

STATE OF NEVADA
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Child and Family Services



Quality Improvement Case Reviews

State of Nevada

Statewide Report

Calendar Year 2015

Division of Child and Family Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

As a part of continuous quality improvement (CQI) the State of Nevada Family Programs Office (FPO) conducts case annual reviews of every child welfare agency in the state. These case reviews, often referred to as Quality Improvement Case Reviews or QICRs, mimic the sampling and evaluation methods used in round III of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) performed by the Administration on Children and Families (ACF).

In collaboration with Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS), Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS), and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), FPO reviewed sixty-six (66): forty (40) foster care and twenty-six (26) in-home cases in 2015.

Each child welfare agency is reviewed once per year, with the exception of CCDFS, which is reviewed twice annually due to its comparative size to the other child welfare agencies and to allow for a more manageable review. Cases for review, regardless of child welfare agency, are selected from a stratified sample of all eligible cases during a period under review (PUR). Cases that have been reviewed are excluded from future samples for the next two years.

METHODOLOGY

The review is designed to be both a quantitative and qualitative review of casework performed by child welfare agencies in Nevada during the PUR.

Each review encompasses a review period of one year prior to the date of the review. The reviewers evaluate the previous year's practice as performed by the child welfare agency and system.

All eighteen (18) items of the CFSR are reviewed, although not every item may be applicable in every case.

- **Item 1:** Timeliness of Investigations
- **Item 2:** Services to Prevent Removal/Re-Entry
- **Item 3:** Risk and Safety Assessment and Management
- **Item 4:** Stability of Foster Care Placement
- **Item 5:** Permanency Goal for the Child
- **Item 6:** Achievement of Permanency
- **Item 7:** Placement with Siblings
- **Item 8:** Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care
- **Item 9:** Preserving Connections
- **Item 10:** Relative Placement
- **Item 11:** Relationship of Child in Care with Parents
- **Item 12:** Needs and Services to Children, Parents, and Foster Parents
- **Item 13:** Child and Family Involvement in Case-planning
- **Item 14:** Caseworker Visits with Children
- **Item 15:** Caseworker Visits with Parents
- **Item 16:** Educational Needs of the Child
- **Item 17:** Physical Health Needs of the Child
- **Item 18:** Mental/Behavioral Health Needs of the Child

All review teams must read the entire case file, including the physical file and searches of Unified Nevada Information for Youth (UNITY). Additionally, the review teams must interview relevant case participants, including the caseworker, child, parents, foster parents, and other program staff such as adoption workers or investigative workers.

REVIEW TEAMS

The review teams are comprised of quality assurance staff from FPO or community partners, who are then paired with partner staff from the agency whose cases are being reviewed. Prior to participating in case reviews, all team members are specifically trained in the case review methods, including application of the review tool. Newly trained reviewers are paired with experienced reviewers when possible.

RESULTS

In keeping with the methods established for round III of the CFSR, all review teams evaluate the child welfare agency's performance using the On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). The OSRI is divided into eighteen (18) items specifically created to evaluate key outcomes for children and families. Each of these items are rated as either "strength," "area needing improvement (ANI)," or "not applicable." Partial scores are not allowed on any item in the OSRI.

All completed OSRI are maintained in the On-line Management System for ease of review, compilation of site and statewide results as well as for historical record. Upon completion of the review, all case names are anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

In 2015, ACF published a new OSRI, which combined several items, created new items, and provided clarity regarding how to rate some items based upon unique case circumstances. For this reason, FPO strongly cautions against comparing current results against past performance.

The following data table shows combined score of all strength ratings by item for all QICRs completed in 2015. Please note that percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

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Statewide Results 2015

Performance Item or Outcome		Substantially Achieved or Strength
Safety 1	Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	70%
Item 1	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	70%
Safety 2	Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	50%
Item 2	Services to family to protect children in the home and prevent removal or re-entry	74%
Item 3	Risk Assessment and Safety Management	50%
Permanency 1	Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	25%
Item 4	Stability of Foster Care Placement	80%
Item 5	Permanency Goal for the Child	42.5%
Item 6	Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption or OPPLA	47.5%
Permanency 2	The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	62.5%
Item 7	Placement with Siblings	86%
Item 8	Visiting with Parents and Siblings Foster Care	64%
Item 9	Preserving Connections	82.5%
Item 10	Relative Placement	69%
Item 11	Relationship of Child in Care with Parents	61%
Well-Being 1	Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	38%
Item 12	Needs and Services of Children, Parents and Foster Parents	50%
Item 13	Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	42%
Item 14	Caseworker Visits with Children	58%
Item 15	Caseworker Visits with Parents	44%
Well-Being 2	Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	76%
Item 16	Educational Needs of the Child	76%
Well-Being 3	Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	67%
Item 17	Physical Health of the Child	75%
Item 18	Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	71%

ANNUAL STATEWIDE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Annual Quality Assurance Case Reviews (QICR) are conducted with each child welfare agency in Nevada to evaluate the quality of services provided to children and families. In 2015, a total of sixty-six (66) cases, representing a selection of twenty six (26) in-home cases and forty (40) foster care cases were selected for review. This report is an interpretation of data collected from all QICR completed in 2015 across all child welfare agencies. For purposes of clarity throughout the remainder of this document, including data tables, charts, graphs, etc. Clark County Department of Family Services will be referred to as “Clark,” Washoe County Department of Social Services as “Washoe,” and Division of Child and Family Services Rural Region as “Carson.”

In 2015 the Family Programs Office (FPO) conducted the following QICR:

- **WASHOE:** August 2015
- **CLARK:** May and September 2015
- **CARSON:** April 2015

Washoe contributed 17 cases, Carson 15 cases, and Clark 34 cases. Due to its larger child welfare population, Clark contributes more cases to the review. Clark is reviewed twice per year to keep the case review process manageable.

