strength  __X Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**
Item 16 was applicable for 28 (70 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child; a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child’s best interests throughout the period under review; or both parents were deceased. In assessing this item, reviewers were
to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of the assessment of item 16 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 16 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Foster Care Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foster Care Cases</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strength by Site</strong></td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Specific findings pertaining to this item are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efforts Made</th>
<th>With Mother (Number of Cases)</th>
<th>With Father (Number of Cases)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the parent’s participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rating Determination
Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 68 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 16 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, foster parents or family members may encourage parents to attend doctor, physical therapy and other assorted medical appointments, or attend school and/or sporting events. The State does not collect data related to item 16.

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

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

<p>| Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs |
| Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Outcome Achievement</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved by Site</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 47.7 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 50 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 44 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. Colorado also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.
Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:

- The State was not consistent in its efforts to identify and provide for the service needs of families or to involve them in case planning.
- In many cases, the frequency of face-to-face contact between agency caseworkers and the children and parents in their cases was not sufficient to meet the needs of the children and families.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Modified rules to require caseworkers to have monthly face-to-face contact with the child in the child’s home and every other month with parent or guardian
- Strengthened the training curriculum to have a greater focus on assessment and treatment planning

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

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

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

Strength  Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had 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 areas are addressed in later items. The results of the assessment of item 17 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 17 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 52.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 48 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. Item 17 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met. Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency had not assessed and/or met the needs of the mother (13 cases).
- The agency had not assessed and/or met the needs of the father (19 cases).
- The agency had not assessed and/or met the needs of the foster parents (nine cases).
- The agency had not assessed and/or met the needs of the children (15 cases).

Additional case review findings pertaining to needs assessments and service provisions are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Person for Needs Assessment and Services</th>
<th>Foster Care Cases</th>
<th>In-Home Services Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s needs assessed and met</td>
<td>19 (66%)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s needs assessed and met</td>
<td>11 (52%)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parents’ needs assessed and met</td>
<td>25 (74%)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s needs assessed and met</td>
<td>34 (85%)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating Determination**

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 51 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the State had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 17 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires assessment of the needs and strengths of children and families during the intake investigation and at development and coordination of the initial FSP using the NCFAS. The FSP documents the needs identified in the assessment; the treatment outcomes to be achieved; and the specific, measurable, realistic, time-limited objectives and actions steps to be accomplished by the parents, child, services providers, and county staff.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the ARD case reviews for the first quarter of SFY 2008 found that the needs of all required parties were addressed through appropriate services in more than 98 percent of cases reviewed.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the agency’s effectiveness in assessing and meeting the service needs of foster parents and children. With regard to foster parents, several stakeholders expressed the opinion that the extent to
which the needs of foster parents are assessed and met varies across caseworkers. However, most stakeholders agreed that the certification and permanency caseworkers are more supportive to foster parents than are other caseworkers.

Regarding assessing and meeting the needs of children in foster care, some stakeholders noted that services are not always provided in a timely manner and that this delay can result in a placement disruption.

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

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

**Case Review Findings**

Item 18 was applicable for 60 (92 percent) of the 65 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, parents were not involved with the child in any way, and/or 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 (when appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process, 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 actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. The results of the assessment of item 18 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 18 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 71 percent of the 35 applicable foster care cases and 48 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process.

Specific information about involving mothers, fathers, and children in case planning is shown in the table below.
### Person Involved in Case Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Involved in Case Planning</th>
<th>Foster Care Cases</th>
<th>In-Home Services Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Applicable Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother involved in case planning?</td>
<td>22 (76%)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father involved in case planning?</td>
<td>14 (70%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children involved in case planning?</td>
<td>16 (84%)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 62 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 18 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires that the family be involved in all phases of assessment and case planning. The Statewide Assessment reports that ARD case reviews determined that mothers, fathers, and children were involved in the case planning process in no less than 97.7 percent of cases for any group.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the issue of the involvement of youth and of parents in case planning. With regard to involving youth, several stakeholders expressed the opinion that youth generally are not engaged in case planning. Information on stakeholder perceptions of the involvement of parents in case planning is provided under item 25 in the Systemic Factors section of this report.

### Item 19. Caseworker visits with child

| ____ Strength | ____X__ Area Needing Improvement |

### Case Review Findings

Item 19 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing 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 of item 19 are presented in the table below.
Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 52 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, and if visits did occur, they did not focus on issues pertinent to case (six cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits with children was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur, they were substantive (two cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery and goal attainment (12 cases).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child During Period Under Review</th>
<th>Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)</th>
<th>In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred at least once a week</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month</td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month</td>
<td>31 (77.5%)</td>
<td>15 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a month</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were no visits during the period under review</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating Determination**

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 69 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. Item 19 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires that caseworkers have at least monthly face-to-face contacts with the children in their cases. For children in out-of-home placements, part of the visit must occur out of the presence of the foster care provider and contact must occur in the child’s placement and include a visual inspection of where the child sleeps. Contact may occur by a member of the treatment team. If a child is in an out-of-State placement, face-to-face contact must occur quarterly by the agency having custody of the child, the public agency in the receiving State, or an entity with whom the custodial agency has contracted.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the ARD case reviews determined that over 97 percent of the required face-to-face contacts were conducted in accordance with agency policy, and that approximately 98 percent of case files contained documentation that the contacts focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and/or goal attainment. The Statewide Assessment also notes however, that children placed out-of-State were visited at least quarterly by a caseworker from Colorado or from the receiving State in only 72.4 percent of the cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on caseworker visits with children expressed the opinion that there are inconsistencies in both the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children. However, most Larimer County stakeholders indicated that caseworkers visited with the children in their caseloads at least once a month.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)

____ Strength __X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 56 (86 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of their children. All cases that were not applicable are 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 ensure the children’s safety and well-being. The results of the assessment of item 20 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 20 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
<td><strong>86%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 55 percent of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 64 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There were no visits with the mother (two cases).
- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency or quality (seven cases).
- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency, although when they did occur they were of sufficient quality (one case).
- Visits with the mother were of sufficient frequency but did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning or service delivery (six cases).
- There were no visits with the father (six cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency or quality (eight cases).
- Visits with the father were of sufficient frequency but did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning or service delivery (three cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review</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 at least once a week</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month</td>
<td>15 (52%)</td>
<td>8 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits occurred less frequently than once a month</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
<td>6 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were no visits during the period under review</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>3 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in the table indicate that in the cases reviewed, mothers were visited at least once a month in 81 percent of the applicable cases, while fathers were visited at least once a month in 47 percent of the applicable cases.

**Rating Determination**

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 59 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. Item 20 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires that caseworkers have face-to-face contact with the parent, parent surrogate, or guardian at least every other month. For youth-in-conflict cases, policy requires that caseworkers have monthly face-to-face or telephone contact with the parent, parent surrogate, or guardian.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ARD case review data relevant to caseworker contacts with parents found that the frequency of contacts was in accordance with State policy in 84 percent of the applicable cases. The ARD review also determined that approximately 94 percent of the visits that took place between the caseworker and parents focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and/or goal attainment.

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

Well-Being Outcome 2

<p>| Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <strong>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Outcome Achievement</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>86.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substantially Achieved by Site</strong></td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 86 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 91 percent of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 73 percent of the 11 applicable in-home services cases. Colorado was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.
Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

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

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

____ Strength __X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 21 was applicable for 43 (66 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if either of the following applied: Children were not of school age or children in the in-home services 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 the assessment of item 21 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 21 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicable Cases</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength by Site</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 91 percent of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 73 percent of 11 applicable in-home services cases. Item 21 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when case reviewers determined the following:
• The child’s educational needs were not assessed (four cases).
• The child had identified educational needs that were not addressed (two cases).

