

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Final Report: Nevada Child and Family Services Review
January 2010

INTRODUCTION

This document presents a summary of the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Nevada. 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 Nevada CFSR was conducted the week of August 31, 2009. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2008, through September 4, 2009. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR data period ending March 31, 2008
- Reviews of 62 cases (40 foster care and 22 in-home services cases) at three sites: 18 cases in Carson City, 26 cases in Clark County, and 18 cases in Washoe 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

Child welfare services in Nevada are administered by three child welfare agencies: Clark County, Washoe County, and the Rural Region. The Rural Region is comprised of four districts. For the onsite CFSR, cases identified as having been reviewed in Carson City included Rural Region cases from the Carson City area and Rural District 2.

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.

Rating the Systemic Factor

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

A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome or systemic factor must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan 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. (For the Nevada 2009 CFSR, originally there were 25 in-home services cases. However, three in-home services cases were determined to be ineligible for the CFSR and were eliminated, leaving 22 in-home services cases.)
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to increase consistency and to ensure an assessment of critical areas such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents

The specific findings regarding the State's performance on safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance 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 fiscal year (FY) 2004 CFSR.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

HHS acknowledges the hard work and progress of the State of Nevada in making positive changes in its practice and in enhancing services to children and families served by the child welfare system. Despite the State's diligent and evident efforts in enhancing services, the systemic change has not yet resulted in improved outcomes. The following evident changes in practice are noteworthy:

- The use of shelter facilities has decreased resulting in positive impacts in Clark County in particular.
- The Differential Response (DR) program was implemented statewide.
- The use of Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings and Family Solutions Team Meetings has increased in some jurisdictions.
- Performance in case reviews in Washoe County was stronger than the State's performance in many areas including timeliness of investigations, provision of services to protect children at home, making diligent efforts to achieve adoption, making diligent efforts to ensure that children receive appropriate independent living (IL) services, ensuring appropriate visitation between children and their families, promoting the relationship of the child with his or her parents, and ensuring that children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs.
- Performance in case reviews in Carson City was stronger than the State's performance in preserving connections for children.
- Performance in case reviews in Clark County was stronger than the State's performance in preventing repeat maltreatment.

Although each jurisdiction demonstrates distinct strengths, which can serve as particularly good models for the State, the State bears the burden of utilizing communication channels that will allow all jurisdictions to work together effectively and efficiently to improve outcomes. To move Nevada forward, HHS would suggest a focus on State communication and collaboration with the jurisdictions to strengthen the State as a whole and to capitalize on the pockets of excellence.

The 2009 CFSR identified the following areas of high performance with regard to the State's achievements in the outcomes and items assessed during the review:

- The State is in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive services to meet their educational needs).
- Items pertaining to foster care reentry, proximity of children's placements to parents, placement with siblings, and the educational needs of children are rated as Strengths for the State.

Although the State's performance on the items pertaining to timeliness of investigations, repeat maltreatment, and addressing children's physical health concerns did not reach the 90-percent level required for an overall rating of Strength, at least 80 percent of the cases reviewed are rated as a Strength for these items.

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

- The State is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situation), with the outcome substantially achieved in only 30.0 percent of applicable cases.
- The State is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs), with the outcome substantially achieved in only 29.0 percent of applicable cases.
- The State is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate), with the outcome substantially achieved in only 51.6 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 9, pertaining to the timeliness of adoptions, is rated as a Strength in only 6 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 17, pertaining to assessing and addressing the service needs of the child, parents, and foster parents, is rated as a Strength in only 37 percent of the cases.
- Item 16, pertaining to the relationship of the child in care with parents, is rated as a Strength in only 39 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 10, pertaining to ensuring that children receive appropriate IL services, is rated as a Strength in only 43 percent of applicable cases.
- Both of Items 18 and 20, pertaining to child and family involvement in case planning and caseworker visits with parents, are rated as a Strength in only 44 percent of applicable cases.

The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence, the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care, placement stability, the timeliness of adoptions, or permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.

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

- There is concern that the data showing a large number of children experiencing foster care placements of less than 8 days indicate ineffective risk assessments and that the State is not using effective strategies to prevent foster care placements.
- One general concern pertained to the State's own quality assurance (QA) ratings for the items as reported in the Statewide Assessment. For many items, these ratings were significantly higher than the Federal 2009 CFSR case review findings. Although the 2009 CFSR determined that the State was in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System, there is concern

regarding the effectiveness of the State's Quality Improvement Case Review (QICR) system for identifying the strengths and needs of the service delivery system and the capability of the QA system to accurately evaluate program improvement measures.

- Although the State is conducting an extensive service array assessment, available services are insufficient to meet the needs of children and families throughout the State and particularly in rural areas.
- The State does not make concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning, visitation, or permanency planning.
- There are high caseworker caseloads.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

With regard to systemic factors, Nevada is in substantial conformity with the systemic factors pertaining to QA System; 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 pertaining to Statewide Information System, Case Review System, Staff and Provider Training, or Service Array and Resource Development.

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.

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 72.4 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 60 percent of applicable Carson City cases, 77 percent of applicable Clark County cases, and 83 percent of applicable Washoe County cases. The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence within 6 months or the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

The 2009 CFSR found that, in the majority of cases reviewed (86 percent), the State initiated a response to a maltreatment report within the timeframes established by State policy and, in the majority of cases reviewed (81 percent), there was an absence of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period. However, concerns were raised regarding the lack of timeliness in investigating some maltreatment reports and the repeat maltreatment experienced by some children.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- DCFS was not consistent with regard to initiating investigations of child maltreatment reports or establishing face-to-face contact with the child subject of the report in accordance with State-established timeframes.
- The State did not have a uniform policy regarding responding to child maltreatment reports.
- DCFS was not effective in preventing recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period.

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

- Standardized intake and investigation procedures, including the modification of the statewide information system known as Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY)
- Developed, implemented, and standardized safety and risk assessment tools including the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Substantiation policy
- Standardized criteria and practice guidelines for substantiation of reports of maltreatment
- Developed a mechanism for analysis of a family with multiple reports of maltreatment
- Developed a standardized criteria for case closure
- Developed a 24-hour, 7-day per week child protection response system, staffed by caseworkers to respond to hotline calls in Clark County

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

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 51.6 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 39 percent of applicable Carson City cases, 42 percent of applicable Clark County cases, and 78 percent of applicable Washoe County cases.

The 2009 CFSR found that in the majority of cases (78 percent), the agency was effective in providing services to the family to prevent the child's removal from the home and, in some cases, in conducting initial and ongoing risk and safety assessments to ensure the child's safety. However, the 2009 CFSR identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- Children remaining in their own homes continued to be at risk either because services were not provided or the services that were provided did not target the key safety concerns.

- There was a lack of initial and ongoing safety and risk assessments.
- There were continued risk concerns in the home that were not addressed and/or monitored by the agency.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The agency was inconsistent in providing services to families that would ensure the safety of children remaining in their homes.
- There were instances of removing children from the home without conducting a safety assessment to determine whether they might be able to remain at home.
- There was a lack of consistent ongoing safety and risk assessments to monitor case progress.
- There was a lack of a safety and risk assessment at case closure, leaving the children at home still at risk of harm.
- There was frequent use of relatives as temporary guardians without providing services to the family or the relatives.

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

- Revised the safety and risk assessment criteria and implemented assessment tools including the NIA, Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Substantiation policy
- Developed a case management model that incorporates best practices for assessment, family engagement, and collaborative case planning
- Initiated a pilot DR system in Clark County

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 termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (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 (OPPLA) are in stable long-term placements and are adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Permanency Outcome 1 also incorporates four national data indicators for which national standards have been established. These data indicators measure the timeliness and permanency of reunification, the timeliness of adoptions, permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, and placement stability.

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 30.0 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 40 percent of Carson City cases, 20 percent of Clark County cases, and 40 percent of Washoe County cases. In addition to case review findings, Nevada met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification. However, the State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness of adoptions, permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, and placement stability.

The 2009 CFSR found that the State was effective in preventing foster care reentry, and that, in most cases (71 percent), the agency made concerted efforts to achieve reunification in a timely manner. However, the 2009 CFSR identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- Many children experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review, and some children were in placement settings that were not stable.
- The child's permanency goal was not appropriate and/or not established in a timely manner.
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.
- There was a lack of concerted effort to achieve the goal of adoption in a timely manner due in part to delays in the TPR process and a lack of effort to finalize adoption after TPR was achieved.
- There was a lack of concerted effort to provide the child with IL services, where appropriate.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to ensure children's placement stability while in foster care.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to achieve children's permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The courts and the agency maintained the goal of reunification even when the prognosis for reunification was poor.
- There were agency-related delays in preparing the paperwork necessary for TPR or for transfer to the adoption unit.
- There was a reluctance to seek TPR if the child was not in an adoptive home.
- There was a lack of available services to promote reunification.
- There was a lack of understanding of concurrent planning by the agency caseworkers, courts, biological parents, and foster parents.

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

- Developed and implemented the standardized Case Management Practice Model, Case Planning Policy, and Concurrent Case Planning Guide to ensure children in foster care experience timely permanency and stability
- Developed training on family-centered practice and collaborative planning
- Strengthened recruitment and training plans for adoptive families and developed a standardized process for responding to adoption subsidy requests
- Developed and implemented a new policy to facilitate ongoing collection of information for social summaries of children in foster care to provide an accurate and comprehensive description of the child

- Developed the Youth Plan for Independent Living to standardize transitional plans for youth, the Medicaid Age-Out of Foster Care program to provide coverage until age 21, and Youth Advisory Councils and the Youth Advisory Board
- Instituted a standardized IL transition plan for youth 15.5 years old and older to ensure that case plans are individualized, youth driven, and meet specialized needs
- Ensured all emergency shelter care facilities operated in accordance with State regulatory standards
- Implemented placement decision-making strategies to improve the matching of children with out-of-home placement providers to minimize placement moves and maximize stability
- Standardized foster and adoptive home studies through the implementation of the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation
- Strengthened policy and practice on early identification; diligent search efforts; and assessment of parents, noncustodial parents, relatives, and other placement resources for the purposes of placement, adoption, or OPPLA

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).

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 60.0 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 80 percent of Carson City cases, 40 percent of Clark County cases, and 80 percent of Washoe County cases.

The 2009 CFSR found that the State was effective with regard to placing children in close proximity to their parents and placing siblings together in foster care, and, in many cases (76 percent), the State made concerted efforts to ensure that the connections of children in foster care were maintained. However, the 2009 CFSR identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- The frequency and quality of visitation between children in foster care and their parents (particularly fathers) and siblings were insufficient to meet the needs of the children and families.
- The agency had not made concerted efforts to search for either maternal or paternal relatives as potential placement resources.
- The agency had not made concerted efforts to support the child's relationship with the mother or father while the child was in foster care.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2 during its 2004 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- There was a lack of consistent effort from the agency to promote frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care.
- There was a lack of consistent effort from the agency to seek and assess relatives as placement resources.
- There was a lack of consistent effort from the agency to preserve children's connections to their families and heritage.
- There was a lack of consistent effort from the agency to support or promote the parent-child relationship.