METHODOLOGY

CASE REVIEW SAMPLE

The Family Programs Office runs a data extract that includes an in-home sample, a stratified foster care sample, and an additional over-sample of cases that are potentially eligible for case reviews. Both the foster care sample and over-sample mimic the categorical stratification methods of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). This stratification ensures adequate representation of cases in key program areas such as adoption and independent living. The final samples are then randomized to promote unbiased selection of cases reviewed. This process is repeated in preparation for each of the reviews listed above.

In-home cases selected for review must meet the following definition: “opened for services following a determination or investigation finding (i.e., substantiated or unsubstantiated), whether formal (e.g., court supervised) or informal, where no child in the family was in an out-of-home placement for 24 hours or more during the period under review.” A foster care case, for the purposes of this review, is when the target child was in out-of-home care for 24 hours or longer during the period under review (PUR). An out-of-home placement may be a shelter or foster home. All cases must be open for services for at least 60 days during the PUR, to be eligible for review.

Items 1 through 18 of the CFSR were evaluated for all cases, although not all items were applicable in all cases reviewed in 2015.

The following items were reviewed in 2015:

Item 1	Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment
Item 2	Services to Protect the Child in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry into Foster Care
Item 3	Risk Assessment and Safety Management
Item 4	Stability of Foster Care Placement
Item 5	Permanency Goal for the Child
Item 6	Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption or OPPLA
Item 7	Placement with Siblings
Item 8	Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care
Item 9	Preserving Connections
Item 10	Relative Placement
Item 11	Relationship of Child in Care with Parents
Item 12	Needs and Services of Children, Parents and Foster Parents
Item 13	Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning
Item 14	Caseworker Visits with Children
Item 15	Caseworker Visits with Parents
Item 16	Educational Needs of the Child
Item 17	Physical Health of the Child
Item 18	Mental and Behavioral Health of the Child

METHODOLOGY

REVIEW RATINGS

In 2015, Nevada began reviewing cases using the On-site Review Instrument (OSRI) as prepared by ACF for round three of the CFSR. The OSRI evaluates case practice in the key areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. Each of these key areas is grouped into performance outcomes which, in turn, are comprised of one or more of the items listed above. Each performance outcome is given a rating of either “substantially achieved (SA),” “partially achieved (PA),” or “not achieved (NACH)” based upon the ratings of their constituent items. Each of the items listed above are rated as “strength” (S), “area needing improvement” (ANI) or “not applicable” (NA). Partial ratings for the individual items are not accepted.

The OSRI prompts reviewers with multiple choice or “yes/no” sub-questions in each item that must be answered in order to determine the appropriate rating. When needed, the OSRI also provides the reviewers with definitions and case applicability questions to help reviewers determine if the item should even be evaluated given the circumstances of the case. Using the answers to these sub-questions, the OSRI uses logic and conditional statements to determine the rating for the item overall.

The Quality Assurance (QA) process consists of two steps for each case. First, a Review Pre-Briefing, a Quality Assurance staff member meets with the review team after the team has conducted its case read. The QA member takes the team through a series of questions to ensure the review team has accurately identified case participants to be included in the face sheet, and, to ensure that the review team has an accurate understanding of those items to be reviewed and those items that are not applicable for review.

Second, upon completion of each case review, the completed OSRI is reviewed by a Quality Assurance member to promote inter-rater reliability by maintaining high fidelity to the requirements of the review process and tool. To encourage a complete and thoughtful review, the QA process requires detailed descriptions in the narrative and comment sections of the tool to serve as justification for each item rated. FPO has opted to use the online management system (OMS) to facilitate reporting results and for historical records. Upon completion of each review, all cases are anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

METHODOLOGY

CASE REVIEW TEAMS

The case review teams are comprised of a staff member from the local child welfare agency being reviewed as well as either an FPO program specialist, a colleague from another Nevada child welfare agency, or another community partner. All reviewers complete training including mock case reviews prior to their participation in the QICR process.

PERFORMANCE

COMBINED STATEWIDE 2015

The following table illustrates the combined results of all case reviews completed in 2015. Please note that throughout the remainder of this document, percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

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COMBINED STATEWIDE RESULTS

Performance Item or Outcome		S	ANI	SA	PA	NACH
Safety 1	Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect			70%	0%	30%
Item 1	Timeliness of Investigation of Reports of Child Maltreatment	70%	30%			
Safety 2	Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate			50%	12%	38%
Item 2	Services to Family to Protect Children in their Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry	74%	26%			
Item 3	Risk Assessment and Safety Management	50%	50%			
Permanency 1	Children have permanency and stability in their living situations			25%	70%	5%
Item 4	Stability of Foster Care Placement	80%	20%			
Item 5	Permanency Goal for the Child	42.5%	57.5%			
Item 6	Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption or OPPLA	47.5%	52.5%			
Permanency 2	The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children			62.5%	30%	7.5%
Item 7	Placement with Siblings	86%	14%			
Item 8	Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	64%	36%			
Item 9	Preserving Connections	82.5%	17.5%			
Item 10	Relative Placement	69%	31%			
Item 11	Relationship of Child in Care with Parents	61%	39%			

		S	ANI	SA	PA	NACH
Well-Being 1	Families have enhanced capacities to provide for their children's needs			38%	33%	29%
Item 12	Needs and Services of Children, Parents and Foster Parents	50%	50%			
Item 13	Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	42%	58%			
Item 14	Caseworker Visits with Children	58%	42%			
Item 15	Caseworker Visits with Parents	44%	56%			
Well-Being 2	Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs			76%	7%	18%
Item 16	Educational Needs of the Child	76%	24%			
Well-Being 3	Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs			67%	11%	21%
Item 17	Medical Needs of the Child	75%	25%			
Item 18	Mental/Behavioral Health Needs of the Child	71%	29%			

SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

This outcome is scored using only Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment. The scoring criteria for this Outcome is if Item 1 is rated as a “strength” the Outcome is scored as “substantially achieved.” If Item 1 is rated as “area needing improvement” then this Outcome must be scored as “not achieved.” There are no options for a “partially achieved” scoring for this Outcome.