Rating Determination
Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 86 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95-percent standard is established for this item because it is the only item assessed for this outcome. Item 21 was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires county child welfare departments to refer children in out-of-home care for an educational assessment. If the assessment determines that the child has an educational disability, the county and the district must meet to determine if the educational needs of the child can be met in the out-of-home placement or through the Core Services Day Treatment Program.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the ARD case reviews for the first quarter of SFY 2008 found that the educational needs of children were adequately addressed during that review period in 98.7 percent of 1,720 applicable cases.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Several stakeholders from across the sites commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that one of the key concerns regarding the educational needs of children in foster care is the lack of uniformity in the curriculum offered by residential treatment programs. They noted that when students transfer from a residential facility school to a regular school, they often do not have the necessary skills for their grade level, and/or the school may not accept the educational credits earned in the treatment facility. According to stakeholders, the Colorado Department of Education created a State facility school board to examine the feasibility of a consistent curriculum for all licensed therapeutic residential child care facilities, which would allow credits to transfer across schools.

Various stakeholders identified the following practices that are intended to meet the educational needs of children in foster care:

- The use of an education liaison whose task it is to provide training to staff and foster parents on educational issues including advocacy for children (Denver County stakeholders)
- Close collaboration between the child welfare agency and the school district (Fremont County stakeholders)
- The use of TDM meetings to plan for keeping a child in the same school or to ensure appropriate transfer of credits if a child must change schools (Fremont County stakeholders)
- The use of either agency or school staff to transport children to their “home” schools if their placement is outside of that school district (Fremont County and Larimer County stakeholders)
- The assigning of an education parent surrogate for all children in foster care (Fremont County stakeholders)
- The joint participation of foster parents and agency staff in any meetings on a child’s Individual Education Plan (Fremont County stakeholders)
Well-Being Outcome 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Outcome Achievement</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substantially Achieved by Site</strong></td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 82 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 90 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 67 percent of the 21 applicable in-home services cases. Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:
- In many cases, children did not receive either routine preventive dental services or treatment dental services, sometimes due to issues with Medicaid cards.
- In many cases, children’s mental health needs were not adequately assessed and when mental health services were recommended, the agency did not always follow up to ensure that children received these services.

To address identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:
- Revised the training curriculum for foster parents and caseworkers to emphasize the importance of the child’s health and mental health assessment needs
- Revised the Health Passport to improve usability and comprehensiveness

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.
Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

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

Item 22. Physical health of the child

**X** Strength  ____ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 22 was applicable for 50 (77 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children’s physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and whether the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of the assessment of item 22 are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 22 Ratings</th>
<th>Denver County</th>
<th>Fremont County</th>
<th>Larimer County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Needing Improvement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicable Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases</strong></td>
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<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strength by Site</strong></td>
<td><strong>92%</strong></td>
<td><strong>92%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 97.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 80 percent of the 10 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children’s medical and dental needs were routinely assessed and necessary services were provided. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child’s physical health needs were not adequately assessed and/or fully addressed (two cases).
- The child’s dental health needs were not adequately assessed and/or fully addressed (two cases).

Rating Determination
Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 94 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children’s physical health needs. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires that children have a medical examination before placement or a screening as soon as it is reasonably possible after placement. These screenings must be consistent with an initial Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment. Full medical examinations must be scheduled within 14 days after placement, and full dental examinations must be scheduled within 8 weeks after placement. State policy also requires county agencies to update information about the child’s health and health services received at the time of each case review.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following data from the ARD case reviews:
• Approximately 85 percent of children received a medical examination or screening within 2 weeks of initial placement or were scheduled for a medical examination within 2 weeks of initial placement.
• Approximately 84 percent of children received a full dental examination within 8 weeks of initial placement or were scheduled for a dental examination within 8 weeks of initial placement.
• 86 percent of children received regular dental care and treatment for identified dental needs.
• Approximately 93 percent of children received regular health care, including immunizations and treatment for identified health needs.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that children in foster care are having their physical and dental health needs appropriately assessed and met. Denver County stakeholders commented that in that county, foster parents must take children to the Denver Health Clinic for medical services. They noted that this practice is currently being assessed because some foster parents must travel long distances to get to the clinic, and others would prefer to use their own family physicians. Denver County stakeholders also noted that foster families can use the dentist of their choice to meet the children’s dental health needs. Larimer County and Fremont County stakeholders, however, reported that sometimes it is challenging to find a dentist who accepts Medicaid.

Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child

_____ Strength  __X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings
Item 23 was applicable for 43 (66 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and whether appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The results of the assessment of item 23 are presented in the table below.
Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 87.5 percent of the 24 applicable foster care cases and 74 percent of the 19 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children’s mental health needs were appropriately assessed and the identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

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

**Rating Determination**

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 81 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires that the caseworkers identify mental health needs and children’s treatment histories in the FSP for each child. The treatment history is to include medications, hospitalizations, and current functioning. The Statewide Assessment reports that the ARD review found that approximately 90 percent of the children in the cases reviewed were provided mental health services during the review period to meet their needs.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that assessment and provision of mental health services is inconsistent across the State. Some stakeholders raised concerns about both the availability of mental health services and the quality of the services that are available to children and families.

In addition, several stakeholders commented that the agency does not routinely share information about the mental health history of children with the foster parents. Stakeholders noted that the Health Passport does not always contain the complete history of mental health assessments and treatments.
SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

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

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. The overall rating for each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

### Rating the Systemic Factor

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

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

If a State is not in substantial conformity with a particular systemic factor, then that factor must be addressed in the State’s Program Improvement Plan. For each systemic factor, information is provided about the State’s performance in its first CFSR as well as in the current CFSR. If the systemic factor was part of the State’s Program Improvement Plan, the key concerns addressed in the Program Improvement Plan 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>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Statewide Information System

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Statewide Information System are presented and discussed below.

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

___ Strength  ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a statewide information system that can track and readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, and goals of children in foster care, Denver County stakeholders reported that in that county children’s placement changes are not entered in a timely manner and therefore the information system cannot readily identify the location of every child. Data accuracy for placement information also was noted as an area needing correction and improvement during the Adoption and Foster Care Reporting and Analysis System Assessment Review. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Colorado’s Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, called Trails, is an automated case management system used to store case records. State policy prescribes the required fields and the timeframes for data entry, including guidelines for modification of existing data. Trails provides reports that allow staff to monitor performance on the State’s Web Portal and in Cognos, report-building software. New functionality was added through Cognos to facilitate easier access by county staff to State and county CFSR performance data. Administrative, supervisory, and direct service delivery staff has access to numerous Trails reports to use in daily practice and in monitoring compliance with State and Federal standards.
Stakeholder Interview Information
Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed three issues with regard to the statewide information system: the capacity to track the required elements, the timeliness of data entry, and the usefulness of data reports.

Regarding Trails’ capacity to track the required data elements, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that Trails has the capacity to track the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goal for the placement of every child in foster care.

Regarding the timeliness and completeness of data entry into Trails, stakeholders’ comments varied by site. Most stakeholders commented that data entry for most elements is timely. However, Denver County stakeholders expressed the opinion that the placement location data for children who have moved to a new placement may be delayed for up to 3 weeks due to a county requirement that placement changes must be entered by administrative staff rather than caseworkers.

Stakeholders reported that Trails also is used by Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) staff to record the required elements for children served through a title IV-E agreement. Stakeholders report that data entry for DYC youth occurs within 24 hours.