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

- Developed Visitation Practice Guidelines for the quality and frequency of visits between children, siblings, and parents
- Developed training for caseworkers in maintaining connections for youth in foster care
- Developed the Diligent Search Process and Placement Decision policy and training for caseworkers
- Developed the Kinship Care policy
- Developed training for caseworkers in permanency service delivery, intake response, and the decision-making process to encourage the need to assist in maintaining the parent-child relationship during placement
- Developed a statewide diversity committee of internal and external stakeholders, including Tribal representatives, that will assist with preserving connections

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of the 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 involve parents and children actively (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).

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 29.0 percent of cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 22 percent of Carson City cases, 19 percent of Clark County cases, and 50 percent of Washoe County cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 32.5 percent of the foster care cases and 23 percent of the in-home services cases.

The 2009 CFSR identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to assess and address the service needs of children in the in-home services cases.
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to involve children, mothers, and fathers in case planning in both the foster care and in-home services cases, although children in the foster care cases were more likely to be involved than children in the in-home services cases.

- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents and children, particularly in the in-home services cases, were not sufficient to ensure the child's safety and well-being and promote attainment of case goals.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 during its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to assess children and families for services and provide necessary services.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to involve parents and children in the case planning process.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to establish sufficient face-to-face contact among agency caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads.

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

- Developed and implemented several assessment tools to aid in appropriately assessing children and family needs, including the Assessment Process Policy and Practice Guidelines, NIA, Safety Assessment, and Risk Assessment
- Implemented training modules with instruction on family assessment and collaborative case planning
- Developed and implemented a standardized policy and practice guideline for caseworker visits and developed the Case Planning Process and the Caseworker Contact with Children, Parents, and Caregivers Protocol
- Developed training and policy to promote CFT training and facilitation
- Created a consumer satisfaction survey for all foster parents to support retention

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of the 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).

Nevada is in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 95.1 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is greater than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 92 percent of Carson City cases, 95 percent of Clark County cases, and 100 percent of Washoe County cases. Also, the outcome was substantially achieved in 97 percent of the applicable foster care cases and 89 percent of the applicable in-home services cases.

The 2009 CFSR found that the educational needs of children in foster care were being appropriately and adequately assessed and addressed.

Nevada was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The key concern identified in the 2004 review was that the agency was not addressing children's education-related needs consistently, even when there was evidence indicating that some type of intervention was warranted.

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

- A statewide policy for a comprehensive assessment process and educational records checklist
- The Program of School Choice for Children in Foster Care
- A standardized policy for caseworker visits with the child to ensure that the child's educational needs are met

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

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.

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 69.5 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of Carson City cases, 54 percent of Clark County cases, and 100 percent of Washoe County cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 72.5 percent of the foster care cases and in 63 percent of the applicable in-home services cases.

The 2009 CFSR found that in the majority of cases (82 percent), the physical and dental health needs of children were appropriately assessed and adequately addressed. However, there was concern that for some children, physical, dental, and mental health needs were not appropriately addressed, particularly for children in the in-home services cases.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3 during its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The agency was not consistently effective in meeting children's physical and mental health needs.
- There was a lack of physical and mental health service providers who were willing to accept Medicaid.

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

- A policy revision and an instructional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure that physical health is assessed for all children placed in foster care
- A standardized policy and protocol for documenting the medical services received by foster children
- An MOU with the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services to support children's mental health needs

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

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System in the 2009 CFSR. The 2009 CFSR determined that, although Nevada is operating a statewide information system called UNITY that contains the required elements, information from the onsite case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicates that this system does not reflect the current goal, placement, or legal status for every child in foster care. In addition, information from the Statewide Assessment in item 25 indicates that data derived from UNITY regarding case plans are not reliable due in part to difficulty ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of data entry.

Nevada was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 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 the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), 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).

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The 2009 CFSR determined that the State was holding periodic reviews and permanency hearings in a timely manner. However, the 2009 CFSR identified the following concerns:

- Although the State provides a process to ensure that each child has a written case plan, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that, based on data from UNITY, only 53 percent of children had case plans.
- Although the State has a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA, information from stakeholder interviews indicates that TPR petitions are not filed consistently in a timely manner throughout the State.
- Although the State provides a process for foster parents and other caregivers to be notified of reviews and hearings, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates inconsistencies across the State in the degree to which notice is given to foster parents.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- Case plans were not developed jointly and routinely with the child's parents, were too generic, did not address the needs of the child, and were not completed in a timely manner.
- There were excessive delays in filing TPR petitions in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.
- There was no statewide, consistent process to notify foster or pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers of review or hearing dates or to afford them an opportunity to be heard at these hearings.

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

- The Case Planning Policy
- Training in CFT meeting facilitation
- Policies to standardize and reinforce timely filing of TPR petitions
- Policies to standardize and reinforce notification of hearings to caregivers
- Comprehensive standards for child welfare court cases
- Collaborations to improve legal representation for children

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of the 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).

Nevada is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The 2009 CFSR determined that the State has standards, protocols, and guidelines in place related to foster home licensing, child visitation, and service contracts. In addition, the 2009 CFSR determined that the State is operating an identifiable QA system.

Nevada was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The State had not developed and implemented procedures to ensure that children in foster care were provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.
- The State did not have a comprehensive QA System that measures program Strengths and Areas Needing Improvement statewide.

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

- Revised and implemented standards to improve the quality improvement (QI) supervisory review process

- Implemented a statutory change that granted State licensing authority over all emergency shelters
- Formalized a comprehensive QICR system to evaluate the quality of services and identify and analyze the strengths and needs of the service delivery system
- Developed and implemented a case review system
- Convened a QI group to develop and monitor the QI and QA processes

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

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.

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The 2009 CFSR determined that the State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of licensed facilities. However, the 2009 CFSR identified the following concerns with regard to training:

- Although Nevada provides a comprehensive New Worker Core Training program, information from the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews indicates that in some areas of the State, this training is not adequate to provide caseworkers with the skills to support the goals and objectives of the CFSP, including conducting investigations, case-level documentation, and Indian Child Welfare Act issues.
- Information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that, although Nevada requires licensed social workers to complete continuing education requirements and maintain licensure, not all caseworkers are licensed social workers. The State does not have minimal ongoing training requirements for caseworkers who are not licensed social workers. In addition, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although some ongoing training is available to caseworkers in various parts of the State, not all caseworkers have the opportunity to access ongoing training.

Nevada was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 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)?

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. The 2009 CFSR determined that the State has an adequate array of key services to meet the basic needs of children and families. However, the 2009 CFSR identified the following concerns:

- Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that many key services are not accessible to families and children in all areas of the State due to gaps in services in some parts of the State and impacted by limited transportation resources, especially for families living in rural areas. Key areas in which services were noted to be insufficient to meet the needs in some parts of the State were the following: in-home services, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, domestic violence treatment, foster homes, and post-adoption services.
- Although Nevada has the assessment and planning tools to identify individualized service needs to meet the unique needs of children and families, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State does not have the capacity to provide these services on a consistent basis to all or most families statewide due to the lack of accessibility of many of the key services in some parts of the State.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The State did not have in place a sufficient array of services that would enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable or would help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency. Critical gaps in the service array were bilingual services (particularly Spanish services), mental health services, substance abuse services, and health and dental services (because many providers did not accept Medicaid).
- Many services were not available at all in rural areas of the State.
- The State did not have a sufficient service array to ensure that caseworkers were able to individualize services for children and families served by the agency.

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

- A service array assessment in all three regions to identify potential areas for service enhancement
- The Case Planning Policy and the Concurrent Planning Policy to enhance the individualization of services to children and families
- Improvements in a collaborative relationship with community partners in Clark County to address gaps in services
- Identified strategies for funding family preservation and family support services

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

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).

Nevada is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The 2009 CFSR determined the following:

- Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State engages in ongoing consultation with key stakeholders in the development of the goals and objectives of the CFSP.
- The State develops the Annual Progress and Services Report based on ongoing consultation with key stakeholders through consortia, advisory boards, committees, workgroups, and community boards.

However, the 2009 CFSR identified concerns regarding information sharing and coordination of services among State departments operating Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same populations, including programs operated by the Tribes.

Nevada also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 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).

Nevada is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The 2009 CFSR determined the following:

- The State has standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are monitored regularly through licensing procedures that have been established in each of the State's three child welfare agencies.
- The State's standards for foster family homes and child care institutions are applied equally to all entities receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds, including licensed relative foster family homes.
- The State completes criminal background records checks for adults in foster homes, relative caregivers, and staff of child care institutions before placing children in a home.
- The State uses a variety of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive and permanent placements for waiting children, including national media, adoption exchanges, photo listings, and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

However, the 2009 CFSR identified concern that, although one local jurisdiction continuously assesses the demographic data of their resource families, the State does not have a process for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Nevada also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Table 1. Nevada 2009 CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved*	Met National Standards?	Rating**	Percent Strength
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	72.4	Met 0 of 2		
Item 1. Timeliness of investigations				ANI	86
Item 2. Repeat maltreatment				ANI	81
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	51.6			
Item 3. Services to protect children in home				ANI	78
Item 4. Risk of harm				ANI	55
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	30.0	Met 1 of 4		
Item 5. Foster care reentry				Strength	92
Item 6. Stability of foster care placements				ANI	65
Item 7. Permanency goal for child				ANI	62.5
Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	71
Item 9. Adoption				ANI	6
Item 10. Other planned living arrangement				ANI	43
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	60.0			
Item 11. Proximity of placement				Strength	100
Item 12. Placement with siblings				Strength	100
Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	59
Item 14. Preserving connections				ANI	76
Item 15. Relative placement				ANI	64
Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	39

* 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. Nevada 2009 CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved	Rating**	Percent Strength
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	No	29.0		
Item 17. Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	37
Item 18. Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	44
Item 19. Caseworker visits with child			ANI	55
Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	44
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs	Yes	95.1		
Item 21. Educational needs of child			Strength	95
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	69.5		
Item 22. Physical health of child			ANI	82
Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of child			ANI	66

* 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 ANIs. 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. Nevada 2009 CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Statewide Information System	No	2	
Item 24. The State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care			ANI
Case Review System	No	2	
Item 25. The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions			ANI
Item 26. The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review			Strength
Item 27. The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter			Strength
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			ANI
Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child			ANI
Quality Assurance System	Yes	3	
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			Strength
Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented			Strength
Staff and Provider Training	No	2	
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			ANI
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			ANI
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

* 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 ANIs.

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Service Array and Resource Development	No	2	
Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency			Strength
Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP			ANI
Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency			ANI
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Yes	3	
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			Strength
Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports delivered pursuant to the CFSP			Strength
Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same population			ANI
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Yes	3	
Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards			Strength
Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds			Strength
Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children			Strength
Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed			ANI
Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children			Strength

* Scores range from 1 to 4. A score of 1 or 2 means that the factor is not in substantial conformity. A score of 3 or 4 means that the factor is in substantial conformity. ** Items may be rated as Strengths or as ANIs.

**Final Report
Nevada Child and Family Services Review
January 2010**

**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 Nevada. 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 Nevada CFSR was conducted the week of August 31, 2009. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2008, through September 4, 2009. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR data period ending March 31, 2008
- Reviews of 62 cases (40 foster care and 22 in-home services cases) at three sites: 18 cases in Carson City, 26 cases in Clark County, and 18 cases in Washoe 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

Child welfare services in Nevada are administered by three child welfare agencies: Clark County, Washoe County, and the Rural Region. The Rural Region is comprised of four districts. For the onsite CFSR, cases identified as having been reviewed in Carson City included Rural Region cases from the Carson City area and Rural District 2.