SAFETY OUTCOME 1	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total	Combined Performance
Substantially Achieved	1	12	8	21	70 %
Partially Achieved	0	0	0	0	0 %
Not Achieved	3	5	1	9	30 %
Total Cases	4	17	9	30	
% Subs. Achieved by Site	25 %	71 %	89 %		

ITEM 1

TIMELINESS OF INITIATING INVESTIGATIONS OF REPORTS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

When a referral is received by an intake worker, alleging possible child maltreatment, a supervisor reviews the information and makes a determination of whether the referral will become a report and what type of response the report merits. If the referral becomes a report, it is assigned to a CPS worker for investigation. Statewide Intake and Response Time Policy 0506 outlines the expected response time given the reported severity and urgency of the alleged child maltreatment. The timeline begins with the assignment of the referral to an intake worker. The following are response times assigned to all screened-in reports of alleged child maltreatment per statewide intake policy 0506.5.1:

- **Priority 1:** Within three (3) hours, when the identified danger threat is urgent or of emergency status; there is present danger; and safety factors are identified. This response type requires that initiation must be made with a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim(s) of the maltreatment report.
- **Priority 1R:** Within six (6) hours, when the identified danger is urgent or of emergency status; there is present danger; and safety factors are identified. This response type requires that initiation must be made with a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim(s) of the maltreatment report. This response time accommodates circumstances when the alleged child victim is a substantial distance from the responding worker and a typical three (3) hour response is not possible due to the distance the worker must travel to make a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim.

- Priority 2: Within twenty-four (24) hours, when there is maltreatment report of impending danger; safety factors are identified including child fatality. This response type also requires a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim(s); however, the investigation can be initiated with a collateral contact or phone call.
- Priority 3: Within seventy-two (72) hours, when maltreatment is indicated but no safety factors are identified. This response type requires a face-to-face contact with alleged child victim(s); however, the investigation may be initiated by a telephone call to the family provided the investigating worker makes a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim(s) within twenty-four (24) hours of the phone call.

Referrals that do not rise to the level of an investigation may be referred to the Differential Response Program (DR). Such programs have required face-to-face contact with the family within three business days.

Safety Item 1 evaluates if the agency initiated and made face-to-face contact with all alleged child victims listed in the maltreatment report in accordance with state statute and policy. In order for Item 1 to be rated as a “strength,” the agency must have met the priority timeframes for both initiation of investigation and face-to-face contact for all screened-in reports on the family during the entire PUR. If reviewers determine there were referrals that were improperly screened-out or unsubstantiated despite, evidence to support a substantiation, those concerns are evaluated in Safety Item 3: Risk assessment and Safety Management.

RESULTS

For Item 1, the table below indicates the combined statewide results as well as a disaggregate score of this item by each child welfare agency.

Item 1	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
STRENGTH (N)	1	12	8	21	70%
ANI (N)	3	5	1	9	30%
NA (N)	11	17	8	36	
APPLICABLE (N)	4	17	9	30	
% STRENGTH	25 %	71 %	89 %		

*(N) = COUNT OF CASES, NA = NOT APPLICABLE

Cases are not applicable for review of this item if there were no reports of child maltreatment received or screened in during the PUR. Cases are not applicable for review if the reports were received prior to the PUR - even if the investigation is on-going during the PUR. In total, thirty (30) cases were applicable for review of this item in 2015. Of those thirty (30) cases, twenty-one (21) or 70% of them were rated as strength.

SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE

Safety Outcome 2 is composed of Item 2 and Item 3. In order for this outcome to score as “substantially achieved,” Item 2 must be rated as “strength” or “not applicable,” and Item 3 must be rated as “strength.” If one of the two items is rated “area needing improvement” while the other is “strength” then the outcome is scored as “partially achieved”. When both Item 2 and Item 3 are rated as “area needing improvement” (or Item 2 is NA and Item 3 is ANI), then safety outcome 2 must be scored as “not achieved.”

The chart below illustrates the scoring of this outcome by each child welfare agency.

SAFETY OUTCOME 2	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total	Combined Performance
Substantially Achieved	3	21	9	33	50 %
Partially Achieved	1	5	2	8	12 %
Not Achieved	11	8	6	25	38 %
Total Cases	15	34	17	66	
% Subs. Achieved by Site	20 %	62 %	53 %		

SAFETY ITEM 2

SERVICES TO FAMILY TO PROTECT THE CHILD IN THE HOME AND PREVENT REMOVAL OR RE-ENTRY INTO FOSTER CARE

Safety Item 2 evaluates if services to prevent entry into foster care were provided prior to removal or prior to returning the child to the care of their parents. Trial home placements are considered returned to parents’ care for the purpose of evaluating this item. The review instructions take into consideration particularly egregious situations of child maltreatment. In some circumstances, is it reasonable to assume that preventative safety services may not be provided in order to ensure the immediate safety needs of the children. For example, in cases of severe physical abuse resulting in child injury, it may be reasonable and prudent to expect that the child welfare agency would take custody of the child without offering prevention services in order to meet the immediate medical needs of the child and to protect the child from further harm.

New in 2015, Item 2 also is focused specifically upon the agency’s concerted efforts to coordinate “appropriate” safety services. Appropriate safety services are services that are directly related to the circumstances of the case. For example, if a safety concern exists due to inadequate monitoring and supervision of the children in the home, an appropriate safety service may be child care. Also, if parental

substance abuse is identified as a safety concern, then substance abuse treatment may be an appropriate safety service.

Evaluation of risk and services provided to reduce risk are evaluated in Item 3. If the reviewers determine that only a safety plan was needed to ensure child safety in the home and, therefore, safety services were not provided to the family because there was a safety plan in place, then this item could be rated not applicable. If all children were removed prior to the PUR and none returned home during the PUR then this item is not applicable.

RESULTS

ITEM 2	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	2	14	4	20	74 %
ANI (N)	2	3	2	7	26 %
NA (N)	11	17	11	39	
Applicable (N)	4	17	6	27	
% Strength	50 %	82 %	67 %		

Assessment of Item 2 was applicable in twenty-seven (27) of sixty-six (66) cases. Thirty-nine (39) cases were excluded from review of this item. Of the twenty-seven (27) applicable cases, twenty (20) or 74% of those cases were rated as strength.