Various stakeholders provided the following information regarding the usefulness of the data reports generated from Trails:
- The reports from Trails are accurate, reliable, and helpful, and include reminders for key events.
- The interface of Trails with the Family Justice Information System (FAMJIS) allows data sharing in real time between the two systems, including information about hearings (including dates and times of permanency hearings), motions, findings, orders, and collateral information regarding the assigned county attorney and guardian ad litem (GAL).
- There is a need for the technical expertise to create ad hoc reports for special issues.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Case Review System

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The State was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.
**Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR**

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 CFSR:

- Parents were not engaged or involved consistently in the case planning process.
- The State was inconsistent in holding permanency hearings in a timely manner.
- For DYC children in foster care placements, permanency hearings were not held by the court or by an administrative body that is not a part of the State child welfare agency. (This does not meet the definition of a permanency hearing as established in the Federal 45 CFR 1355.20.)
- There was inconsistent implementation of the process for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Denver County and El Paso County used TDM strategies to involve children and families in case planning. The State provided opportunities for county staff to attend FGC conferences and training.
- The State and Court Improvement Program (CIP) created and delivered training for judicial officers regarding ASFA timelines and permanency hearings.
- The State revised caseworker initial and ongoing training curricula to emphasize timelines required for permanency hearings.
- For children committed to DYC who are in foster care placements, permanency hearings were conducted by an administrative law judge (ALJ) from the Office of the Administrative Courts (OAC) in the Department of Personnel and Administration.
- The State implemented a revision in Trails to capture children in foster care for 15 of the previous 22 months, and the ARD began monitoring whether cases contained necessary ASFA documentation and actions.

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

**Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Case Review System are presented and discussed below.

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

___ Strength ______ X Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the stakeholder interviews indicate that although the State has processes in place to engage parents in case planning, the State is not consistent in the involvement of parents, especially fathers, in case plan development. In addition, the findings for item 18 in the case review instrument, which addresses involvement of parents...
and children in case planning, indicate that mothers were involved in case planning in 74 percent of applicable cases, while fathers were involved in case planning in 60 percent of applicable cases. Item 25 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Colorado’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
The Statewide Assessment reports that policy requires caseworkers to develop a FSP within 60 days from the date the referral was received and to document the involvement of appropriate parties, including parents, in the development of the plan. The ARD reviews the case plan and monitors whether the case file documents efforts to involve parents (as well as other persons) in the development of the FSP. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, more than 40 counties have initiated implementation of the four F2F core strategies, which include: self assessment; building community partnerships; recruitment, development, and support of resource families; and TDM. TDM is a key strategy used to involve parents actively in the development of their plan for services.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following information relevant to ARD data for in-home and foster care cases pertaining to this item for the first quarter of SFY 2008:
- Efforts to involve mothers in case planning were made in 99.1 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Efforts to involve fathers in case planning were made in 98 percent of the cases reviewed.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the following four issues with regard to the case planning process: the extent to which all children have case plans, the timeliness of case plan development and update, the quality of the case plan, and the involvement of parents in the development of the case plan.

Regarding the existence of case plans, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that every child has a case plan and that the initial case plan is completed within the required timeframes. Although most stakeholders indicated that case plans generally are updated at least every 90 days, a few Fremont County stakeholders suggested that they are not routinely updated in a timely manner.

Regarding the quality of the case plan, several stakeholders expressed the following concerns:
- The case plan is not individualized for each family but follows a standardized format.
- The case plan contains language that is confusing to families and is too long for families to work with.
- The automated case plan functionality in Trails is difficult to use, particularly the modifications required for updating the case plan.
- The case plan often does not specify the services that will be provided by the agency.

Regarding involvement of parents in case planning, most stakeholders confirmed that the agency has embraced the concept of a family-centered, strength-based collaborative approach toward case planning. Denver County stakeholders said that in their county, the TDM meeting is the process used to involve the family members in case planning. Larimer County stakeholders commented that
case plan development begins at the first family meeting, called the Family Safety and Resource Team meeting. Progress on case plan goals and any concerns are discussed in monthly meetings called Family Unity meetings. If updates are needed to the case plan, they are addressed in these meetings. In contrast to these positive views, Fremont County stakeholders noted that TDM meetings are not used for case planning in all cases, and parents are not consistently involved in case planning.

Several stakeholders expressed the following concerns regarding involvement of parents in case planning:
- Caseworkers struggle with engagement of the noncustodial parent in case planning.
- Parents are presented with the case plan rather than engaged in developing it.
- Engagement of parents in the case planning process is challenging when the parents are not cooperative, are not in agreement with the case plan, or are reluctant to participate.
- In-home services cases do not typically have either TDM or ARD reviews to engage parents in case planning. The skill level of the caseworker will determine if the parents are engaged in the case planning process.

A few stakeholders confirmed that the ARD reviews monitor parental involvement in the case plan by checking the signatures on the document, and they acknowledged that a signature on the plan does not necessarily indicate the parents were engaged in developing the case plan.

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

| X | Strength | Area Needing Improvement |

Item 26 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Colorado has a functioning administrative review process and a court process for the periodic review of the status of each child no less frequently than once every 6 months. This item also was rated as a Strength in the 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, the court is required to conduct timely reviews (including 6-month reviews) or, if there are no objections, the court may use its discretion to require an administrative review by DCWS. The Administrative Review System is an independent review system and may substitute for court reviews if so ordered by the court. The ARD is responsible for managing the case review system and the QA system. ARD reviews cases for timeliness and quality by reading case files and conducting face-to-face meetings with children in placement for 6 months or longer. Reviews are scheduled at 6-month intervals as long as the child is in placement. The Statewide Assessment reports that at a minimum all children in foster care are reviewed by the ARD at least once every 6 months.
Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed two issues with regard to the periodic reviews. One issue pertains to whether the periodic reviews are being held in accordance with State plan requirements (at least once every 6 months). The second issue pertains to the effectiveness of the periodic reviews with regard to moving children toward permanency.

With regard to the timeliness of reviews, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency holds periodic reviews of all cases in accordance with established timeframes. Some stakeholders attributed this to the interface between Trails and FAMJIS, which ensures that caseworkers are notified when periodic reviews or permanency hearings need to be scheduled. Stakeholders reported that most cases have a court review every 3 months in addition to the ARD case reviews, which occur every 6 months. They noted that findings from the ARD review either are given to the court or can be inserted into the court permanency hearing report.

With regard to the quality of ARD and court periodic reviews, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the court reviews and ARD reviews are effective in moving children toward permanency. A few stakeholders also commented that the ARD case review focuses on QA issues related to process and procedural requirements.

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

___X___ Strength  ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that permanency hearings are held in accordance with the required 12-month timeframes and are used to evaluate progress in moving children toward permanency. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires courts to conduct permanency hearings no later than 12 months after the date the child is considered to have entered foster care and no later than every 12 months thereafter while the child remains in foster care. Additionally, if a child is younger than 6 years of age at the time a petition is filed, Expedited Permanency Planning requires that a permanency hearing be held no later than 3 months after the decree of disposition. The Statewide Assessment notes that the 12-month permanency hearings for DYC youth are conducted by ALJs.

The Statewide Assessment provided the following data for the first quarter of SFY 2008: In 1,622 cases of children in foster care for 12 months or longer, there was a signed and dated court order within the previous 12 months that contained reasonable efforts to achieve permanency in 1,576 (97.2 percent) of the cases.
Stakeholder Interview Information
Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed two issues with regard to permanency hearings. One issue pertains to whether the permanency hearings are being held at least once every 12 months. The other issue pertains to whether the permanency hearings are effective in moving children toward permanency.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in holding a permanency hearing for each child in foster care at least once every 12 months. The following factors were seen as contributing to the timeliness of the hearings:

- In Denver County, judges receive information from the court data system pertaining to whether they are meeting the required timeframes. The city attorney tracks due dates and sets hearings.
- In Fremont County, the attorney tracks the permanency hearing due dates and informs the agency.
- In Larimer County, the magistrate started a new process of holding permanency hearings 30 days before they are actually due to prevent delays. The county attorney tracks permanency hearing due dates and informs the agency.