All 62 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.

Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

Case Characteristics	Foster Care	In-Home Services
Total Number of Cases	40	22*
Date case was opened		
Open prior to the period under review	30 (75%)	8 (36%)
Open during the period under review	10 (25%)	14 (64%)
Child entered foster care during the period under review	13 (32.5%)	NA
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than 10	22 (55%)	**
At least 10 but younger than 13	6 (15%)	**
At least 13 but younger than 16	4 (10%)	**
16 and older	8 (20%)	**
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic	1 (2.5%)	**
Asian Non-Hispanic	0	**
Black Non-Hispanic	10 (25%)	**
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	0	**
Hispanic (of any race)	6 (15%)	**
White Non-Hispanic	20 (50%)	**
Two or More Races Non-Hispanic	3 (7.5%)	**
Primary reason for opening case		
Physical abuse	3 (7.5%)	2 (9%)
Sexual abuse	2 (5%)	1 (5%)
Emotional maltreatment	0	1 (5%)
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	18 (45%)	10 (45%)
Medical neglect	1 (2.5%)	2 (9%)
Abandonment	4 (10%)	0
Mental/physical health of parent	0	2 (9%)
Mental/physical health of child	1 (2.5%)	1 (5%)
Substance abuse by parent	9 (22.5%)	1 (5%)
Child's behavior	1 (2.5%)	1 (5%)
Substance abuse by child	1 (2.5%)	0
Domestic violence in child's home	0	1 (5%)
Child in juvenile justice system	0	0

* For the Nevada 2009 CFSR, originally there were 25 in-home services cases. However, three in-home services cases were determined to be ineligible and were eliminated, leaving 22 in-home services cases.

**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,” and “not achieved.” For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan 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 approach 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 CFSRs assesses a State’s current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continued 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 Nevada 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 (see footnote page 3)
- 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 Nevada's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR, which was held in fiscal year (FY) 2004, the State's status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Differences in findings across the sites included in the Onsite Review are 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) also are identified when appropriate.

I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

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					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	6	10	5	21	72.4
Partially Achieved	2	3	1	6	20.7
Not Achieved	2	0	0	2	6.9
Total Applicable Cases	10	13	6	29	
Not Applicable Cases	8	13	12	33	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Substantially Achieved by Site	60%	77%	83%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (%)	State's Percentage	Meets Standards?
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6 +	93.6	No
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68 +	99.60	No

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 72.4 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, Nevada did not meet the national standards for the national data indicators pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence or absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- DCFS was not consistent with regard to initiating investigations of child maltreatment reports or establishing face-to-face contact with the child subject of the report in accordance with State-established timeframes.
- The State did not have a uniform policy regarding responding to child maltreatment reports.
- DCFS was not effective in preventing recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period.

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

- Standardized intake and investigation procedures, including the modification of the State's automated information system, Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY)
- Developed, implemented, and standardized safety and risk assessment tools including the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and the Substantiation policy
- Standardized criteria and practice guidelines for substantiation of reports of maltreatment
- Developed a mechanism for analysis of a family with multiple reports of maltreatment
- Developed a standardized criteria for case closure
- In Clark County, developed a 24-hour, 7-day per week child protection response system, staffed by caseworkers to respond to hotline calls

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 29 (47 percent) of the 62 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 a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

State policy regarding the investigations of reports of abuse or neglect is the following:

- Priority 1: Present Danger. The child welfare agency must initiate face-to-face contact within 3 hours of the time the report is assigned (or within 6 hours in rural areas when the location of the family is more than 50 miles from the nearest agency office).
- Priority 2: Impending Danger. The child welfare agency must initiate face-to-face contact within 24 hours of the time the report is assigned.
- Priority 3: Maltreatment Indicated, but no safety threats identified. The child welfare agency must initiate face-to-face contact within 72 hours of the time the report is assigned.

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

Item 1 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	11	6	25	86
Area Needing Improvement	2	2	0	4	14
Total Applicable Cases	10	13	6	29	
Not Applicable	8	13	12	33	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	80%	85%	100%		

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 25 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 four cases when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes. Of these four cases, one involved a report assigned priority 1, one involved a report assigned priority 2, and two involved reports assigned priority 3.

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 86 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State has standardized the intake procedures and investigations statewide through the use of a structured intake information collection process and a standardized intake assessment of family strengths and safety risk. The Statewide Assessment notes that all child welfare agencies in the State have an emergency response system in place including "on call" response capability 24 hours per day, 7 days per week through a collaboration among the agency, law enforcement, and other entities such as the Crisis Call Center. The Statewide Assessment also notes that supervisors must review reports received by the child welfare agency regardless of the screening recommendation made by the intake caseworker to ensure proper response to reports.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that Nevada Administrative Code permits investigations to be considered to be timely if they are initiated by telephone or a review of a case record; however, if case initiation occurs in that manner, a face-to-face meeting with the child and family must be attempted on the next business day.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the Differential Response (DR) program was implemented statewide in 2008-2009 to provide an alternative to an investigation. Referrals to DR are limited to Priority 3 reports in the following categories: educational neglect, environmental neglect, physical neglect, medical neglect, and improper supervision. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that in Clark County, if it is determined that the level of risk of an allegation does not rise to the level required for investigation and the family would benefit from an assessment rather than an investigation, the family is offered an assessment as an option.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) based on the Federal CFSR model were conducted in 2006, 2007, and 2008. In the 2008 QICR, item 1 was rated as a Strength in 83.4 percent of 47 applicable cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment notes, however, that UNITY currently does not have the capability to track the timeliness of investigations.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that it is a challenge to conduct investigations of reports in rural areas of the State within the required timeframes. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that in some cases, the timeliness of investigations is affected by an inability to locate a bilingual investigative caseworker or interpreter.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The key issues addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were the availability of hotlines for the reporting of child abuse and neglect, the timeliness of the agencies' responses to accepted reports of abuse and neglect, and coordination between child welfare agencies and law enforcement agencies with regard to responding to accepted reports of abuse and neglect.

With regard to the availability of hotlines for the reporting of child abuse and neglect, stakeholders expressed the opinion that the hotline is available, or calls are forwarded to on-call responders, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, in all areas of the State. Some Carson City stakeholders indicated that the hotline sometimes did not accept reports for investigation appropriately, rejecting some reports that should have been referred for investigation.

With regard to the effectiveness with which agencies respond in a timely manner to accepted reports of abuse and neglect, stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency generally responds in a timely manner.

With regard to the coordination between child welfare agencies and law enforcement agencies, some Washoe County stakeholders indicated that there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the child welfare agency and the law enforcement agency dictating protocols for reporting, investigation, substantiation, and removal.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 21 (34 percent) of the 62 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.

Item 2 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	1	11	5	17	81
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	1	4	19
Total Applicable Cases	3	12	6	21	
Not Applicable	15	14	12	41	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	33%	92%	83%		

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 17 cases 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 in four cases 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 12 cases, there was only one report.
- In 41 cases, there were between two and nine reports.
- In seven cases, there were between 10 and 19 reports.
- In two cases, there were 20 or more maltreatment reports.

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 81 percent of the applicable cases, there was no recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month period. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 2 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State prevents the recurrence of child maltreatment through the following strategies:

- The NIA. This tool is an investigative process to identify the negative factors or conditions that are known to contribute to the likelihood of maltreatment and to determine the strengths and/or protective capacities that can help mitigate risk and safety threats. (The Statewide Assessment notes that the effectiveness of the NIA was reviewed in 2008 and that the tool is currently under revision.)
- The Risk Assessment. This tool identifies the level of future risk of maltreatment and is used at the completion of the investigation to guide the decision to close an investigation or provide ongoing services to the family.
- The DR Program. This program is available by referral to families assessed at intake as Priority 3 and is designed to provide services to families to prevent maltreatment.
- The Paired Teams approach. This practice was initiated in Washoe County in August 2008 to improve the continuity of services for children and families by establishing a unit in which investigative caseworkers and permanency caseworkers are paired and work under the same supervisor who maintains oversight throughout the case.
- Intensive Family Services (IFS), Family Support Services, Wraparound in Nevada (WIN), and Nevada Early Intervention Services. These services are all offered in the Rural Region to support families and prevent maltreatment.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 2 was rated as a Strength in 87.5 percent of 41 applicable cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment notes that UNITY does not have an efficient process for documenting multiple reports that are made on the same family during an open investigation.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some Clark County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that maltreatment reports regarding open child welfare cases are referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) for investigation, to the assigned caseworker, and to licensing

caseworkers in foster care cases. Some Clark County stakeholders also indicated that there are cases in which multiple referrals are made but no investigation is conducted or no services are offered to the family to prevent maltreatment.

Safety Outcome 2

Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	7	11	14	32	51.6
Partially Achieved	5	5	3	13	21.0
Not Achieved	6	10	1	17	27.4
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Substantially Achieved by Site	39%	42%	78%		

Status of Safety Outcome 2

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 51.6 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The agency was inconsistent in providing services to families that would ensure the safety of children remaining in their homes.
- There were instances of removing children from the home without conducting a safety assessment to determine whether they might be able to remain at home.
- There was a lack of consistent ongoing safety and risk assessments to monitor case progress.
- There was a lack of a safety and risk assessment at case closure, leaving children at home still at risk of harm.
- There was frequent use of relatives as temporary guardians without providing services to the family or the relatives.

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

- Revised the safety and risk assessment criteria and implemented assessment tools including the NIA, Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and the Substantiation policy
- Developed a case management model that incorporates best practices for assessment, family engagement, and collaborative case planning
- Initiated a pilot DR system in Clark County

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 41 (66 percent) of the 62 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.

Item 3 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	10	9	13	32	78
Area Needing Improvement	3	6	0	9	22
Total Applicable Cases	13	15	13	41	
Not Applicable	5	11	5	21	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	77%	60%	100%		

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 (nine cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal (15 cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent reentry into foster care (four cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal although the child was subsequently removed to ensure safety (four 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: IFS, counseling, parenting, substance abuse assessment and treatment, mental health assessment and treatment,

financial assistance, WIN, domestic violence treatment, early intervention services, educational services, vocational rehabilitation, and anger management services.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Services were not provided to the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (two cases).
- Services were provided, but they did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home (five cases).
- No services were provided to prevent the children's removal from the home, although the removal was not immediately necessary to ensure the children's safety (one case).
- No services were provided at the time of reunification, and the children were at risk in the home (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 78 percent of the applicable 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 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, when a child welfare agency determines that a child needs protection but is not in imminent danger, the agency must make reasonable efforts to keep the child safely in the home and commit its resources to preserve the family. The Statewide Assessment notes that the State uses the following strategies to maintain children safely in their own homes:

- Caseworkers conduct a comprehensive safety and risk assessment to guide the services provided to families.
- Caseworkers offer the parents a plan for services, including a safety plan.
- Statewide services provided include DR services, Family Preservation Services, and IFS for at-risk children and families to strengthen the family and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.
- The DCFS Rural Region has a Placement Prevention Fund through title X to provide financial assistance to families for whom removal from the home can be avoided.
- Washoe County provides ongoing voluntary case management services to families in order to prevent removal.