SAFETY ITEM 3

RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Initial and ongoing assessment of risk is necessary to ensure that risk factors have not risen to a level requiring a safety response (NAC 432B.160, NAC432B.180, NAC 432B.185) for the child whether residing in the family home or placed in a foster home. On-going assessments of risk, (both formal and informal) are documented in the case notes and in the case file.

A safety assessment is an ongoing review of safety factors, conditions of the home/environment, and caregiver functioning, that occur at case milestones whenever a child experiences a placement move (reunification, guardianship or foster placement change) or when a planned change occurs that may increase risk such as changes in visitation or changes in supervision of the child. Safety plans may be developed to ensure the immediate protection of the child while the safety threats are being addressed. Safety plans may be a formal, written document found in the case file or informal plan where all family team members are aware of the safety plan and their responsibilities. Reviewers evaluate both initial and ongoing evaluations of risk and safety made throughout the PUR. Risk and safety assessments may be either formal or informal or a combination of the two.

Item 3: Risk Assessment and Safety Management also instructs reviewers to determine if the risk and safety of children were properly assessed and managed for all children in their placements with their parents; children in their foster placements; and foster children while visiting with parents, caregivers, and extended family members.

Reviewers evaluate written safety and risk assessments such as the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), present danger assessments (PDA), safety assessments, safety plans, visitation plans and other relevant assessments that may provide detail regarding risk and/or safety. Additionally, reviewers may evaluate informal safety activities that provide insight into the agency’s evaluation of child safety in an informal setting such as caseworker home visits or observing the parents and children interact during a supervised visit.

The element of recurring maltreatment, new in 2015, is now included in the overall evaluation of Item 3. Recurring maltreatment is defined as one substantiated report of maltreatment on any child in the family during the PUR with another substantiated report of maltreatment that occurred within six months (before or after) that report that was of the same or substantially similar circumstances. Reports with similar occurrences with a disposition to differential response are also considered to be an instance of recurring maltreatment or recurring safety concerns.

As mentioned in Item 1, if the reviewers determine a report of child maltreatment was improperly screened-out or otherwise not investigated; or if the report of child maltreatment was not substantiated despite evidence that would warrant substantiation; or if the case was closed while safety concerns still existed, then this item must be rated ANI.

RESULTS

ITEM 3	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	3	21	9	33	50 %
ANI (N)	12	13	8	33	50 %
NA (N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	15	34	17	66	
% Strength	20 %	62 %	53 %		

All cases are applicable for review of this item. Thirty-three (33) or 50% of cases reviewed were rated as strength.

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN WILL HAVE STABILITY AND PERMANENCY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS

Only out-of-home cases are included in Permanency Outcome 1. Permanency Outcome 1 is composed of Items 4, 5, and 6. The criteria for a “substantially achieved” (SA) scoring is: Item 4, Item 5 and Item 6 are all rated as “strength”; or Items 4 and 6 are rated “strength” while Item 5 is “not applicable.” If any of the included items are rated as “ANI” this outcome is scored as “partially achieved” (PA). When all included items are rated as “ANI” or are not applicable, the outcome must be scored as “not achieved” (NACH).

The chart below indicates the scoring for Permanency Outcome 1 by child welfare agency.

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total	Combined Performance
Substantially Achieved	1	8	1	10	25%
Partially Achieved	9	14	5	28	70%
Not Achieved	0	0	2	2	5%
Total Cases	10	22	8	40	
% Subs. Achieved by Site	10 %	36 %	12.5 %		

PERMANENCY ITEM 4

STABILITY OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT

Item 4 determines if the child is placed in a stable placement at the time of the review and if the child experienced placement moves during the PUR. This item determines if those moves were in the best interests of the child and in accordance with achieving the child’s permanency plan. The OSRI provides reviewers with specific instructions regarding how to define various placement settings and what is considered a change in placement setting. Reviewers consider the type and number of placement settings the target child experienced during the PUR only, even if the child entered care prior to the PUR. If the target child had multiple foster care episodes during the PUR, the reviewers are instructed to consider and evaluate all placement settings across the episodes that meet the definition of “placement setting” as provided by the OSRI.

RESULTS

ITEM 4	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	10	17	5	32	80 %
ANI (N)	0	5	3	8	20 %
NA (N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	10	22	8	40	
% Strength	100 %	77 %	62.5 %		

Only foster care cases are applicable for review of this item. Of the forty (40) foster care cases applicable for review, thirty-two (32) cases were rated as strength.

PERMANENCY ITEM 5

PERMANENCY GOAL FOR THE CHILD

This item evaluates if all permanency goals in effect during the PUR are listed in the case file or court order and established in a timely manner. To properly rate this item, reviewers are instructed to consider the child's date of foster care entry as either the date of adjudication or 60 days following the child's removal from their home, whichever date is sooner. For children who recently entered care, it is expected that a permanency goal will have been established within 60 days from the child's entry into foster care. Reviewers are also reminded of Adoption and Safe Families Act expectations regarding termination of parental rights when permanency goals of adoption are in effect. If there are concurrent goals, reviewers apply this same scrutiny to all concurrent goals in effect during the PUR.

RESULTS

ITEM 5	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	3	12	2	17	42.5 %
ANI (N)	7	10	6	23	57.5 %
NA (N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	10	22	8	40	
% Strength	30 %	55 %	25 %		

In addition to timely establishment of permanency goals this item asks reviewers to make a determination of appropriateness of all permanency goals in effect during the PUR. If there are concurrent goals or if goals change during the PUR, the reviewers are instructed to use their professional judgment to determine if all goals were appropriate given a global understanding of the case.

All foster care cases are applicable for review of this item. In-home cases are excluded from evaluation of this item. Of the forty (40) cases applicable for review of this item seventeen (17) or 42.5% of cases were rated as strength.