For children committed to DYC who are in foster care placements, permanency hearings currently are conducted by an ALJ from the OAC in the Department of Personnel and Administration. Stakeholders indicated that these hearings are timely and substantive.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions with regard to whether permanency hearings are effective in moving children to permanency. Some stakeholders suggested that permanency hearings review the history of the case and note areas of progress or lack of progress. A few stakeholders also suggested that families use the permanency hearings to identify what they need to do and that parents are held accountable for meeting service plans. A few State-level, Denver County, and Larimer County stakeholders identified the following concerns with regard to the effectiveness of permanency hearings in moving children to permanency:

- In some cases, judges do not have sufficient information about the case to evaluate effectively whether progress is being made.
- The agency does not always follow up with the court’s recommendations.
- There are some situations in which the court does not trust the opinion of the agency professionals and will not allow the agency to achieve the plan and close the case.

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 Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the agency is not consistent in filing for TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements. According to data provided in the Statewide Assessment, a TPR petition had been filed in a timely manner in 53.4 percent of the applicable cases reviewed, and a documented
A compelling reason was found in 63.4 percent of the cases in which filing for TPR did not occur in accordance with required timeframes. The CFSR case reviews found that ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 76 percent of the 21 applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, Colorado requires county departments to file a petition for TPR no later than the end of the fifteenth month of placement for any child who has been in foster care for 15 of the previous 22 months unless there is a compelling reason submitted to the court identifying why it is in the child’s best interests not to terminate parental rights. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that most courts will not terminate parental rights if an adoptive home has not been identified. In addition, some courts require maintaining the reunification goal until a TPR petition is filed.

The Statewide Assessment provides the following TPR data from ARD case reviews:

- A motion for TPR had been filed in 196 (53.4 percent) of the 367 cases in which a child has been in out-of-home care for 15 out of the previous 22 months. The ARD reviewer determined that TPR was appropriate in 193 (99.0 percent) of the 195 motions to TPR.
- A documented compelling reason for not filing a TPR was in Trails for 121 (63.4 percent) of 191 children for whom the agency had not filed a TPR petition in a timely manner.
- ARD case reviews found that the reason for not filing was appropriate in 97 (84.3 percent) of 115 compelling reasons reviewed.
- “Not in the child’s best interest” accounted for 76.3 percent of the reasons for not filing a TPR. The primary circumstances that make filing a TPR not in a child’s best interests are: the child will emancipate in a short period of time; there is no adoptive family; the child is living with relatives who are not going to adopt; and/or the child has severe disabilities and needs ongoing services from the county.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the agency’s effectiveness in filing for TPR in accordance with ASFA timeframes. Several stakeholders suggested that the agency was effective in this regard and some State-level stakeholders attributed this to the fact that the GAL may file for a TPR if the county attorney does not file. Various other stakeholders expressed the following concerns:

- Some judges believe that they should not terminate parental rights if there is no identified adoptive resource for the child in order to prevent creating legal orphans.
- Sometimes the court delays the filing for TPR by providing parents with extensions to continue to work toward reunification.

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

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**Strength**

**Area Needing Improvement**

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60
Item 29 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews indicates that the State is consistent with regard to notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers about court hearings involving the children in their care. In addition, opportunities for these resource parents to be heard in court hearings occur consistently throughout the State. Item 29 was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, on July 10, 2007, the Colorado Supreme Court chief justice issued a written directive to all Colorado District Courts to ensure that county departments are providing written notice of all proceedings to children, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers. The directive also instructed the county to review certificates of mailing routinely to ensure that the noticing is occurring.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the ARD case reviews for the first quarter of SFY 2008 found that all required parties were invited to the reviews and given at least 2 weeks notice in 2,104 (89.9 percent) of the 2,340 reviews. These figures include the 6-month periodic reviews and 12-month permanency hearings.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Stakeholder comments during the onsite CFSR addressed two issues with regard to this item. One issue pertains to whether resource parents (foster parents, relative caregivers, and pre-adoptive parents) receive notification of the reviews and hearings that are to be held concerning a child in their care. The other issue pertains to whether resource parents are given the opportunity to be heard at the reviews and hearings.

With regard to notification, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that caregivers are consistently notified regarding ARD reviews. They indicated that ARD notification goes out at least 2 weeks in advance via a letter produced in Trails. Although Denver County and Fremont County stakeholders reported that caregivers also are notified regarding permanency hearings, some State-level and Larimer County stakeholders reported that if a caregiver is not a party to the legal suit, notification of permanency hearings may be inconsistent.

With regard to caregivers being given the opportunity to be heard in reviews and hearings, there was general agreement among stakeholders that there was ample opportunity for caregivers to be heard in the ARD reviews. Most stakeholders also indicated that caregivers are given the opportunity to be heard in permanency hearings held by the courts, although a few suggested that the court would benefit from training on how to seek input from caregivers and that caregivers would benefit from training about their role in court and how to address the court.
III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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Status of Quality Assurance System

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under QA System are presented and discussed 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. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that multiple standards are in place to address the health and safety of children in foster care. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires initial and regular health and dental exams and treatment for children in out-of-home care. Children’s physical and dental health, examination, and treatment information is verified during monitoring visits to CPAs by the 24-Hour Monitoring Unit. The statewide Foster Parent Core Training emphasizes the importance of scheduling the child’s health assessment and dental examination in a timely manner and documenting the dates these activities took place.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that State policy requires monthly caseworker (or treatment team member) face-to-face contacts with children in out-of-home care who reside in the State. For children residing in out-of-State placements, caseworker face-to-face contact is required quarterly. Monitoring Unit caseworkers also are required to make visits in resource homes every month.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCWS added additional staff to the 24-Hour Monitoring Unit who are responsible for monitoring State-licensed facilities, including CPAs. The purpose of the monitoring visit is to ensure that agencies are in compliance
with minimum rules and regulations and to evaluate the quality of services provided to children and families. All observed violations are documented in a Report of Inspection, and violations are required to be corrected within 30 days or the agency must submit a corrective action plan outlining when the violations will be corrected.

The Monitoring Unit also follows up on critical incident reports that State-licensed facilities are required to submit. A critical incident is a serious or potential life safety incident or concern that poses a danger to the life, health, and/or well-being of a child or children at a facility or a staff member at a facility. During SFY 2008, the unit investigated more than 150 complaints filed against State-licensed facilities and conducted more than 450 investigations to determine administrative culpability in cases of alleged child abuse and/or neglect. More than 5,000 critical incidents were submitted to the department. In cases of founded institutional child abuse and/or neglect (assessed by county departments) the Monitoring Unit submits a recommendation for adverse licensing action. This may result in termination of employment of the alleged perpetrator or closure and denial of foster parent certification.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health.

In addition to information cited in the Statewide Assessment, various stakeholders identified the following as ensuring quality services:

- Contract providers are expected to meet performance requirements pertaining to appropriate medical care for a child, caseworker visits with a child, family contact, and other outcome-related factors. Feedback on performance is given to the provider.
- In Denver, Fremont, and Larimer counties, supervisors review cases at least every 90 days to ensure the quality of services and the safety of the child.

**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**

___ Strength  ___X___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from stakeholder interviews indicates that although the State has a case review process that assesses performance on key indicators, the process is not integrated into a larger QA system that supports continuous quality improvement, and it is focused primarily on the State’s 10 largest counties. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, ARD serves as an independent third-party QA review system under the auspices of CDHS within the Office of Employment and Regulatory Affairs. ARD is responsible for the QA systems for both DCWS and DYC. County departments engaged in either the Integrated Care Management Program (one county) or the Collaborative Management Program (24 counties) are required to have Quality Improvement and Utilization Review as a condition of program participation. The feedback loop for information resulting from the ARD review is typically through administrators and supervisors, depending on the county structure. Reviews also are conducted of the services provided by placement providers and their compliance with licensing and certification requirements.