The Statewide Assessment notes that DR services are offered to families when it appears that the family is likely to benefit from early intervention through an assessment for appropriate services. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that all cases open for service must have a written collaborative case plan which defines the overall goals of the case and the step-by-step proposed actions for all parties to take to reach the goals within a specified time period.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 3 was rated as a Strength in 93.2 percent of 63 applicable cases reviewed. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports the following findings from 805 stakeholders surveyed from February 2009 through April 2009. Stakeholders surveyed included caseworkers, supervisors, caregivers, youth, judicial personnel, child advocates,

Tribal representatives, school district representatives, family resource centers, and service providers. Stakeholders identified the following as the most important services to ensure that children remain safely in their homes: substance abuse treatment for parents, mental health treatment for parents, anger management for parents, mental health treatment for children, behavioral services, domestic violence prevention, parenting, medical care, educational services for children with learning and related disabilities, Medicaid providers, substance abuse treatment for children, family preservation, child care assistance, developmental services, low income housing, and dental services.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the effectiveness of the DR program and the issue of children returning home after brief stays in foster care.

With regard to the effectiveness of the DR program, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the implementation of DR programs throughout the State has improved the ability of the agency to prevent foster care placement and coordinate services to support families at home.

With regard to the issue of children returning home after brief stays in foster care, some State-level and Clark County stakeholders expressed concern about the high number of children who are returned home after brief stays in foster care indicating that the children were either removed from home without the provision of appropriate services or returned home without appropriate support services to prevent reentry. Various Clark County stakeholders expressed the following opinions:

- It is common for the agency to take custody of unsupervised children and then release them to their parents within a short time period.
- Children are returned home after brief stays in foster care and services are not widely available to support reunification.
- There are cases in which children are removed from home for brief periods of time because services are not available to minimize risk in the home.
- There are cases in which multiple referrals are made but no investigation conducted or services offered to the family to prevent maltreatment.

Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 62 cases. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. The results of the assessment of item 4 are presented in the table below.

Item 4 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	7	13	14	34	55
Area Needing Improvement	11	13	4	28	45
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	39%	50%	78%		

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 34 cases 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 in 28 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no initial safety or risk assessment (two cases).
- There was no ongoing safety and risk assessment in the child's home during the period under review (12 cases).
- There was no ongoing safety and risk assessment in the foster home during the period under review (12 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 (12 cases).
- The case was closed without any safety and risk assessment (five cases).
- Safety and risk were not assessed for all children in the home (three cases).

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 55 percent of the 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 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a Safety Assessment is required to be completed upon the initial face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim to determine whether a child is likely to be in immediate or imminent danger of serious physical or other type of harm that may require a protective intervention. The Statewide Assessment reports that the NIA is used by caseworkers during the investigation.

The Statewide Assessment notes that if safety concerns are identified, a safety plan must be developed to ensure the immediate protection of the child while the threats to the child's safety are being addressed. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that risk assessments identify the level of risk for future maltreatment and that ongoing assessments of risk must be made at appropriate case milestones. The Statewide Assessment also notes that in Clark County, if an investigation remains open beyond 45 days, the assigned CPS caseworker must see the child once every 14 days until the investigation is closed.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 4 was rated as a Strength in 79.7 percent of 62 applicable cases reviewed. Stakeholders responding to the 2009 survey indicated the following information:

- 50.5 percent of stakeholders agreed that in the majority of cases, caseworkers use the NIA.
- 84.9 percent of stakeholders agreed that in the majority of cases, caseworkers use the Safety Assessment.
- 64.7 percent of stakeholders agreed that in the majority of cases, caseworkers use the Risk Assessment.
- 86.7 percent of judges indicated that they use the results of the Safety Assessment for their determination in removing the child.
- 30.7 percent of caseworkers indicated that they had cases where the child felt unsafe while in foster care.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the agency does not have the ability to conduct effective risk assessment on a consistent basis due to staffing shortages and high caseworker caseloads. In addition, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that, due to a lack of sufficient resources, a number of cases are unsubstantiated and closed without service provision even when the family has significant risk factors that had not been addressed or resolved.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the NIA is completed to assess the safety and risk of children in the home and to identify services needed to prevent placement into foster care. Some stakeholders indicated that risk and safety are assessed initially and periodically at significant milestones during the life of the case. However, some Clark County and Washoe County stakeholders noted that the NIA is not used consistently. Some Carson City and Clark County stakeholders indicated that because of the very high level of risk that is required for children to be removed from their homes, the agency sometimes will leave children in their homes even when there are serious safety concerns.

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					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	4	4	4	12	30.0
Partially Achieved	5	15	6	26	65.0
Not Achieved	1	1	0	2	5.0
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	40%	20%	40%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (Scaled Score)	State Score (Scaled Score)	Meets Standards?
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6 +	152.8	Yes
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4 +	83.1	No
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7 +	120.0	No
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5 +	82.6	No

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 30.0 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, although Nevada met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification, the State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness of adoptions, permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, or placement stability.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to ensure children's placement stability while in foster care.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to achieve children's permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The courts and the agency maintained the goal of reunification even when the prognosis for reunification was poor.
- There were agency-related delays in preparing the paperwork necessary for termination of parental rights (TPR) or for transfer to the adoption unit.
- There was a reluctance to seek TPR if the child was not in an adoptive home.
- There was a lack of available services to promote reunification.
- There was a lack of understanding of concurrent planning by the agency caseworkers, courts, biological parents, and foster parents.

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

- Developed and implemented the standardized Case Management Practice Model, Case Planning Policy, and Concurrent Case Planning Guide to ensure children in foster care experience timely permanency and stability
- Developed training on family-centered practice and collaborative planning
- Strengthened recruitment and training plans for adoptive families and developed a standardized process for responding to adoption subsidy requests
- Developed and implemented a new policy to facilitate ongoing collection of information for social summaries of children in foster care to provide an accurate and comprehensive description of the child
- Developed the Youth Plan for Independent Living to standardize transitional plans for youth, the Medicaid Age-Out of Foster Care program to provide coverage until age 21, and Youth Advisory Councils and the Youth Advisory Board
- Instituted a standardized independent living (IL) transition plan for youth 15.5 years old and older to ensure that case plans are individualized, youth driven, and meet specialized needs
- Ensured all emergency shelter care facilities operated in accordance with State regulatory standards
- Implemented placement decision-making strategies to improve the matching of children with out-of-home placement providers to minimize placement moves and maximize stability
- Standardized foster and adoptive home studies through the implementation of the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE)
- Strengthened policy and practice on early identification, diligent search efforts and assessment of parents, noncustodial parents, relatives, and other placement resources for the purposes of placement, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA)

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 13 (32.5 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.

Item 5 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	4	5	3	12	92
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	1	1	8
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	5	4	13	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	15	6	27	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	75%		

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in 12 cases 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 or there was evidence that concerted efforts were made to prevent reentry. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case 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 92 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 5 also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 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.

Nevada'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, 8.7 percent of children exiting foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is less than the national 25th percentile of 9.9 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the three child welfare agencies in Nevada have adopted a practice of maintaining legal custody of a child for up to 6 months after the child has been physically reunified to ensure that parents are continuing to utilize the available post-reunification services when problems arise. These services include intensive family preservation services and wraparound services for seriously emotionally disturbed children.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 5 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of 28 applicable cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the practice of maintaining legal custody of the child for up to 6 months after the child has been physically reunified has led to cases being kept open for extended periods of time and has added to the large caseworker caseloads.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some State-level and Clark County stakeholders expressed concern that, although many children are reunified quickly, the lack of transition services and post-reunification services results in some of the children experiencing reentry into foster care.

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.

Item 6 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	5	14	7	26	65
Area Needing Improvement	5	6	3	14	35
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	50%	70%	70%		

Item 6 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child’s current placement was stable and the child did not experience a placement change during the period under review (22 cases).
- The child’s current placement was stable, and 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) (four cases).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 cases when reviewers determined one or both 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 attain the child's permanency goal (10 cases).
- The child's placement setting at the time of the onsite CFSR was not stable (six cases).

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 24 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in seven cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in nine cases experienced between three and five placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 65 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C4.1: 78.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is less than the national median of 83.3 percent.
- C4.2: 51.4 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 less than the national median of 59.9 percent.
- C4.3: 23.8 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is less than the national median of 33.9 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Nevada Administrative Code supports the placement stability of children in foster care by requiring child welfare agencies to assess the individual needs of the child and to place that child in the least restrictive environment that is consistent with the identified needs. The Statewide Assessment notes that relatives are the first placement option. The Statewide Assessment indicates that DCFS supports placement stability with the following strategies:

- DCFS child welfare agencies are required to share appropriate information with the foster care provider on an ongoing basis about the child's family, medical, and behavioral history to ensure that the child's needs are continually addressed with appropriate services.

- DCFS child welfare agencies are required to complete a case plan for each child and family addressing goals, objectives, and services.
- Caseworkers are required to visit children in foster care once every month.
- Adoption and foster care recruiters must assist in the early identification of stable and appropriate placement resources.
- In Washoe County, cases are referred to the Foster Care Stability Group when there are signs of instability or potential disruption in a foster home.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 6 was rated as a Strength in 92.2 percent of 33 applicable cases reviewed. In addition, Nevada's Solutions for Online Activity Reporting (SOAR) data show that there was placement stability for 76.96 percent of cases reviewed. As opposed to QICR, SOAR data do not capture whether or not placement moves are in the best interests of the youth.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that barriers to placement stability include the following:

- Inadequate number and array of foster homes
- High caseworker caseloads and caseload growth
- Inadequate training for foster families to manage the behaviors of children who have suffered trauma

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the following opinions:

- The placement review team meetings help stabilize placements for children in foster care (Carson City and Clark County stakeholders).
- The Child and Family Team (CFT) process helps stabilize placements for children in foster care (Washoe County stakeholders).
- Children who need therapeutic foster care placements do not always have stable placements; sometimes they are placed in nontherapeutic foster homes due to a lack of therapeutic foster homes (Carson City and Clark County stakeholders).
- There is a lack of transition planning for children when their placements change contributing to instability because there is insufficient preparation for the new placement (Washoe County stakeholders).
- Children sometimes have needs that the foster family is not equipped to address (Carson City, Clark County, and Washoe County stakeholders).

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 7. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had established a permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and whether the most current permanency goal was

appropriate. Reviewers also were to determine whether the agency had sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The results of the assessment of item 7 are presented in the table below.

Item 7 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	11	6	25	62.5
Area Needing Improvement	2	9	4	15	37.5
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	80%	55%	60%		

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 25 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and, if relevant, that the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.

Item 7 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 15 cases 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 (four cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (12 cases).
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA (four cases).

ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 21 (84 percent) of 25 applicable cases.