PERMANENCY ITEM 6

ACHIEVING REUNIFICATION, GUARDIANSHIP, ADOPTION OR OPPLA

While Item 5 evaluates if all permanency goals, were appropriate and established in a timely manner, Item 6 evaluates if those goals identified in Item 5 were, or will be, achieved in a timely manner. Reviewers evaluate if concerted efforts were made by the child welfare agency to achieve the permanency goal for the child. In order to determine if concerted efforts were made or are being made at the time of the review to achieve the goal, the reviewers are instructed to consider the total time the child has been in care for the current (or most recent) foster care episode. Using the total time in care, it is expected that concerted efforts to achieve the permanency plan would result in the following timelines:

- Reunification: 12 months
- Guardianship: 18 months
- Adoption: 24 months

The OSRI does allow the reviewer discretion to use his or her professional judgment if there are circumstances that justify the delay of achieving permanency. Likewise if it is not reasonable that the child would have achieved their permanency goal given the timeline of the case (e.g., child recently entered care), the OSRI instructs the reviewer to evaluate if concerted efforts are being made to achieve the goal within the expected timelines or sooner if possible.

This item also includes sub-questions specific to youth with OPPLA goals. If the only goal in effect during the PUR was OPPLA, the OSRI instructs the reviewers to evaluate the efforts made by the child welfare agency to ensure the youth is placed in a permanent living arrangement or a placement that can be considered permanent until the youth is discharged from care.

Only foster care cases are applicable for review of this item.

RESULTS

ITEM 6	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	2	13	4	19	47.5 %
ANI (N)	8	9	4	21	52.5 %
NA(N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	10	22	8	40	
% Strength	20 %	59 %	50 %		

Of the forty (40) cases that are applicable for review of this item, nineteen (19) or 47.5% were rated as strength.

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN

Permanency Outcome 2 is composed of Items 7 through 11. Each of these items are applicable in out-of-home cases only. In order for Permanency Outcome 2 to be scored as “substantially achieved,” no more than one item can be rated as “area needing improvement” provided at least one item is rated “strength.” A scoring of “partially achieved” indicates that at least two items, but fewer than all five items, were rated as “area needing improvement,” while at least one item was rated as “strength.” If no items were rated as “strength” while at least one item was rated “area needing improvement,” the score must be “not achieved.”

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total	Combined Performance
Substantially Achieved	7	12	6	25	62.5 %
Partially Achieved	2	8	2	12	30 %
Not Achieved	1	2	0	3	7.5 %
Total Cases	10	22	8	40	
% Subs. Achieved by Site	70 %	55 %	75 %		

PERMANENCY ITEM 7

PLACEMENT WITH SIBLINGS

This item is only applicable in foster care cases when the target child also has siblings in foster care. This item evaluates if the child welfare agency made on-going efforts to ensure the target child was placed with siblings. The OSRI does allow for situations when separation of siblings is needed in order to meet the treatment needs of the target child or sibling, or when placement with siblings is not in the best interest of the target child or sibling. Lack of resources or foster homes is not a sufficient argument for failing to place siblings together.

RESULTS

ITEM 7	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	6	13	5	24	86 %
ANI (N)	0	3	1	4	14 %
NA (N)	4	6	2	12	
Applicable (N)	6	16	6	28	
% Strength	100 %	81 %	83 %		

Of the twenty-eight (28) applicable cases for review of this item, twenty-four (24) or 86 % were rated as strength.

PERMANENCY ITEM 8

VISITING WITH PARENTS AND SIBLINGS IN FOSTER CARE

The purpose of Item 8 is to determine if the child welfare agency made concerted efforts to ensure the target child was provided with visits, when appropriate, with their parents and siblings in foster care. If the target child is placed with his or her siblings, or if visits with these family members are not in the best interest of the child, then this item may be not applicable.

The OSRI provides reviewers with specific definitions of “mother” and “father” to evaluate this item. The OSRI requires the reviewers to describe the frequency of the visits between the target child and natural family, and reviewers are instructed to use their professional judgment to determine if the quality of those visits was sufficient.

Termination of Parental Rights, parents refusing visits, unknown parents, or when the parents’ whereabouts are unknown (despite ongoing efforts to locate) are justifications for infrequent visits. Only foster care cases are applicable for review of this item.

RESULTS

ITEM 8	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	3	14	4	21	64 %
ANI (N)	3	7	2	12	36 %
NA (N)	4	1	2	7	
Applicable (N)	6	21	6	33	
% Strength	50 %	67 %	67 %		

Of the 33 applicable cases for review of this item, twenty-one (21) or 64% of the cases were rated as area of strength.

PERMANENCY ITEM 9

PRESERVING CONNECTIONS

Item 9 evaluates if the agency made efforts to maintain the connections the target child had in their community, cultural and heritage, religious groups and extended family at the time he/she entered care. All foster cases are applicable for review of this item; although an exception may be appropriate if the foster child was an abandoned infant about whom the child welfare agency has no familial and cultural information.

RESULTS

ITEM 9	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	9	18	6	33	82.5 %
ANI (N)	1	4	2	7	17.5 %
NA (N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	10	22	8	40	
% Strength	90 %	82 %	75 %		

Of the forty (40) cases applicable for review of this item, thirty-three (33) were rated as strength for a combined performance rating of 82.5%.

PERMANENCY ITEM 10

RELATIVE PLACEMENT

Title IV-E requires states to give preference to placing children with relatives, and Item 10 evaluates if the child welfare agency follows this provision and determines if placement with relatives was in the child's best interest.

Item 10 is applicable in all foster care cases unless the identity and location of the child's parents is unknown, or if the child requires specialized treatment and placement with a relative is, therefore, not in the child's best interest, or if relatives were evaluated for placement and ruled out.

RESULTS

ITEM 10	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	7	13	5	25	69 %
ANI (N)	3	8	0	11	31 %
NA (N)	0	1	3	4	
Applicable (N)	10	21	5	36	
% Strength	70 %	62 %	100 %		

Of the thirty-six (36) applicable cases, twenty-five (25) or 69% were rated as strength.