In addition to the reviews of all children in placement, administrative reviews are conducted on a statistically valid random sample of all cases opened for in-home services. One hundred percent of these case records are reviewed and input is solicited from individuals attending the ARD case review.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Stakeholders identified both strengths and weaknesses related to the State’s QA system. Various stakeholders identified the following challenges related to the QA system:

- The case review process is not integrated into a larger statewide QA system that supports continuous quality improvement.
- The case review process does not share information about successful programs statewide requiring each county to “reinvent the wheel.”
- More communication and transparency are needed in educating counties about the State ARD methodologies, program, and process.
- Many counties do not have enough expertise to identify the existing reports that would assist in understanding the underlying problems or to develop new reports. For example, there is a need for better management reports such as workload for each type of caseworker.
- There is not enough support from the State ARD due to understaffing, and many counties do not have the technical resources necessary, either through their staffs or through outside resources, to develop a continuous quality improvement program.
- ARD does not include all foster care cases; it is limited to cases of children in foster care for at least 6 months. In-home services cases are reviewed only twice a year, creating a 5-year cycle to review all in-home services cases for the entire State.
- The case reviews occur primarily in the 10 largest counties. Smaller counties are included when there is time to work them into the review schedule, and therefore they are not monitored on a routine basis.

Stakeholders also identified the following strengths related to the ARD process:

- It uses a data collection instrument that is similar to the CFSR Federal instrument, so it is effective in identifying casework and documentation deficits, and in providing feedback to all levels of agency operations, including case-specific feedback to individual caseworkers and supervisors.
The division conducts exit interviews immediately following the case review and another, more formal exit 2 weeks after the review.  
The process holds staff accountable for improving their case review data by setting a deadline for completion of follow-up steps taken by the county to address the identified issues.  
The ARD case review includes interviews with stakeholders, parents, and appropriate youth for out-of-home cases; however, only caseworkers are interviewed for in-home services cases.  
ARD data from case reviews are analyzed to determine if changes to rules and regulations are needed—for example, policy regarding sibling visits was changed as a result of ARD data.  
ARD case review reports are posted on the Internet on a quarterly basis and shared with the judiciary.

IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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Status of Staff and Provider Training

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Staff and Provider Training are presented and discussed 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

____ Strength ___X____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State operates an initial training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that there are delays in caseworkers receiving the initial core training and that the current availability of the training is insufficient to meet the demand. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
**Statewide Assessment Information**
According to the Statewide Assessment, the State requires new caseworkers to complete a 30-hour program of computer-based training (CBT) prior to receiving case assignments. The CBT includes 10 major content areas: case planning, cultural sensitivity, confidentiality, documentation, domestic violence, investigation, risk assessment, reasonable efforts, substance abuse, and medical aspects of child abuse and neglect. Caseworkers also are required to have 60 hours of structured on-the-job training within the first 3 months of employment and to complete 14 days of core training within their first year on the job.

The subjects of the core training are the following:
- Family preservation and protection for abused and neglected children
- Case planning and family-centered casework
- The effects of abuse and neglect on child development
- Separation, placement, and reunification in child welfare

Core caseworker training is provided by CDHS. County departments may supplement this training with county-specific training. County departments track training participation by caseworkers and supervisors. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the average wait time for caseworkers to receive the initial core training is 3 to 6 months.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Stakeholders commenting on this item confirmed that Trails CBT for a new caseworker is a prerequisite for carrying a case or for enrolling in core training. They noted that CBT is accessible and focuses on how to navigate and complete data entry into mandatory fields in Trails. CBT is tracked at the county level by the supervisor and is required prior to case assignment.

Stakeholders also confirmed that the second part of initial training for caseworkers is a series of four core training classes. Core 1 and core 2 are to be completed within the first 6 months on the job, and cores 3 and 4 are to be completed within a year. Stakeholders noted that CPA caseworkers who have full case management responsibility have access to core training, while caseworkers working for contracted CPAs that do not have full case management responsibility may attend the core training for a fee. Stakeholders said that the counties and the State track the completion of core training.

One concern noted by stakeholders is that the current availability of core training is insufficient to meet the demand, and caseworkers may wait 2 to 4 months (sometimes longer) before they can begin the training. Some stakeholders commented that to address this situation, supervisors assign mentors to new caseworkers or the county purchases its own training. Denver County stakeholders reported that the county has a “boot camp” training for new caseworkers, while Larimer County and Fremont County stakeholders said that they have new caseworkers shadow more experienced caseworkers as a training tool. State-level stakeholders noted that the State’s Child Welfare Action Committee is working on legislation to create a training academy so that training is more consistent across counties.
Stakeholders commenting on the quality of training for Trails and the core training expressed different opinions. Some stakeholders suggested that the training curriculum is adequate and reported that the core curriculum is monitored annually by a curriculum review team composed of State and county content experts, and is updated to include best practices standards. A few stakeholders reported that pre- and posttests of core 3 and 4 classes and survey information are used to gather input on training content. However, other stakeholders noted that there are gaps in the training curriculum, such as a lack of sexual abuse training and training for caseworkers working with older children.

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. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that caseworkers are required to take a minimum of 6 hours of ongoing training annually. Stakeholders noted that participation in training is enforced and monitored by supervisors. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCWS policy requires caseworkers to complete a minimum of 6 hours of in-service training annually. Caseworkers may receive this training through the CDHS, which offers 55 specialized and advanced training topics, or through other resources.

The Statewide Assessment reports that there have been successful collaborative training opportunities offered via annual conferences. For example, in 2008, the Colorado Judicial Branch CIP and DCWS created the first Colorado Summit on Children, Youth, and Families, which was attended by about 1,000 professionals and volunteers and received overwhelmingly positive evaluations. Another ongoing training offered recently by ACTION for Child Protection was the statewide training on updated safety management policies.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCWS sponsored trainings to promote foster care program development. These were delivered to county staff and CPA staff, and included topics such as developing treatment foster care, preparing foster parents of youth to help them successfully move to adulthood, and the dynamics of kinship.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed two issues with regard to ongoing training. One issue pertains to whether the ongoing training requirement is enforced in the State. The other issue concerns whether agency staff have access to the ongoing training classes that are offered.
With regard to enforcing the ongoing training requirement, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State enforces this requirement and training is tracked by supervisors. Stakeholders noted that supervisors are required to do a training plan each year for their staff and identify the number of ongoing training hours obtained in their performance evaluations. Some counties require additional ongoing training hours. Denver County stakeholders said that the county requires 8 hours of ongoing training for caseworkers, and Larimer County stakeholders said that 16 hours of ongoing training are required annually there. Most stakeholders commented that caseworkers routinely obtain more than 6 hours of ongoing training annually.

With regard to accessibility of training, most stakeholders suggested that sufficient ongoing training opportunities are offered by either the county or the State and that the offerings are accessible to caseworkers.

Stakeholders noted that there is required training for new supervisors that includes topics such as supportive supervision, educational supervision, and administrative supervision. This training also includes mentoring, discipline, constructive feedback, and the hiring process. All new supervisors are required to take the training within the first 6 months.