The following case goals were identified for the 40 foster care cases:

- Adoption only (15 cases)
- Reunification only (including reunification with relatives) (12 cases)
- Guardianship only (two cases)
- OPPLA only (four cases) (Nevada refers to this goal as another planned permanent living arrangement [APPLA])
- Concurrent goals of adoption and reunification (three cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification and OPPLA (two cases)
- Concurrent goals of guardianship and OPPLA (one case)
- Concurrent goals of guardianship and reunification with relatives (one case)

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 62.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements when relevant. 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 Nevada’s 2004 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C3.1: 30.6 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 greater than the national 75th percentile of 29.1 percent.
- C3.2: 95.1 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is less than the national median for 96.8 percent.
- C3.3: 48.2 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 greater than the national median of 47.8 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS child welfare agencies are required to adopt a plan for permanency that is in accordance with ASFA timeframes and based on an assessment of the child's safety needs, child and family strengths, and risk factors. The Statewide Assessment reports that permanency goals are, in ascending order of preference: reunification with removal caregiver or noncustodial parent, adoption by a relative, adoption by a non-relative, legal guardianship by a relative, legal guardianship by a non-relative, permanent placement with a fit and willing relative, and APPLA. The Statewide Assessment notes that the court must approve the permanency goal and review its continued appropriateness at the periodic and permanency review hearings. The Statewide Assessment indicates that when a youth has a permanency goal of APPLA, caseworkers continuously review this permanency goal and work with the youth in identifying other options such as adoption or guardianship.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that child welfare agencies use the following strategies to develop goals and achieve permanency for children:

- Caseworkers use the NIA, the Risk Assessment, and the Safety Assessment to guide the determination of an appropriate case plan goal and the services needed to support that goal.
- Caseworkers follow the Case Planning Policy and the Assessment Process Policy and Practice Guidelines to identify the appropriate permanency goal.
- The Rural Region uses the monthly meeting of the Supervisory Review Committee to discuss children in care and track all case information quarterly until permanency has been achieved.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 7 was rated as a Strength in 94.6 percent of 34 applicable cases reviewed. Stakeholders responding to the 2009 survey indicated the following information:

- 100 percent of judges surveyed said that they are aware of child welfare policy requirements regarding permanency.
- 60 percent of judges surveyed said that they frequently agree with the child welfare agency's recommendations regarding case goal decisions.

The Statewide Assessment identified the following concerns with regard to achieving timely permanency:

- High caseworker caseloads
- Lack of services in the community to meet the identified needs of children and families
- Lack of understanding of concurrent planning by caseworkers
- The reluctance of some courts to consider TPR unless the child is in an adoptive placement
- The fact that some parents require lengthy treatment for substance abuse, which makes it difficult to file for TPR within the timeframes established by ASFA

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR primarily addressed the issue of concurrent planning. While some Clark County stakeholders noted that caseworkers follow agency guidelines for concurrent planning, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that many caseworkers tend to establish concurrent goals, but then pursue them sequentially rather than simultaneously.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 21 (52.5 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.

Item 8 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	5	5	5	15	71
Area Needing Improvement	1	5	0	6	29
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	10	5	21	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	10	5	19	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	83%	50%	100%		

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in 15 cases 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 in six cases 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 71 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 8 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 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 target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Nevada's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification is presented below for the measures pertaining to timeliness:

- C1.1: 88.0 percent of the reunifications occurred in more than 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 after being in foster care for at least 8 days was 1.7 months. This length of stay is less than the national 25th percentile of 5.4 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C1.3: 37.1 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 less than the national median of 39.4 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS child welfare agencies are required to make reasonable efforts to ensure that children who have been removed from home can return safely. The Statewide Assessment notes that case plans include a projected date by which the agency expects to achieve the goal specified. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the following strategies facilitate the achievement of the goals of reunification and guardianship:

- The NIA, the Safety Assessment, and the Risk Assessment guide the design of services needed to support the achievement of the goal of reunification.
- The Diligent Search Process and Placement Decisions Policy direct the search for relatives.
- DCFS child welfare agencies are required to ensure equal efforts are made to locate noncustodial parents.

- To promote reunification and guardianship, the Rural Region offers IFS, Family Support Worker Services, WIN, Clinical Resource Services, and the Supervisory Review Committee.
- Washoe County offers Family Preservation Services, Human Services Support Specialists, and the Family Drug Court.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 8 was rated as a Strength in 97.1 percent of 31 applicable cases reviewed.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that reunification plans often do not take into account the recovery stages including relapse for families receiving substance abuse treatment. The Statewide Assessment notes that there can be a reduction of available services post-reunification, especially if the family does not qualify for Medicaid.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that high caseworker caseloads and a lack of services can affect achieving the goal of reunification in a timely manner.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the child welfare agencies generally support the goal of reunification with services and through maintaining court supervision. However, a few stakeholders noted that the child welfare agencies and/or the courts continue reunification efforts for long periods of time without consideration of other permanency options. In addition, some State-level and Clark County stakeholders expressed concern about the high number of children who are returned home after brief stays in foster care without the provision of services.

Item 9. Adoption

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 18 (45 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 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	0	1	0	1	6
Area Needing Improvement	4	9	4	17	94
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	10	4	18	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	10	6	22	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	0	10%	0		

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in one case 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 (one case)
- Delays in the TPR process after filing (seven cases)
- Delays in completing or approving home studies (six cases)
- A lack of effort to finalize adoption after TPR was achieved (nine cases)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 18 children with a goal of adoption, 3 achieved the goal during the period under review.
- Of the three children who had a finalized adoption during the period under review, all had been in foster care for longer than 24 months.
- Of the 15 children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, 9 had been in foster care for longer than 24 months.

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 6 percent of the applicable 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

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

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

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Nevada's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions was the following:

- C2.1: 20.9 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 26.8 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 36.4 months. This median length of stay is greater than the national median of 32.4 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C2.3: 21.2 percent of children who were 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 greater than the national median of 20.2 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 22.7 percent.

- C2.4: 11.6 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 greater than the 75th percentile of 10.9 percent.
- C2.5: 36.6 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is less than the national median of 45.8 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy presumes that TPR for the purpose of adoption is in the best interests of a child who has been in out-of-home care for 14 of the last 20 consecutive months and requires that the agency file for TPR by the time the child has been out of the home for 14 of the last 20 consecutive months. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following strategies as assisting in the achievement of the goal of adoption:

- The Diligent Search Process and Placement Decisions Policy direct agencies to begin search activities and the identification of family members during the initial contact with the family.
- TPR policy requires the agency to make and finalize permanency plans no later than 12 months after the child's removal and to finalize adoption proceedings within 24 months.
- A dual licensure home study is used to allow resource families to be approved for both foster care and adoption.
- Adoption recruitment and training plans support both targeted and general recruitment activities.
- The Rural Region uses the monthly meeting of the Supervisory Review Committee to discuss children in care on a quarterly basis until permanency has been achieved.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 9 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of seven cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment reports that UNITY data show that from February 1, 2007, through November 30, 2008, it appears that Washoe County successfully completed TPR on both parents in 50 percent of all applicable cases within 25 months; Clark County successfully completed TPR on both parents within 24 months; and the Rural Region successfully completed TPR on both parents in approximately 35 percent of applicable cases within 30 months.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges the following barriers to achieving timely adoptions:

- Difficulties in recruitment of families willing and able to commit to adopting children with special needs
- Insufficient post-adoption services beyond the adoption subsidy
- High caseloads for permanency caseworkers
- Delays in filing for TPR
- In the Rural Region, the TPR appeal process delaying the finalization of a child's permanency goal

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the child welfare agencies are not effective in finalizing adoptions in a timely manner. Various stakeholders identified the following barriers to timeliness in finalizing adoptions:

- There are delays in completing adoption paperwork, including documentation of criminal histories and home studies (State-level, Carson City, Clark County, and Washoe County stakeholders).
- Despite the fast track of 180 days implemented at the Supreme Court, there are delays in finalizing adoptions due to TPR appeals (State-level, Carson City, Clark County, and Washoe County stakeholders).
- Court continuances and docketing concerns delay finalizing TPR and adoption (Carson City, Clark County, and Washoe County stakeholders).
- There are delays in finalizing adoptions due to the practice of transferring the case from a permanency caseworker to an adoption caseworker only after TPR has been achieved (Clark County and Washoe County stakeholders).

Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 7 (17.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. The results of the assessment of item 10 are presented in the table below.

Item 10 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	1	1	1	3	43
Area Needing Improvement	1	3	0	4	57
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	4	1	7	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	16	9	33	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	50%	25%	100%		

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in three 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 when reviewers determined the following:

- Concerted efforts were not made to provide the child with IL services (three cases).
- Concerted efforts were not made to ensure that the child was placed in a permanent living arrangement (one case).

The following provides information about the age of the child at the time the goal of OPPLA was established.

Age of Child When OPPLA Was Established	Number of Children
Ages 0-12	1
Ages 13-15	4
Ages 16 and older	2
Total	7

Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 43 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Nevada statute and policy require that the Youth Plan for Independent Living must be developed for children with a permanency goal of APPLA. The goal of the plan is to prepare youth age 15.5 years and older who are likely to remain in foster care until their 18th birthdays to make successful transitions to independence. The Statewide Assessment reports that to assist youth in the transition process, the State extends Medicaid benefits to youth who have aged out of foster care until they are age 21.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 10 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of three applicable cases reviewed. The stakeholder survey conducted in 2009 indicated that 83.3 percent of judges and 64.9 percent of child advocates surveyed said that the agencies provide adequate documentation of compelling reasons for choosing APPLA as a permanency goal.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that providing IL services to youth in isolated areas in the Rural Region presents a considerable challenge.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that IL services are provided for children over the age of 15 and include assessments, financial management training, educational counseling and assistance, job training, and housing assistance. However, some stakeholders indicated that, although services are available to children up to the age of 21, information regarding these benefits is not provided to children making the transition from foster care to independence consistently.

Some Carson City stakeholders noted that IL services are provided by family resource centers but that lack of transportation can be a barrier to providing services to youth in rural areas. Some Clark County stakeholders noted that IL services are provided by youth

support caseworkers but that the lack of stable housing and the transient nature of the youth population are barriers to providing high-quality IL services to youth. Some Washoe County stakeholders noted that the Children's Cabinet and IL specialists provide IL services.

Permanency Outcome 2

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	8	8	8	24	60.0
Partially Achieved	2	12	1	15	37.5
Not Achieved	0	0	1	1	2.5
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	80%	40%	80%		

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 60.0 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- There was a lack of consistent effort from the agency to promote frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care.
- There was a lack of consistent effort from the agency to seek and assess relatives as placement resources.
- There was a lack of consistent effort from the agency to preserve children's connections to their families and heritage.
- There was a lack of consistent effort from the agency to support or promote the parent-child relationship.

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

- Developed Visitation Practice Guidelines for the quality and frequency of visits between children, siblings, and parents
- Developed training for caseworkers in maintaining connections for youth in foster care
- Developed the Diligent Search Process and Placement Decision policy and training for caseworkers
- Developed the Kinship Care policy
- Developed training for caseworkers in permanency service delivery, intake response, and the decision-making process to encourage the need to assist in maintaining the parent-child relationship during placement

- Developed a diversity committee of internal and external stakeholders, including Tribal representatives, that will assist with preserving connections

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 28 (70 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 were 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 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	6	16	6	28	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	16	6	28	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	4	4	12	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	100%		

Item 11 was rated as a Strength in all 28 applicable cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed in the same community as the parents or in close proximity (26 cases).
- 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 (two cases).

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 100 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed children in locations close to their parents or relatives when appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 11 also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Nevada Administrative Code requires that if the child's goal is reunification with his or her family, consideration must be given to a placement that is in close proximity to the child's parents. The Statewide Assessment indicates that if a child is placed at a substantial distance from the family, there must be clear documentation for the reasons such a placement is in the child's best interests.