PERMANENCY ITEM 11

RELATIONSHIP OF CHILD IN CARE WITH PARENTS

The focus of Item 11 is to determine if the child welfare agency made concerted to efforts to promote, support, and maintain the relationship between the child in care and his or her parents. The OSRI provides specific definitions of "mother" and "father" as well as guidance regarding how to rate this item if a termination of parental rights has occurred, or if the identities or whereabouts of either of the parents are unknown.

This item is only applicable in foster care cases.

RESULTS

ITEM 11	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	4	11	4	19	61 %
ANI (N)	2	9	1	12	39 %
NA (N)	4	2	3	9	
Applicable (N)	6	20	5	31	
% Strength	67 %	55 %	80 %		

Of the thirty-one (31) applicable cases nineteen (19) or 61 % were rated as an area of strength.

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES WILL HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Well-Being Outcome 1 is applicable in both in-home and out-of-home cases. Items 12 - 15 are included in the scoring of this outcome. In order for this Outcome to score as "substantially achieved," Item 12 must be rated as "strength" or "not applicable," and only one of the remaining items can be rated as "area needing improvement." A "partially achieved" score indicates that Item 12 is rated as "area needing improvement," and at least one other item is rated as "strength;" or Item 12 is rated "not applicable," and at least two other items are rated as "area needing improvement." This outcome is scored as "not achieved" when all applicable items are rated as "area needing improvement."

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total	Combined Performance
Substantially Achieved	4	15	6	25	38 %
Partially Achieved	3	14	5	22	33 %
Not Achieved	8	5	6	19	29 %
Total Cases	15	34	17	66	
% Subs. Achieved by Site	27 %	44 %	35 %		

WELLBEING ITEM 12

NEEDS AND SERVICES OF CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND FOSTER PARENTS

Item 12 is a three-part item. Each sub-part pertains to the target child (or all children of in-home cases), parents, and foster parents respectively. In item 12 sub-part A, reviewers are specifically instructed to disregard needs of the child that are medical, dental, mental health, behavioral (including substance abuse) and educational in nature as those needs are covered in items later the review. Needs associated with the medical, educational, or mental health of the parents and foster parents may be assessed in item 12 sub-parts B and C.

WELL-BEING ITEM 12 SUB-PART A

NEEDS AND SERVICES OF THE CHILD

Item 12 sub-part A is applicable for both in-home cases and foster care cases. In some circumstances, needs that are educational, medical or mental health in nature may be the only needs identified. In those cases, item 12 sub-part A may be not applicable because there are no needs identified that are applicable for review. Reviewers are instructed to consider efforts made by the child welfare agency to assess the needs of child throughout the PUR and to identify services necessary to meet those needs and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family. All children of in-home cases are assessed in this item, while only the target child is assessed for foster care cases, even if the target child and their siblings return to the family home during the PUR.

RESULTS

ITEM 12-A	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	9	29	12	50	76 %
ANI (N)	6	5	5	16	24 %
NA (N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	15	34	17	66	
% Strength	60 %	85 %	71 %		

This sub-part was applicable in all sixty six (66) cases reviewed in 2015. In 76% of the cases reviewed in 2015 reviewers determined that the child welfare agency made ongoing concerted efforts to identify the needs of the children and link the child (or all children of in-home cases) with appropriate services aimed to meet the identified needs.

WELL-BEING ITEM 12 SUB-PART B

NEEDS AND SERVICES OF THE PARENTS

In item 12 sub-part B, reviewers evaluate the medical, mental health, and educational needs of the parents. The OSRI provides definitions of “mother” and “father” to evaluate item 12 sub-part B. Caregivers, who are not the “biological parents” of the child but were caring for the child at the time of the child’s removal, and with whom the child welfare agency is working toward reunification, are considered as either “mother” or “father” for evaluation of this sub-part. Likewise, for in-home cases, caregivers, who are not biological parents to the children but are in the home in a care-providing role to the children, may be evaluated in this item. This item is only applicable if the identities and whereabouts of the parents/caregivers are known and parents whose parental rights are intact. If parental rights were terminated during or before the PUR, only efforts made by the agency to assess needs and provide services to the parents are evaluated for the portion of time when the parent’s rights remained intact. If TPR occurred prior to the PUR this item may be rated “not applicable.”

RESULTS

ITEM 12-B	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	6	21	6	33	55 %
ANI (N)	7	12	8	27	45 %
NA (N)	2	1	3	6	
Applicable (N)	13	33	14	60	
% Strength	46 %	64 %	43 %		

In order for this item to be rated as an area of strength, the agency must make concerted efforts to evaluate the needs of all identified parents and link the parents with services specifically aimed to meet those needs. If the reviewers determine that the agency made concerted efforts with regard to one parent but not another, this sub-part must be rated “ANI.”

This item is applicable in sixty (60) of the total cases reviewed. Of those sixty (60) cases, thirty-three, or 55% rated as areas of strength.

WELL-BEING ITEM 12 SUB-PART C

NEEDS AND SERVICES OF THE FOSTER PARENTS

Item 12 sub-part C asks the reviewers to evaluate if the child welfare agency made concerted efforts to evaluate the needs of all foster parents of the target child during the PUR. If needs were identified, it is expected that the agency would link the foster parents with services to meet the identified needs. The OSRI provides the reviewers with definitions of “foster parent.” This case is only applicable in foster care cases with caregivers who meet the definition of “foster parent.” If the target child has more than one

foster home and more than one “foster parent” during the PUR, the reviewers are instructed to evaluate the concerted efforts of the agency to assess all foster parents during the PUR and to link them with services. In-home cases are not applicable for review of this sub-part.

RESULTS

ITEM 12-C	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	5	18	5	28	74 %
ANI (N)	4	4	2	10	26 %
NA (N)	6	12	10	28	
Applicable (N)	9	22	7	38	
% Strength	56 %	82 %	71 %		

Of the thirty-eight (38) applicable cases for review of this sub-part, twenty-eight (28) or 74% of cases rated as strength.