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

___ Strength ___X Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State requires both pre-service and ongoing training for foster parents, information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that some county-certified foster parents do not participate in ongoing training and that the counties are out of compliance with regard to this requirement. However, the Statewide Assessment also reports that foster parents certified by CPAs are obtaining ongoing training and that their training hours are monitored routinely. This item also was rated an Area Needing Improvement in Colorado’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires prospective foster parents to complete 27 hours of pre-service training in order to be certified. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that children may be placed in the home following 12 hours of pre-service training under provisional certification, but the foster parents must complete the remaining 15 hours within 3 months of placement. The remaining 15 hours are designed to strengthen foster parents’ skills in order to meet the unique needs of children they serve. The Statewide Assessment notes that the same standards are required of both public and private agency-licensed foster parents.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, all foster parents must complete 20 hours of ongoing training annually to maintain their certification. For family foster care homes providing care to specialized populations, the ongoing training requirement is 32 hours per year. According to the Statewide Assessment, desk audits of foster home provider files from county program reviews completed in
October 2007, April 2008, and September 2008, resulted in a primary finding that foster parents certified by county departments were out of compliance with timely completion of annual ongoing training. The Statewide Assessment reports that tracking of training is documented in the provider’s record and done by county departments for the county foster parents and by CPAs for their foster homes. Foster parents who do not meet training standards may have their certifications withheld. The Statewide Assessment reports that in SFY 2007, 429 foster parents received core training, and 201 foster parents attended ongoing training. According to data received from the State, as of May 4, 2009, the number of county-certified homes was 1,150, and the number of CPA-certified homes was 1,303, for a total of 2,453 certified homes.

The Statewide Assessment did not address training required for staff of State-licensed facilities or for adoptive parents.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed two issues—one pertained to the pre-service training for foster parents and the other to ongoing training. With regard to pre-service training, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State’s pre-service training requirements for foster parents are met and often exceeded. Stakeholders reported that the first 12 hours of training are standardized across the State, while the remaining 15 hours can vary. In addition, training hour requirements vary across counties. Denver County stakeholders, for example, reported that foster parents there must complete all 27 training hours before a child is placed in the home; in other counties a child may be placed after foster parents complete 12 hours. Larimer County stakeholders noted that foster parents in that county are required to complete 30 hours of pre-service training.

Several stakeholders suggested that the pre-service training is effective in preparing foster parents for parenting. However, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that the pre-service training is not effective because it does not pay sufficient attention to parenting children who have special needs, including serious behavioral and emotional problems. Various stakeholders identified the need for additional training in attachment disorder, mental health issues, how to access needed services, and the foster parents’ role in the court-related processes.

With regard to ongoing training for foster parents, stakeholders suggested that foster parents can earn credits for ongoing training by accessing the training offered for caseworkers, reading books, watching videos, and/or attending community meetings or the annual conference of the Colorado State Foster Parents Association. Stakeholders said that if foster care providers do not obtain the required hours, it is up to the certifying county or agency to decide whether they will recertify the home.

Stakeholders indicated that CPAs have the same ongoing training requirements as the counties but that they usually create a training plan for each foster home that is specific for the children in it. Stakeholders commented that ongoing training requirements for CPA foster parents is thoroughly monitored, which they believe results in a higher compliance rate than the rate for county foster parents.
V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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Status of Service Array and Resource Development

Colorado is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Service Array and Resource Development are presented and discussed 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. Although the agency is not consistent with regard to assessing needs and providing services to children and parents (as noted previously in item 17), both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that the State has an adequate array of services in place to meet the needs of children and families. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Colorado policy requires that each county provide a set of core services funded by and provided through the Core Services Program. Each county must provide the following: home-based intervention, intensive family therapy, life skills, day treatment, sexual abuse treatment, special economic assistance, mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and aftercare services. The county may choose to provide the following services: family stabilization, early intervention, adoption promotion, and medical and dental services for children who do not have insurance or Medicaid coverage.
The Statewide Assessment also reports that the Office of Behavioral Health and Housing, which is a subdivision of CDHS, delivers Colorado’s Mental Health Institute, Supportive Housing and Homeless Program, and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division services. There are five behavioral health organizations responsible for operating managed care programs to deliver mental health services to Medicaid-eligible individuals in their assigned geographic service areas. Community mental health services are delivered through contracts with 7 specialty clinics and 17 not-for-profit community mental health centers. The roles and functions of the community centers and clinics are statutorily defined.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State has an adequate array of services to address the needs of the children and families served by DCWS. Stakeholders described Core Services as a block grant to each county that allows the county to tailor services to address the needs of the families in their communities. The service array includes services to prevent removal, promote timely reunification or adoption, and provide IL services to youth emancipating from foster care, among others. However, some stakeholders noted that there are an insufficient number of foster homes in the State to meet the needs of the foster care population, including Native American foster parents, Spanish-speaking foster parents, and foster homes for large sibling groups, adolescents, and children with complex needs.

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 Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that there have been budget cuts for services that have resulted in waiting lists for services in many areas of the State and a lack of key services in rural areas of the State. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the accessibility of services in Colorado is negatively affected by a shrinking tax base in the State. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the Taxpayer Bill of Rights Amendment (TABOR), approved by Colorado voters in 1992, prohibited additional or new taxation without voter approval. The Statewide Assessment reports that TABOR resulted in a decrease in Colorado’s funding for services statewide, and, in 2005, when the economy was making strong gains, State and local governments were prohibited from using growing revenues to restore cuts to vital programs. Although Referendum C, passed by the voters in 2005, created a 5-year “time-out” from TABOR, the effects of TABOR in the coming years are unknown and unpredictable.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that stakeholders interviewed as part of the self-assessment process indicated that service accessibility varies across jurisdictions and identified the following barriers to service accessibility:
• There are challenges in meeting transportation needs of families to access services, particularly in rural areas.
• Respite care services for foster parents and kinship families are not available consistently across the State.
• Statewide, there are insufficient services for foster parents who are caring for children and youth with mental health needs.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that many of the services in the service array are not readily accessible to the children and families who need them. A particular concern noted was the lack of mental health services in some areas of the State, especially high-level mental health services, such as residential treatment and psychiatric services. Another key concern identified pertained to the variability in the quantity and quality of IL services throughout the State. It was noted that in some rural counties, IL services are not available, and in other counties the quantity of IL services is insufficient to meet the need. Stakeholders also identified the lack of sufficient transportation services.

Stakeholders also indicated that the following services are either not available in some areas or have waiting lists:
• Support services for foster parents including insufficient subsidized child care, a lack of mileage reimbursement to transport foster children to appointments, and insufficient respite services for foster parents
• Substance abuse services, particularly in-patient treatment resources
• Services for developmentally disabled children and adults
• Services to support adoptive and post-adoptive families

In addition, adoption subsidy benefits are provided inconsistently across the State, and some counties authorize only Medicaid coverage without a monetary amount.

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

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

Item 37 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although there are flexible funds available at both the State and county levels for specialized services, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the general limitations in funding for both specialized and basic services results in inconsistencies with regard to the ability of the agency to meet the unique needs of children and families. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Core Services grants are designed to allow counties the flexibility to tailor services to the needs of children and families, including the ability to contract for the services needed by an individual family. The Statewide Assessment notes that when appropriate services are not available through the community or contracted providers, flexible-funding dollars are accessible to purchase the needed services.
However, the Statewide Assessment also notes the following two areas of concern regarding the individualization of services:

- There is an increased need for respite care for foster parents caring for children with mental health needs.
- There is a need for caseworkers or service providers who speak the primary language of the family.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the ability of the agency to individualize services to children and families is enhanced by the availability of State flexible-funding resources and flexible funds in some counties. These funds generally are used for services that cannot be paid for through a contract with a provider and for emergency payments such as rent and utility bills. A few stakeholders also noted that individualization of services is enhanced by collaborative efforts of local agencies to pool resources to ensure that the needs of children and families are met in a cost-efficient manner.