Despite these requirements, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that when a relative placement is considered the best option for the child, the child may be placed far away from parents in other communities or States. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that there is a lack of licensed foster homes, particularly for youth, in the rural areas of the State, which makes it difficult to place children in close proximity to their parents.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 11 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of 35 applicable cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the challenges to placing children in close proximity to their families include limited placement resources, particularly therapeutic placement resources, and limited resources in rural areas.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 27 (67.5 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.

Item 12 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	5	15	7	27	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	15	7	27	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	5	3	13	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	100%		

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed with siblings (19 cases).
- 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 (eight cases).

Rating Determination

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 100 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength.

Item 12 also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that siblings must be placed together in foster care unless there is justification for not doing so based on the best interests of the child. The Statewide Assessment notes that in Clark County, if only one sibling requires a foster home with a higher level of care, all siblings can be placed together in that foster home and receive the higher level of services.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 12 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of 15 applicable cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that siblings sometimes are not placed together because there are not enough foster homes willing to take sibling groups, particularly if there are five or more siblings. In addition, some foster families cannot take a sibling group due to the foster family's licensing restrictions with regard to the number and/or age of the children that can be placed in the home.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that the child welfare agencies work diligently to keep siblings placed together. Some Clark County stakeholders noted that a targeted recruitment effort to identify foster care providers for sibling groups was successful. A few stakeholders indicated that it can be a challenge to place siblings together in foster care due to a lack of sufficient placement resources.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 27 (67.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child's life or 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 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.

Item 13 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	3	7	6	16	59
Area Needing Improvement	2	9	0	11	41
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	16	6	27	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	4	4	13	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	60%	44%	100%		

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 16 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 11 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

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

Additional information about visitation frequency is provided in the table below.

Typical Frequency of Child's Visits During the Period Under Review	With Mother	With Father	With Siblings in Foster Care
Visits occurred at least once a week	14 (61%)	6 (43%)	4 (57%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	2 (9%)	0	1 (14%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	1 (4%)	0	1 (14%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	3 (13%)	0	1 (14%)
There were no visits during the period under review	3 (13%)	8 (57%)	0
Total Applicable Cases	23	14	7

The data indicate that children visited at least once per month with their mothers in 74 percent of the applicable cases, with their fathers in 43 percent of the applicable cases, and with their siblings in foster care in 86 percent of the applicable cases.

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 59 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 13 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy provides that a parent of a child in foster care retains the right to reasonable visitation with the child unless the court has restricted this right. The Statewide Assessment notes that visitation must be regular, frequent, and purposeful to facilitate reunification efforts and promote the relationship of the children and parents. In addition, State policy requires that a visitation plan must be developed for siblings placed separately into foster care placements. The Statewide Assessment indicates that visitation schedules range from two to five weekly visits lasting at least 60 minutes to at least one visit per week lasting at least 60 minutes. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that due to high caseworker caseloads, it is difficult for caseworkers to facilitate sufficient visitation between children and their parents and siblings.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following promising practices in the area of family visitation:

- Statewide training is provided to caseworkers regarding visitation.
- Clark County has a Family Visitation Center to ensure that parents and children can visit in a safe and comfortable environment.
- Washoe County has a Visitation Workgroup that reviews and makes recommendations to improve visitation between children and their families.
- Washoe County has a Family Peace Center, an ongoing visitation program provided in collaboration with the State's Court Improvement Project (CIP).

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 13 was rated as a Strength in 87.8 percent of 28 applicable cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some Carson City and State-level stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there are challenges to providing children in foster care with sufficient opportunities for visitation with their parents and siblings due in part to a lack of transportation resources, particularly in the Rural Region. However, some Clark County stakeholders noted that the Family Visitation Center in that county increases opportunities for visitation.

Item 14. Preserving connections

 Strength

 X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 14 was applicable for 38 (95 percent) of the 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.

Item 14 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	9	12	8	29	76
Area Needing Improvement	0	7	2	9	24
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	19	10	38	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	1	0	2	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	63%	80%		

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 29 cases 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 religious or cultural heritage (two cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his or her school (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his or her community and friends (four cases).

Rating Determination

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 76 percent of the applicable 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 Nevada’s 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following promising practices promote the preservation of connections for children in foster care:

- The Program of School Choice for Children in Foster Care permits foster children to enroll in a public school that is other than the school the child is zoned to attend to allow the child to maintain connections with his or her original community.
- Caseworker training includes information regarding the need to maintain connections for youth.
- Clark County involves parents in the placement selection process whenever possible to ensure that information is collected with regard to the child's religious affiliation and language preference.
- DCFS policy requires caseworkers to complete a diligent search for any possible adult family member within the third degree of consanguinity to the child.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 14 was rated as a Strength in 97.3 percent of 33 applicable cases reviewed. Stakeholders responding to the 2009 survey indicated the following information:

- 23.5 percent of stakeholders agreed that in a majority of cases children tend to go to the same school.
- 46.3 percent of stakeholders agreed that in a majority of cases children are involved in culturally relevant activities.
- 87.1 percent of stakeholders agreed that connections with extended family members are maintained while the child is in foster care.

The Statewide Assessment notes that State policy complies with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in prioritizing the recognition of a child as being an Indian child and assures that the child's Tribe is contacted immediately when an Indian child is taken into custody.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are barriers to maintaining connections for children in foster care when a child is unable to remain in his or her community due to a lack of foster homes or service resources within the community.

Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient 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 36 (90 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.

Item 15 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	7	9	7	23	64
Area Needing Improvement	2	8	3	13	36
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	17	10	36	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	1	3	0	4	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	78%	53%	70%		

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

- The child was placed with relatives (12 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable (11 cases).

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 13 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (13 cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (11 cases).

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 64 percent of applicable 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 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS policy requires caseworkers to complete a diligent search for any possible adult family member within the third degree of consanguinity to the child and also requires that priority must be given to family members as potential placement resources for children who are removed from their homes. The Statewide Assessment notes that the agency has both a Diligent Search Process and a Relative Placement Decisions Protocol, and both of these documents focus on the identification, location, and contact of relatives regarding their interest in providing a temporary or permanent placement for a child prior to or when the child is placed in substitute care. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the State provided training for caseworkers on the importance of relative placement and searching for relatives.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that identified family members are assessed for appropriateness in much the same manner as regular family foster care providers using SAFE.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data for State FY 2008 showed that 25.81 percent of children in foster care were in relative placements. The Statewide Assessment also reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 15 was rated as a Strength in 91.5 percent of 29 applicable cases reviewed. Stakeholders responding to the 2009 survey provided the following responses:

- 87.9 percent of caseworkers and supervisors surveyed said that in a majority of cases caseworkers gave preference to relative caregivers, when appropriate.
- 61 percent of caseworkers and supervisors surveyed said that in a majority of cases diligent searches for the absent birth parent are conducted.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Although some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR in Clark County and Washoe County indicated that caseworkers routinely collect information about relatives, these stakeholders noted that relative searches do not continue consistently throughout the life of the case.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 23 (57.5 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.

Item 16 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	1	3	5	9	39
Area Needing Improvement	3	11	0	14	61
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	14	5	23	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	6	5	17	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	25%	21%	100%		

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in nine cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother (10 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father (nine cases).

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

Efforts Made	With Mother	With Father
Encouraging the parent's participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	14 (61%)	5 (33%)
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments	9 (39%)	4 (27%)
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	8 (35%)	2 (13%)
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them	5 (22%)	3 (20%)
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	1 (4%)	0
Total Applicable Cases	23	15

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 39 percent of the applicable 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, although the State does not have a specific statute that addresses the parent-child relationship, several practices support the importance of maintaining and strengthening the parent-child relationship. These practices include the following:

- State policy requires diligent searches for noncustodial parents.
- Caseworker training includes a component on encouraging and promoting the parent-child relationship while the child is in foster care.
- Washoe County has practices that encourage parental involvement in all children's medical, dental, mental health, and educational appointments.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 16 was rated as a Strength in 91.2 percent of 32 applicable cases reviewed. Further, the Statewide Assessment states that parents may not be able to participate in many of the child's medical, school, or therapeutic activities due to a lack of transportation.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The number of stakeholder comments on this item during the onsite CFSR was not sufficient to include.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

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					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	4	5	9	18	29.0
Partially Achieved	7	12	6	25	40.3
Not Achieved	7	9	3	19	30.6
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Substantially Achieved by Site	22%	19%	50%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 29.0 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 13 (32.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases and 15 (3 percent) of the 22 in-home services cases.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to assess children and families for services and provide necessary services.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to involve parents and children in the case planning process.

- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to establish sufficient face-to-face contact between agency caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads.

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

- Developed and implemented several assessment tools to aid in assessing children and family needs appropriately, including the Assessment Process Policy and Practice Guidelines, NIA, Safety Assessment, and Risk Assessment
- Implemented training modules with instruction on family assessment and collaborative case planning
- Developed and implemented a standardized policy and practice guidelines for caseworker visits and developed the Case Planning Process and the Caseworker Contact with Children, Parents, and Caregivers Protocol
- Developed training and policy to promote CFT training and facilitation
- Created a consumer satisfaction survey for all foster parents to support retention

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 X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 62 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.

Item 17 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	7	7	9	23	37
Area Needing Improvement	11	19	9	39	63
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	39%	27%	50%		

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 15 (37.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases and 8 (36 percent) of the 22 in-home services cases. Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 23 cases when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met.

Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 39 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was an inadequate assessment of children's needs (19 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of mothers' needs (12 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of fathers' needs (14 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of foster parents' needs (11 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address children's needs (18 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address mothers' needs (18 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address fathers' needs (15 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address foster parents' needs (11 cases).

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

Target Person for Needs Assessment and Services	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable	Yes	Applicable
Child's needs assessed and met	29 (72.5%)	40	13 (59%)	22
Mother's needs assessed and met	16 (62%)	26	13 (62%)	21
Father's needs assessed and met	10 (56%)	18	9 (56%)	16
Foster parents' needs assessed and met	25 (68%)	37	NA	NA

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 37 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, all cases open for services must have a written collaborative case plan, based on the needs identified in the Safety and Risk Assessments, that defines the overall goals of the case and the proposed step-by-step actions for all parties to take to reach the goals within a specified time period. The Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers use the NIA, Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, Case Planning Policy, and DR policy to conduct assessments of the strengths and needs of families in the child welfare system. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers use the CFT to develop case plans for families that are based on strengths and focus on solutions.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR item 17 was rated as a Strength in 85.3 percent of 57 applicable cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

A few Washoe County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSSR expressed the opinion that services are included in case plans based on the results of needs assessments conducted by caseworkers.

Carson City stakeholders expressed different opinions with regard to whether the needs of foster parents are assessed and met. Some Carson City stakeholders suggested that the child welfare agency conducts an assessment of the needs of foster parents; however, others said that the agency did not do this routinely.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable for 57 (92 percent) of the 62 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.

Item 18 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	6	7	12	25	44
Area Needing Improvement	11	17	4	32	56
Total Applicable Cases	17	24	16	57	
Not Applicable Cases	1	2	2	5	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	35%	29%	75%		

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 18 (51 percent) of the 35 applicable foster care cases and 7 (32 percent) of the 22 in-home services cases.

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 25 cases when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had participated actively 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 in 32 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process.

Specific information about involving mothers, fathers, and children in case planning is shown in the table below.