WELL-BEING ITEM 12 OVERALL

NEEDS AND SERVICES OF CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND FOSTER PARENTS

Item 12 overall is the combined scores of the previous three sub-parts. Not every sub-part is applicable in every case. In order for a case to receive a strength rating for item 12 overall, all sub-parts must be rated as either strength or not applicable.

RESULTS

ITEM 12	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	5	20	8	33	50 %
ANI (N)	10	14	9	33	50 %
NA (N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	15	34	17	66	
% Strength	33 %	59 %	47 %		

All cases are applicable for review of this item. Of the sixty-six (66) cases reviewed in 2015, thirty-three (33) or 50% were rated as an area of strength. From the data provided above, the common rationale for the ANI rating of the overall items is the lower performance of item 12 sub-part B: needs and services to the parents.

WELL-BEING ITEM 13

CHILD AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN CASE PLANNING

Item 13 is principally concerned with the efforts the child welfare agency made throughout the PUR to engage the parents and when appropriate, the children in case planning activities. Case planning activities are not only concerned with the creation of a case plan. They may also include encouraging the family to select service providers as well as tracking and monitoring the family's progress toward case plan goals and objectives. Only the target child is evaluated for this item of foster care cases; however, all children in the home of in-home cases (and for whom it is appropriate to include) are evaluated for this item. Generally, children who are school-aged and for whom it is developmentally appropriate are expected to participate in case planning activities at some level. The OSRI provides the reviewers with circumstances where it may be inappropriate to include the children and/or parents. If those circumstances exist during the PUR, the reviewers may rate the item as not applicable for either parent or children.

RESULTS

ITEM 13	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	5	16	7	28	42 %
ANI (N)	10	18	10	38	58 %
NA (N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	15	34	17	66	
% Strength	33 %	47 %	41 %		

All cases were applicable for review of this item. Of those sixty-six (66) cases reviewed, twenty-eight (28) or 42% were rated as strength.

WELL-BEING ITEM 14

CASEWORKER VISITS WITH CHILDREN

Item 14 evaluates both the quality and frequency of the caseworker's visits with children. Only the target child in a foster care case is evaluated for this item, including the time the child is in the family home under the care of the parents if the child was reunified during the PUR. All children from in-home cases are evaluated for this item as all children are expected be visited by the caseworker. The OSRI defines a visit as "face-to-face and in-person", video conference or similar technology is not an acceptable substitute for a face-to-face in person visit with the children. It is expected that the caseworker of record will make at least monthly visits with the children. However the OSRI guides the reviewers to use their professional judgment regarding the needed frequency of caseworker visits with children. This means that if the reviewers determine that a child needed to be visited weekly but the worker made monthly contact, the reviewers must rate this item "ANI" because the frequency of the visits was insufficient. Likewise, the

reviewers are to use their professional judgment to determine if the quality of the caseworker visits was sufficient to assess child safety and promote positive outcomes. Reviewers use the content of case notes as well as interviews with the parents, foster parents, caseworkers and, when possible, the children to determine the most typical pattern of frequency and quality regarding caseworker visits.

RESULTS

ITEM 14	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	2	26	10	38	58 %
ANI (N)	13	8	7	28	42 %
NA (N)	0	0	0	0	
Applicable (N)	15	34	17	66	
% Strength	13%	76 %	59 %		

All cases are applicable for review of this item, including cases where the child is placed out of state. In cases where the child is placed out of state or outside the jurisdictional boundary of the child welfare agency, the agency may request a courtesy worker to visits those children. In those cases, the visits performed by the courtesy worker and the efforts the child welfare agency made to ensure quality visits were occurring are consider in the evaluation of this item. All sixty-six (66) cases were applicable for review of this item. Of those cases, thirty-eight (38) or 58% were rated as strength.

WELL-BEING ITEM 15

CASEWORKER VISITS WITH PARENTS

Item 15 evaluates the frequency and quality of the caseworker’s visits with parents or caregivers. The OSRI provides definitions for “mother” and “father” to evaluate this item. The OSRI defines a visit as: “face-to-face in-person contact” with the parent. In some cases it is not possible or practical for the caseworker to make monthly face-to-face in-person contact with the parents (for example, a parent who resides out of state or in cases where the parents are homeless and contact with them is sporadic due to difficulty locating parents). In those circumstances, the reviewers are encouraged to consider the efforts made by the agency to locate the parents or make alternate contact with the parents. When contact with parents is made, reviewers evaluate the quality of the contact to determine if the quality of those visits or other contact was sufficient to promote case plan goal attainment. If both parents’ identities or if their location cannot be determined despite ongoing efforts to locate them and/or identify them or if there was a termination of parental rights prior to the PUR, this item may be rated NA.

RESULTS

ITEM 15	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	4	16	7	27	44 %
ANI (N)	9	17	8	34	56 %
NA (N)	2	1	2	5	
Applicable (N)	13	33	15	61	
% Strength	31 %	48 %	47 %		

Sixty-one (61) cases were applicable for review of this item. Of those cases applicable for review, twenty-seven (27) or 44% were rated as strength.

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN WILL RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

This Outcome only includes Item 16. A “strength” rating in Item 16 results in a “substantially achieved” rating for this outcome. A score of “partially achieved” indicates that overall item 16 was rated as “area needing improvement” but that either question A or B of item 16 was answered “yes.” If item 16 is rated “area needing improvement” and both questions A and B of item 16 were answered “no,” then this outcome is scored as “not achieved.”

This outcome may include both children served in their homes and children in out of home care.

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total	Combined Performance
Substantially Achieved	8	17	9	34	76 %
Partially Achieved	1	2	0	3	7 %
Not Achieved	1	5	2	8	18 %
Total Cases	10	24	11	45	
% Subs. Achieved by Site	80 %	71 %	82 %		

WELL-BEING ITEM 16

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD

Item 16 is applicable for all foster youth who are school-aged, including pre-school-aged children (aged three years and over) as well as younger foster youth (under age three) who are developmentally delayed and for whom the developmental delays are addressed through an educational approach. It is also possible that this item may apply to youth of in-home cases if educational issues are relevant to the reason for agency involvement or if it is reasonable to assume the agency would monitor and track the child's education, such as when the maltreatment is impacting the child's school performance.