However, despite the availability of flexible-funding resources and collaborative efforts, many stakeholders suggested that the general limitations in funding for services means that some families do not get the services they need. Some stakeholders reported that there have been cuts in funding for specialized programs, and that mental health funding requirements under Medicaid severely limit the ability to meet the mental health service needs of children and youth, particularly high-level service needs. They noted that often there are no funds available for children who still need mental health services but have met the cap established by Medicaid. Stakeholders also noted that caseworkers have limited flexibility with regard to offering services that are paid for through Medicaid.

Some stakeholders suggested that funding cuts for preventive services have limited the ability of the agency to meet the needs of children. Denver County stakeholders reported that F2F services have been cut due to budgetary constraints and that adolescents are coming into the system because placement prevention services are not available, or information about how to access available services is limited.

Stakeholders also expressed concern about the lack of culturally sensitive services in all parts of the State and the difficulty in finding service providers, particularly mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, who can work with families from various cultures. A few State-level stakeholders noted that it is particularly difficult to meet the service needs of immigrant families from Mexico, particularly when the family is “undocumented.”

Several State-level, Fremont County, and Denver County stakeholders also raised concerns about the quality of mental health services available. They noted that there is a high level of turnover among mental health services providers, and service providers may be inexperienced and not competent to address the mental health concerns of the children in the system.
VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

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**Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

Colorado is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Colorado was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Agency Responsiveness to the Community are presented and discussed 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. DCWS engages in ongoing consultation to develop and update the CFSP through surveys, special studies, and collaborative efforts with internal and external partners. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, in April 2008, the governor issued an Executive Order creating the Governor’s Child Welfare Action Committee. The goal of this committee, comprised of 25 key stakeholders, is to provide recommendations for improving Colorado’s child welfare system. An interim report was presented to the governor on October 31, 2008. The final report is due December 31, 2009.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that Colorado has several programs that require the counties to engage community stakeholders in ongoing consultation, and to include the major concerns of these stakeholders in the goals and objectives of the CFSP. The Collaborative Management Program, which was implemented by legislation in 2004, requires DCWS to collaborate in service provision for multisystem clients and children. The Statewide Assessment notes that 89 percent of counties and Tribes reported that
collaborative efforts are part of their core services programs. The Collaborative Management Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) have defined expanded service arrays as community partners join together in identifying and addressing needs of children and families in the community. The 24 counties engaged in the Collaborative Management Program are required to have both a Quality Improvement Review and a Utilization Review as a condition of program participation. Feedback from these reviews is incorporated into the department’s CFSP and helps to inform DCWS regarding policy initiatives and budget development.

In addition, according to the Statewide Assessment, DCWS meets and obtains feedback regularly from the following:

- The Colorado’s Children’s Justice Task Force, which is comprised of individuals who represent agencies and professionals involved in children’s issues. At the quarterly meetings, the panel provides input about interagency collaboration, child fatalities, abuse and neglect investigations, domestic violence, and substance abuse.
- CIP and DCWS, which cosponsored the Colorado Summit on Children, Youth, and Families, and brought child welfare stakeholders together to discuss issues and to find practical solutions for achieving permanency, safety, and well-being for children and families in the child welfare system.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the two federally recognized Tribes in the State are the Southern Ute and the Ute Mountain Ute, located in reservations in Southwest Colorado. The State has MOUs with the Tribes outlining the responsibilities of each party relating to abuse and neglect allegations involving Tribal members. The State Office employs a Tribal liaison who is responsible for ongoing communication and facilitation of casework on specific cases.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR identified the following possible resources for consultation regarding the State’s CFSP:

- Quarterly meetings of the Collaborative Management groups
- The Placement Alternatives Commission
- The Governor’s Child Welfare Action Committee
- The Foster Care and Permanence Task Force composed of members of the Colorado Association of Family and Children’s Agencies
- Outreach to the Tribes, including invitations to judicial training and annual conferences and a collaborative effort to develop drug courts on the reservations

In addition to these formal opportunities for input, stakeholders noted that many formal and informal opportunities exist for providers, clients, and other stakeholders to provide input to the agency.
Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports pursuant to the CFSP

__X__ Strength __Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength. According to the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews, the State consults with community stakeholders to update the CFSP annually and develop the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment
The Statewide Assessment does not provide information for this item other than what is provided under item 38.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCWS has processes in place to continually obtain input from community stakeholders, which is integrated into CFSP updates and the APSR. Please see item 38 for further detail.

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. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews confirm that the State’s child welfare agency services are coordinated with the services and benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs. This item also was rated as Strength in Colorado’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, DCWS engages in ongoing partnerships with other State agencies that provide services to children and families. Partnerships occur through ongoing meetings and interagency agreements to coordinate planning and transitioning clients between the agencies. For example, interagency agreements are in place with school districts, law enforcement, and health, mental health, and substance agencies, as well as the Judicial Branch.

The following were cited as examples of coordination of services for Colorado:
- The Collaborative Management Program, described under item 38
- The FAMJIS data exchange between the Colorado Judicial Department and the DCWS
- The implementation in many counties of F2F principles and core strategies such as TDM and the involvement of community partners in decision-making
• The Colorado Care Coordination Project, which provides an integrated system of care, coordination, and case management among primary care and specialty providers, State agencies and their local counterparts, and local community agencies
• The collaboration between the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing and CDHS to identify gaps in mental health services available to Medicaid eligible children
• The Best Practice Court Teams, multidisciplinary teams designed to incorporate best practices in handling child welfare cases by developing ongoing collaboration among Colorado’s child welfare stakeholders at all levels of government

The Statewide Assessment notes that in addition to these efforts, the Governor’s Child Welfare Action Committee will develop recommendations for how public/private partnerships can further improve the services and care provided to children served by the child welfare system.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**
Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCWS is effective in coordinating services with other Federal or federally assisted programs. Some stakeholders said that the block grant system of funding county services actually encourages flexibility and collaboration with other agencies to integrate existing funding sources efficiently and to provide needed services. The legislatively mandated managed care system also reinforces blended funding. Stakeholders commented that DCWS coordinates services with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Colorado Workforce Development Council, and mental health providers.

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</th>
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<th>In Substantial Conformity</th>
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<td>2</td>
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**Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**

Colorado is in substantial conformity with this systemic factor. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention are presented and discussed 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. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholders’ comments indicate that the State has established and implemented clear standards for approving foster family homes and licensing child care institutions. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, Colorado’s standards for foster and adoptive homes are governed by both State regulation and departmental policy and are in accord with nationally recognized guidelines. The Statewide Assessment reports that responsibility for oversight of standards for foster families and child care institutions resides with DCWS’ 24-Hour Monitoring Unit. Foster homes, adoptive homes, and specialized group facilities are certified by either the county child welfare unit or a private CPA.

The Statewide Assessment reports that DCWS requires certification of a home prior to an initial placement and the use of the SAFE home study for foster home studies, kinship foster care studies, and adoption home studies. The use of a modified SAFE assessment is optional for non-certified kin homes. State statute requires that 27 hours of pre-certification training are completed for initial certification.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCWS rules require that local agencies and CPAs conduct criminal record checks and child abuse checks on all adults in the home prior to initial certification and prior to the annual re-certification. Active certification must be maintained the entire time the home provides foster care services. The homes must be supervised a minimum of once a month to address any foster parent questions or concerns or issues of the certifying agency. The supervision is to include, if possible, an observation of the interaction between each child and the foster parent. This visit is not the same as the monthly child welfare visit of the caseworker with the foster child.

The Statewide Assessment notes that a child may be placed with a relative or an individual who has a significant relationship with a child who is not licensed for up to 60 days pending completion of the requirements for certification. In addition, criminal records and child abuse records must be in compliance with regulations in order for a certification to be granted.