RESULTS

ITEM 16	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	8	17	9	34	76 %
ANI (N)	2	7	2	11	24 %
NA (N)	5	10	6	21	
Applicable (N)	10	24	11	45	
% Strength	80 %	71 %	82 %		

Both foster care and in-home cases were deemed applicable for review of this item. In total, forty-five (45) cases were reviewed for this item and of those cases reviewed, thirty-four (34) or 76 % were rated as strength.

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Well-Being Outcome 3 encompasses Items 17 and 18. The scoring criteria for Well-Being Outcome 3 are as follows: both items 17 and 18 are rated as "strength" or one item is "strength" and the other "not applicable" then the Outcome is scored as "substantially achieved"; one item is rated "strength" and the other is "area needing improvement" the Outcome is scored as "partially achieved"; a score of "not achieved" occurs when either Item 17 or item 18 is "area needing improvement" or if one item is rated "area needing improvement" and the other is "not applicable." This outcome is applicable for all out-of-home cases and may be applicable for in-home cases if it is reasonable for the agency to monitor the physical and mental health needs of the children.

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total	Combined Performance
Substantially Achieved	10	22	9	41	67 %
Partially Achieved	2	4	1	7	11 %
Not Achieved	2	6	5	13	21 %
Total Cases	14	32	15	61	
% Subs. Achieved by Site	71 %	69 %	60 %		

WELL-BEING ITEM 17

PHYSICAL HEALTH NEEDS OF THE CHILD

Item 17 is applicable in all foster care cases and in some circumstances, may be applicable for some children from in-home cases. This item also includes evaluating the dental needs of children. This item also evaluates if the agency ensured that the physical health needs of the target child of foster care cases were assessed and monitored per federal statutes.

Like in item 16, the physical health needs of the children from in-home cases may be relevant to the reason for agency involvement. If the reviewers determine it is reasonable for the agency to monitor the physical or dental needs of children or if the maltreatment impacted the physical or dental health of the children, this item may be appropriate for review for in-home cases.

RESULTS

ITEM 17	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	11	19	8	38	75 %
ANI (N)	3	8	2	13	25 %
NA (N)	1	7	7	15	
Applicable (N)	14	27	10	51	
% Strength	79 %	70 %	80 %		

In total, fifty-one (51) cases, which includes a combination of foster care and in-home cases were applicable for review of this item. Of those fifty-one (51) cases reviewed, thirty-eight (38), or 75 % of cases were rated as strength.

WELL-BEING ITEM 18

MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN

Item 18 evaluates if the child welfare agency made efforts to ensure the child’s mental/behavioral health was properly assessed and if needs were identified and services were provided to meet those identified needs. This item is applicable for all foster care cases and may be applicable for some children served via in-home services. Specifically, regarding in-home cases: if the reviewers determine that mental/behavioral health is a reason for agency involvement or that the maltreatment impacts the child’s mental/behavioral health and it is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the agency would or should monitor the child or children’s mental/behavioral health then this item may be applicable.

RESULTS

ITEM 18	Carson	Clark	Washoe	Total (N)	Performance
Strength (N)	8	20	7	35	71 %
ANI (N)	2	6	6	14	29 %
NA (N)	5	8	4	17	
Applicable (N)	10	26	13	49	
% Strength	80 %	77 %	54 %		

Item 18 was applicable in forty-nine (49) total cases. The forty-nine (49) cases reviewed were a combination of foster care and in-home cases. Of those cases applicable for review of this item, thirty-five (35) or 71% were rated as strength.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Substantial changes to the CFSR and subsequently the Nevada QICR process took effect in 2015. Many items were either eliminated, combined, or edited to better reflect current practices in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. In addition to these changes, ACF provided additional guidance regarding how to review and rate items. For these reasons, FPO strongly cautions against comparing 2015 case review results against previous years' performance.

However, FPO intends to use the 2015 ratings as a baseline year against which future performance will be compared.

The following observations and recommendations are based upon observations made from all of case reviews completed in Nevada in 2015 and are not specific to any single child welfare agency.

1. Improve Risk and Safety Assessments

Safety of children is paramount. It is critical that child welfare agencies in Nevada develop systems of practice that ensure accurate and comprehensive assessments of risk and safety are performed throughout the life of the case. In 2015, thirty-three (33) cases were rated as an "area needing improvement," and in twenty-eight (28) cases, the reviewers found that the agency was not making accurate assessment of child risk throughout the life of the case. This same rationale was particularly common among the in-home cases reviewed, as fifteen of 25 total in-home cases (all rating types) did not have adequate assessment of child safety throughout the life of the case.

2. Establish Permanency Goals and File TPR Petitions More Timely

In 2015, attention was placed on permanency goals in a manner that was not reviewed in prior years. In 2015, Items 5 and 6 evaluate how well the child welfare system facilitated achieving permanency for children in foster care. In 2015, the QICR process found delays in establishing permanency goals as well as delays of filing termination of parental rights petitions with the court. The OSRI instructs the reviewers to use federal expectations to evaluate timeliness of permanency goals.

3. Develop Methods to Engage Parents and Provide Parents with Frequent and Meaningful Visits.

Engaging parents and encouraging participation in child welfare processes are critical to achieving successful child welfare outcomes. Frequent and high-quality caseworker contact with parents enhances and promotes parental engagement. Caseworker visits with parents should occur at a frequency unique to the needs and capacities of each family. In 2015, common reasons for ANI ratings of Item 15: Caseworker Visits with Parents was due to the low frequency of caseworker visits with the parents, particularly with fathers, which was insufficient to promote case-plan goal attainment. This phenomenon was identified equally in foster care cases as well as in-home cases. Going forward, focus should be given to continue to develop methods to engage non-custodial parents, specifically fathers.