The department may waive the limits on the number of children cared for by a family foster care home in order to allow the placement of sibling groups. The rules are the same for all certified foster homes; however, kinship family foster homes may file an appeal for an area of hardship if it does not affect safety, such as the amount of required space.
Certifications are granted to the following types of family foster care homes:

- Certified non-relative
- Certified relative
- Receiving homes

The Statewide Assessment reports that specialized group facilities are sponsored by a county child welfare unit or a CPA and provide care for at least 3 but fewer than 12 children (with exceptions noted in Section 26-6-102(10)(a), C.R.S.).

Oversight of county-conducted institutional child abuse or neglect investigations is provided by the Institutional Abuse Review Team (IART), composed of community members and experts in child abuse or neglect prevention or treatment fields. The IART reviews all reports of investigations of abuse and neglect in 24-hour out-of-home child care settings, which include department licensed and certified out-of-home care settings such as foster care and kinship homes, residential child care facilities, CPA foster or group homes, as well as DYC juvenile facilities and Colorado Division of Mental Health institutions. The team reviewed 642 reports in 2007. IART makes recommendations regarding follow-up to involved State and county agencies.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR stated that no home is certified until all licensing requirements are met. In addition, homes must be recertified every year. Criminal and child abuse background checks are completed prior to placement of a child with a non-certified relative and prior to certification of all other family foster homes. Foster homes are monitored monthly by a certification caseworker.

Some stakeholders noted that waivers with regard to the number of children permitted in the home may be granted to accommodate sibling groups, if all other requirements including available space are met. Waivers are not allowed for background check requirements. They noted that all waivers must be approved through the appeals board composed of members of the Department of Health, DYC, Department of Education, and Qualistar, and waivers can be granted for 60 days.

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

__X__ Strength  ____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholders’ comments indicate that the State applies consistent standards for all licensed child-placing agencies, child care institutions, and foster family homes. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.
Statewide Assessment
According to the Statewide Assessment, all certified foster care homes and group homes must meet the same standards. Rules for child care facility licensing are found in the Colorado Code of Regulations (12 CCR 2509-8). Foster parents are defined in Section 7.708. In addition, specific policies and procedures for certifying agencies are defined in 7.708-7.708.65, 7.500 (county resources), and 7.710 (CPAs). Basic requirements for all 24-hour facilities are defined in 7.701 (“General Rules for 24-Hour Facilities”).

Although 27 hours of training are required for full certification, in some areas of the State children are placed in a foster home after the foster parents have completed 12 hours of training. Foster parents are then expected to complete the remaining 15 hours of training within 3 months after placement. In these situations, the foster family has a provisional certification and training must be completed before full certification. Title IV-E funds are not used for foster home payments until final certification.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review stated that all DCWS counties and private CPAs must meet the State standards for certified homes.

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

X Strength

Item 43 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State is in compliance with the Federal requirements for criminal background clearances and safety requirements for prospective foster and adoptive parents. The State was found to be in compliance with this issue in its 2009 title IV-E review. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, DCWS rules require local agencies and CPAs to conduct criminal record checks and child abuse checks on all adults in the home prior to initial certification and prior to the annual re-certification. Criminal record checks also are conducted on all prospective foster parents applying to contracted child-placing agencies. A conviction of child abuse for anyone in the home will result in denial of the application or revocation of a certificate. Patterns of misdemeanors also will result in the denial of an application or revocation of a certificate.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR stated that criminal backgrounds checks are done before the family starts the foster parent training program. If an additional offense occurs after the initial check, DCWS is notified via the Colorado
Bureau of Investigation. DCWS also completes a criminal records check with other States if the family has not lived in the State for the past 5 years. Criminal checks are redone with each annual recertification.

**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**

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Item 44 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. The State does not have a statewide, informed process in place to ensure diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive homes that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. The State does not require, fund, or monitor county recruitment plans. This item was rated as a Strength in the 2002 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**
The Statewide Assessment identified the following concerns with regard to foster homes:
- A shortage of trained and experienced foster parents has resulted in less-than-optimal matches between foster parents and children.
- A need exists for more foster and adoptive homes and for more foster homes in neighborhoods from which children were removed.
- A lack of racially and culturally diverse foster homes does not meet the needs of the child population.

The Statewide Assessment also reports the following recruitment efforts:
- Child-specific recruitment for permanent families through a contract between DCWS and the Adoption Exchange registers children awaiting permanent placement on the Adoption Exchange and AdoptUsKids [http://www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org) websites. These two sites link to Colorado’s Change a Life Forever website featuring Colorado’s waiting children and certified adoptive families searching for a placement.
- Child-specific recruitment featuring Colorado’s longest waiting children is done through a contract between the CDHS and the Heart Gallery. According to the Statewide Assessment, 30 percent of the children featured on the Heart Gallery were placed in adoptive homes during the first 2 years of implementation.

In addition, the State has implemented (or had planned to implement, in May 2009), the following projects to measure outcomes of recruitment efforts:
- A Foster Parent Exit Survey was begun a year ago whereby a contractor collects information related to reasons for discontinuance.
- A geo-mapping database will collect racial and ethnic information on both children and foster and certified kinship homes, and will compare entry addresses of children to their placement addresses to identify where recruitment efforts can be focused to maintain children in their communities.
A mechanism in Trails will track certification efforts from an initial inquiry to placement of a child in a foster home to identify actions that contribute to increased certifications.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed two issues. One issue pertains to the State’s diligent efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents to meet the needs of the children in foster care, and the other concerns the types of children who are most in need of foster and adoptive families.

Stakeholders across the State confirmed that counties in Colorado have very different recruitment needs, based on the differences in the number and characteristics of the children needing foster or adoptive homes. They noted that each county determines if they will have a recruitment plan and identifies the strategies needed and issues to be addressed in the plan. Some stakeholders reported that the State does not fund county recruitment efforts and a few indicated that the State lacks a cohesive statewide recruitment plan.

Various stakeholders identified the following recruitment efforts:
- Project 1.27, a faith-based partnership project
- ZIP Code-based recruitment to ensure that families are recruited from the same communities as the children
- Radio ads
- **AdoptUsKids** and the Heart Gallery

Denver County stakeholders commented that the number of homes available is not keeping pace with the number of children entering foster care. They also noted that there are not enough Native American foster homes, which results in most Native American children being placed in non-native foster homes. Stakeholders also reported that there are not enough foster homes for older youth.

Fremont County stakeholders reported that the county has an inadequate number of foster homes with the skills to handle children with challenging or volatile behaviors. They said that the county has limited recruitment efforts for new resource parents. They also reported they do not have recruitment efforts targeted for older youth.

Larimer County stakeholders reported that the county has a half-time Latino recruiter to address the need for additional Latino homes. Stakeholders commented that there is an inadequate number of foster homes for teenagers, sexually reactive children, and large sibling groups. The county’s recruitment efforts include advertising in print media, radio announcements, and Spanish-language ads.

Most stakeholders across the State reported increases in kinship placements (both certified and non-certified) and a renewed focus on recruitment and certifications of relative foster homes.

**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**
Item 45 is rated as a Strength. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholders’ comments indicate that the State has in place a process for the use of cross-jurisdictional resources. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information
According to the Statewide Assessment, the State has made concerted efforts to place children across jurisdictional boundaries, when appropriate, using AdoptUsKids and Adoption Exchange to find permanent families for children waiting for adoption, and using the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children when home studies or placement supervision is needed from other States.

Stakeholder Interview Information
Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR confirmed that DCWS uses the Heart Gallery, the Adoption Exchange, AdoptUsKids, and Colorado’s Change a Life Forever websites to find cross-jurisdictional families for waiting children. However, each county is allowed to retain an adoptive family for possible matching with county children for 6 months after the home study is approved. After the 6-month period is over, the family is encouraged to look for a child outside of the county. The State coordinates a monthly meeting among adoption supervisors and the Adoption Exchange staff that has been successful in making cross-jurisdictional matches.