Person Involved in Case Planning	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable Cases	Yes	Applicable Cases
Mother involved in case planning?	17 (63%)	27	13 (62%)	21
Father involved in case planning?	11 (58%)	19	9 (56%)	16
Children involved in case planning?	15 (68%)	22	8 (42%)	19

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 44 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute encourages the participation of parents in the case planning process and requires the engagement of the child's family throughout the planning process. The Statewide Assessment reports that usually the case plan is developed by the CFT, which is a team comprised of family members, friends, foster parents, legal custodians, community specialists, and other interested people identified by the family.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following practices as promoting the involvement of parents and children in case planning:

- Policy requires that a CFT must be convened, and an initial permanency case plan must be finalized and signed by the parents within 45 days after a child's removal from the home.
- Policy requires that a youth must be actively involved in his or her IL planning.
- The Diligent Search Policy requires caseworkers to identify noncustodial parents, in addition to maternal and paternal relatives, so that they can be involved in case planning.
- Washoe County uses Family Solutions Team meetings, held within 72 hours of an initial child protection investigation, to develop a safe plan collaboratively with the family.
- The Rural Region uses video and telephone conferencing to facilitate family involvement in case planning.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 18 was rated as a Strength in 81.6 percent of 55 applicable cases reviewed. Stakeholders responding to the 2009 survey indicated the following information:

- 77.8 percent of caseworker and supervisor respondents indicated that in the majority of cases they develop the case plan jointly with parents, and 45.4 percent agreed that the child is included when age-appropriate.

- 87.5 percent of youth respondents indicated that they participated in developing their IL plan.
- 80 percent of youth respondents said that they had a voice in determining their permanency goal.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that it is a challenge to schedule the CFT and that caseworkers' skill levels vary in engaging families in case planning activities, particularly when families are resistant.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCFS caseworkers generally are effective in engaging parents and youth in case planning. Several stakeholders indicated that the CFT process facilitates the engagement of families in case planning but that it is not held consistently. In addition, a few stakeholders indicated that older youth generally are not involved in case planning.

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

Item 19. Caseworker visits with child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 19 was applicable for all 62 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 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	6	16	12	34	55
Area Needing Improvement	12	10	6	28	45
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	33%	62%	67%		

Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 26 (65 percent) of the 40 foster care cases and 8 (36 percent) of the 22 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 34 cases 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 they did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (16 cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits with children was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur, they focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (four 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 (eight cases).

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

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)	In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)
Visits occurred at least once a week	3 (7.5%)	4 (18%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	7 (17.5%)	2 (9%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	21 (52.5%)	5 (23%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	9 (22.5%)	11 (50%)
There were no visits during the period under review	0	0
Total Cases	40	22

The data indicate that caseworkers visited with children at least once per month in 77.5 percent of the foster care cases and 50 percent of the in-home services cases.

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 55 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that caseworkers visit with children in foster care and with children in in-home services cases every calendar month. The Statewide Assessment reports that caseworkers must spend at least a portion of each visit alone with the child and that for cases in which the child is in a foster care placement, the contact must take place in the child's residence at least 51 percent of the time. The Statewide Assessment notes that caseworker visits with children are captured in UNITY and monitored monthly in the Caseworker Contact Report. The Statewide Assessment indicates that Clark County requires caseworkers to have contact with children on a biweekly basis for in-home cases and that Washoe County Drug Court requires caseworkers to have contact with children at least twice per month.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 19 was rated as a Strength in 81.9 percent of 58 applicable cases reviewed. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that the Statewide Monthly Caseworker Contact Report shows that caseworkers met the monthly contact goal in 67 percent of the cases in May 2007 and in 80.93 percent of the cases in May 2009.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the requirement pertaining to frequency of visitation is not always met due to high caseload size, high turnover of caseworkers in Clark County, and the long distances caseworkers must travel in the Rural Region.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the frequency of caseworker visits with children. State-level and Clark County stakeholders suggested that caseworkers visit with children at least once per month in some cases, but less frequently in other cases. Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders indicated that in those sites, caseworkers visit monthly with children.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 50 (81 percent) of the 62 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.

Item 20 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	7	6	9	22	44
Area Needing Improvement	7	16	5	28	56
Total Applicable Cases	14	22	14	50	
Not Applicable Cases	4	4	4	12	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	50%	27%	64%		

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 50 percent (14 cases) of the 28 applicable foster care cases and 36 percent (8 cases) of the 22 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 22 cases when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient

frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency (18 cases)
- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient quality (13 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency (18 cases)
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient quality (seven cases).

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

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	0	1 (6%)	4 (19%)	2 (12.5%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	6 (22%)	4 (22%)	4 (19%)	1 (6%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	11 (41%)	4 (22%)	4 (19%)	3 (19%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (26%)	2 (11%)	6 (29%)	7 (44%)
There were no visits during the period under review	3 (11%)	7 (39%)	3 (14%)	3 (19%)
Total Applicable Cases	27	18	21	16

The data indicate that caseworkers visited at least once per month with mothers in 63 percent of the applicable foster care cases and 57 percent of the applicable in-home services cases; caseworkers visited at least once per month with fathers in 50 percent of the applicable foster care cases and 37.5 percent of the applicable in-home services cases.

Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 44 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that caseworker visits with parents in foster care and in-home services cases must focus on case planning, service delivery, safety, family strengths, needs of the child and family, family progress, and identification of resources and services the family needs in order to achieve case plan goals. The Statewide Assessment reports that caseworkers must spend at least a portion of each visit alone with the parent. The Statewide Assessment notes that Clark County requires more frequent face-to-face contact with parents. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that Washoe County Drug Court requires that caseworkers have at least two face-to-face contacts with parents per month.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 20 was rated as a Strength in 79.7 percent of 50 applicable cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges the following barriers to sufficient caseworker visitation with parents:

- Caseworker caseloads are high across the State, and there is a high rate of turnover in the caseworker position.
- In the Rural Region it is a challenge to meet visitation requirements due to the long distances caseworkers must travel.
- In Clark County it is a challenge to engage noncompliant parents in case planning and conduct high-quality contacts with parents who are noncompliant.

Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient substantive comments from stakeholders regarding this item during the onsite CFSR.

Well-Being Outcome 2

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	12	18	9	39	95.1
Not Achieved	1	1	0	2	4.9
Total Applicable Cases	13	19	9	41	
Not Applicable Cases	5	7	9	21	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Substantially Achieved by Site	92%	95%	100%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Nevada is in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 95.1 percent of the cases. This percentage is greater than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 97 percent (31 cases) of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 89 percent (8 cases) of the 9 applicable in-home services cases.

Nevada was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2004 review was that the agency was not consistently addressing children's education-related needs even when there was evidence indicating that some type of intervention was warranted.

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

- Implemented statewide policy and developed a comprehensive assessment process and educational records checklist
- Developed the Program of School Choice for Children in Foster Care
- Implemented standardized policy for caseworker visits with the child to ensure that the child's educational needs are met

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 single item assessed under Well-Being Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 41 (66 percent) of the 62 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.

Item 21 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	12	18	9	39	95
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	0	2	5
Total Applicable Cases	13	19	9	41	
Not Applicable	5	7	9	21	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	92%	95%	100%		

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 39 cases when reviewers determined that the child's educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child's educational needs were not assessed (two cases).
- The child had identified educational needs that were not addressed (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 95 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is equal to the 95 percent required for a rating of 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 an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute and policy require that a report must be made in writing by the child welfare agency concerning the child's record in school and that the agency must address the educational needs of children in custody. The Statewide Assessment reports that the Program of School Choice for Children in Foster Care permits children in foster care to enroll in a public school other than the school the child is zoned to attend to allow the child to maintain connections with his or her original community and school. The Statewide Assessment notes that the case plan for foster care and in-home cases must include information regarding the child's school and achievement level and that the NIA includes an assessment of educational needs. The Statewide Assessment indicates that Washoe County has an interagency protocol with the School Superintendent's Office to jointly provide training to school and agency staff members on meeting the educational needs of children in foster care and to fund an educational liaison who works with the Family Court, school district, foster parents, and agency staff when issues arise.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 21 was rated as a Strength in 85.3 percent of 33 applicable cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that throughout the State there is a lack of resources and qualified professionals to assess the children's educational needs, which results in long waiting lists for obtaining educational assessments. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that it is a challenge to collect educational records from the school district, foster parents, and biological parents.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Clark and Washoe County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that children in foster care have an educational liaison who manages educational issues with the school.

However, various stakeholders identified the following barriers to the agencies' ability to meet the educational needs of children in foster care:

- Many children do not have the opportunity to continue to attend the same school when they are removed from home due in part to a lack of transportation, said State-level, Carson City, Clark County, and Washoe County stakeholders.
- For children in foster care, the graduation rate is low, the dropout rate is high, and children fall behind in school, said State-level, Carson City, and Clark County stakeholders.
- Although some Washoe County stakeholders noted that tutoring is provided to children in foster care, some State-level stakeholders noted that tutoring is not provided routinely.

Well-Being Outcome 3

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	10	14	17	41	69.5
Partially Achieved	1	7	0	8	13.6
Not Achieved	5	5	0	10	16.9
Total Applicable Cases	16	26	17	59	
Not Applicable Cases	2	0	1	3	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Substantially Achieved by Site	62.5%	54%	100%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 69.5 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 29 (72.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases and 12 (63 percent) of the 19 applicable in-home services cases.

Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The agency was not consistently effective in meeting children's physical and mental health needs.
- There was a lack of physical and mental health service providers willing to accept Medicaid.

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

- Revised policy and issued an instructional MOU to ensure that physical health is assessed for all children placed in foster care
- Developed a standardized policy and protocol for documenting the medical services received by foster children
- Developed an MOU with the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services (MHDS) to support children's mental health needs

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 51 (82 percent) of the 62 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 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.

Item 22	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	18	16	42	82
Area Needing Improvement	4	5	0	9	18
Total Applicable Cases	12	23	16	51	
Not Applicable Cases	6	3	2	11	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	67%	78%	100%		

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 34 (85 percent) of the 40 foster care cases and 8 (73 percent) of 11 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 42 cases 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 in nine cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child's physical health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (six cases).
- The child's dental health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (five cases).

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 82 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children's physical health needs. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires that the case plan must include plans for the coordination and provision of services to address children's physical health. Service needs are to be identified using the Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment protocols. The Statewide Assessment notes that State policy requires that all children under the age of 3 who are involved in a substantiated case of abuse or neglect must be referred to an Early Intervention Program for an assessment of developmental issues.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following factors as facilitating the ability of DCFS to provide physical and dental health services to children:

- DCFS has a collaborative relationship with Medicaid to improve access to services for children in the child welfare system and increase the number of participating dentists.
- The Clark County Medical Case Management Unit creates a Medical Passport packet for each child entering a new placement.
- Clark County DCFS provides a full-time medical clinic for children in the child welfare system.
- Washoe County DCFS employs a full-time pediatrician and nurse to conduct assessments, monitor medical care, and participate in case planning activities.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 22 was rated as a Strength in 78.9 percent of 35 applicable cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are not enough medical professionals, particularly specialists such as pediatric neurologists, oncology specialists, and endocrinologists, who are willing to accept Medicaid.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that medical and dental assessments and services are provided to children appropriately. However, some State-level and Clark County stakeholders indicated that there are delays in the provision of medical and dental services due to the lack of a sufficient number of doctors and dentists in the State who will accept Medicaid.

Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 47 (76 percent) of the 62 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 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 Ratings	Carson City	Clark County	Washoe County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	12	11	31	66
Area Needing Improvement	6	10	0	16	34
Total Applicable Cases	14	22	11	47	
Not Applicable Cases	4	4	7	15	
Total Cases	18	26	18	62	
Strength by Site	57%	55%	100%		

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 22 (71 percent) of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 9 (56 percent) of the 16 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 31 cases when reviewers determined that children's mental health needs were appropriately assessed and the identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were not assessed nor addressed (15 cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but services were not provided to address identified needs (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 66 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 Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires that the case plan must include plans for the coordination and provision of services to children, including services to support their mental and behavioral health. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following factors as facilitating the ability of DCFS to provide mental and behavioral health services to children:

- DCFS has a collaboration with Medicaid to improve access to and quality of mental and behavioral health services.
- A Mental Health Consortium was established in Clark County, Washoe County, and the Rural Region to determine how well the current system is meeting mental health needs and to develop an annual plan on how needs can be better met.
- MHDS provides services to severely emotionally disabled children and adolescents in rural areas through a network of clinics.
- A community-based clinic in Clark County and Washoe County provides early childhood services, outpatient services, case management, day treatment, residential treatment, and crisis residential services.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2008 QICR, item 23 was rated as a Strength in 84.8 percent of 27 applicable cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges the following barriers to meeting the mental and behavioral health needs of children:

- The number of clinical professionals who are willing to accept Medicaid is insufficient to meet the State's needs.
- There are insufficient resources to meet mental health needs including a lack of community-based services beyond hospitalizations and outpatient care, long waiting lists for residential treatment centers and intensive outpatient care, and a lack of inpatient substance abuse treatment.
- In Clark County, there is a waiting list for the assessment of mental or behavioral health-care needs for children under 6 years of age from DCFS Early Childhood Mental Health Services.
- Rural Region clinical services are not available throughout the region.
- There is a lack of continuity and communication among entities (service providers, DCFS, residential treatment centers) and unclear guidelines as to which entity is responsible for a child's treatment.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is not consistent in ensuring that children in the child welfare system receive the mental health assessments and services they need. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that insufficient services and waiting lists for services exist statewide in the following areas: mental health assessment and treatment, counseling, inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment, domestic violence treatment, psychiatric treatment for children, and placements for children who need residential treatment.

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

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

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 issues addressed in the Program Improvement Plan and the strategies for assessing those concerns are noted.

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

Status of Statewide Information System

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. Nevada was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 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 item 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 X Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although Nevada is operating UNITY, a statewide information system that contains the required elements, information from stakeholder interviews indicates that this system does not reflect the current goal, placement, or legal status for every child in foster care. In addition, information from the Statewide Assessment in item 25 indicates that data derived from UNITY regarding case plans are not reliable due in part to difficulty ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of data entry. This item was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

In addition, during the onsite CFSR, reviewers determined that in a few cases identified through UNITY as in-home services cases, children were actually in foster care placements. As a result, there is concern that the State does not have the ability to identify the goals and legal status for every child in foster care because some children are not identified accurately in UNITY as being in foster care.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, UNITY, the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, includes up-to-date information on basic demographics, placement, goals, location, legal status, and title IV-E eligibility for children in foster care and in-

home cases. The Statewide Assessment notes that UNITY allows staff to record detailed case and child-specific information for both foster care and in-home cases from intake through the investigation process, the process of opening a case for services, and to the point of case closure. The Statewide Assessment indicates that UNITY is available to State staff members, agency staff members in the three regions, the DR unit, and the Attorney General's Office.

The Statewide Assessment notes that UNITY generates reports for intake, management, eligibility, case and resource management, the courts, financial management, and administration. The Statewide Assessment also notes that child welfare agencies use UNITY reports for planning, supervision, and to monitor conformity with Federal and State policy and outcome measures.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several State-level, Carson City, and Clark County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that information on permanency goals, placement, and legal status of children, particularly in adoption cases, is not entered into UNITY accurately or in a timely manner. These stakeholders also noted that because UNITY is so difficult to navigate, it is difficult to correct data that have been entered incorrectly.

Despite these concerns, some stakeholders suggested that UNITY can be used to generate reports on the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care, as well as other types of management reports.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

Status of Case Review System

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- Case plans were not routinely developed jointly with the child's parents, were too generic, did not address the needs of the child, and were not completed in a timely manner.
- There were excessive delays in filing TPR petitions in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.
- There was no statewide, consistent process to notify foster or pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers of review or hearing dates or to afford them an opportunity to be heard at these hearings.

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

- The Case Planning Policy
- Training in CFT meeting facilitation
- Policies to standardize and reinforce timely filing of TPR petitions
- Policies to standardize and reinforce notification of hearings to caregivers
- Comprehensive standards for child welfare court cases
- Collaborations to improve legal representation for children

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan 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. Although the State provides a process to ensure that each child has a written case plan, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that, based on data from UNITY, only 53 percent of children had case plans. In addition, during the onsite CFSR, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve mothers in case planning in 62.5 percent of the applicable cases and fathers in case planning in 57 percent of the applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that each child must have a written case plan, including children in cases opened for services, that is developed through a process of engaging the family and that parents must sign the case plan. The Statewide Assessment reports that parents must be encouraged to participate in the development of a written agreement for services and engage in a set of processes for receiving services. The Statewide Assessment reports that parent engagement occurs during the

CFT meeting and process. During the CFT meeting, participants make decisions about desired outcomes and determine what activities should be performed, by whom, how, and when. The Statewide Assessment indicates that if a parent is not available or refuses to participate in case planning, the CFT still must be formed, and every effort must be made to continue to involve the parents in case planning. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the DCFS Rural Region uses video or telephone conferencing to facilitate the participation of absent parents in case planning and that caseworkers schedule CFT meetings around parents' schedules to ensure the participation of parents. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that the CFT reviews the case plan every 90 days or when a significant event has occurred that requires modification to the plan.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the most challenging aspect of engaging families and children in case planning is the difficulty of getting all CFT members together quickly, given participants' busy schedules.

The Statewide Assessment notes that a compilation of UNITY reports shows that as of June 2008, approximately 53 percent of children had case plans. The Statewide Assessment indicates that this percentage is not reliable and that a survey of stakeholders conducted in 2009 found that 86.7 percent of judges and 78.7 percent of caseworkers and supervisors reported that case plans are submitted within 60 days of removal.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that a case plan is developed for each child. Most stakeholders also indicated that the child welfare agencies generally are effective in engaging parents in case planning, primarily through the use of the CFT and, in Washoe County, the Family Solutions Team meetings. However, a few stakeholders reported that the CFT is not held consistently and that parents are not involved in case planning consistently.

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 the State provides a process for the periodic review by a court of the status of each child in foster care every 6 months, and often more frequently. This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires the court to conduct a hearing at least semiannually (and within 90 days after a request by a party to any of the prior hearings) to evaluate and assess progress in carrying out case plan requirements and achieving case plan goals for the child in foster care. The Statewide Assessment notes that most courts schedule the semiannual review at the dispositional hearing to ensure that it occurs within 6 months and often within 3 months. The Statewide Assessment notes that the process for tracking hearings differs across localities.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Washoe County has a Model Court Program to address ways to improve court hearings, troubleshoot problems, and develop local rules. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that Washoe County has an agreement with the court that, in lieu of a court hearing, the agency is to conduct a formal case plan review meeting within 90 to 120 days from the date of the child's removal from the home.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that periodic hearings are held in court to review the status of children in foster care at least every 6 months and often more frequently. Some stakeholders indicated that although continuances occur, they are rare and usually delay the hearing for not more than 2 weeks. Some stakeholders also indicated that the periodic review hearings address issues pertaining to progress in achieving case goals.

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 the State provides a process to ensure that each child in foster care has a permanency hearing in court no later than 12 months after the child's removal from home and that permanency hearings are held in a timely manner and address the permanent plan for the child. This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute mandates that the court shall hold a hearing concerning the permanent placement of a child no later than 12 months after the initial removal of the child from his or her home and annually thereafter, or within 30 days of a finding that the child welfare agency is not required to make reasonable efforts toward reunification. The Statewide Assessment reports that State policy requires agencies to finalize permanency plans no later than 12 months after the date of the child's removal from the home. The Statewide Assessment notes that most courts schedule the permanency review hearing at the 6-month periodic review to ensure that it occurs within 12 months and that compliance with the requirement to provide permanency hearings is tracked using Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System reports.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are held in a timely manner and that these hearings address the permanent plan for the child. Several stakeholders noted that permanency hearings are held as frequently as every 3 months (every 6 months in rural areas) and that permanency issues are addressed at periodic hearings as well as permanency hearings. Some Carson City and Clark County stakeholders expressed concern that permanency hearings are not effective at moving children toward permanency.

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. Although the State has a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA, information from stakeholder interviews indicates that TPR petitions are not filed consistently in a timely manner throughout the State. In addition, during the onsite CFSR, case reviewers determined that ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 84 percent of applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy indicates that if the child has been placed outside of his or her home for 14 months of any 20 consecutive months, the best interests of the child must be presumed to be served by TPR. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that the State has developed a report to identify children who have been in out-of-home care for 14 of the last 21 months.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that compelling reasons for not filing for TPR must be detailed in the case plan and reported to the court and that within 60 days of the court's determination that reasonable efforts are not required, the agency must file for TPR, unless there are compelling reasons not to file TPR. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that referral to TPR is initiated when adoption is identified as the permanency goal for the child.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the State's CIP has conducted training for judges and attorneys about ASFA regulations.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various Carson City and Clark County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR identified the following reasons for delays in the timely filing of petitions for TPR:

- A backlog in the District Attorney's office resulting in delays in filing for TPR (Clark County stakeholders)
- A reluctance to file TPR before the court has ordered a goal of adoption and ordered the agency to file for TPR (Carson City stakeholders)

Despite these concerns, most Washoe County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that TPR petitions in that region are filed in a timely manner.

Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that compelling reasons not to file TPR generally are documented in the case file and presented to the court during the permanency hearing. Stakeholders indicated that the extension of reunification efforts when parents are pursuing case plan requirements is considered a compelling reason not to pursue TPR.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State provides a process for foster parents and other caregivers to be notified of reviews and hearings, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates inconsistencies across the State in the degree to which notice is provided to foster parents. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the DCFS court notification policy is to ensure that foster parents and other caregivers are given the right to be heard in review hearings with respect to children in their care and to offer information about the services received by the child and family. The Statewide Assessment reports that, although internal policies and procedures regarding court notification requirements and protocols may differ among the State's three child welfare agencies, formal written notification to the caregivers must be supplied. The Statewide Assessment notes that the *Nevada Bench Book for Child Abuse and Neglect Cases and Related Matters* includes instructions for providing notice to caregivers: "At the time of a preliminary protective hearing and all subsequent hearings, a notice of time and place of hearing must be given to a parent or other persons responsible for the child's welfare by personal service of a written notice, orally, or by posting a written notice on the door of the parent's residence." In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that it is the responsibility of the caseworker to provide notice to foster parents of hearings.

Despite these policies, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that State review data indicate inconsistencies across the State in the degree to which notice is provided to foster parents. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that, in a survey of 226 foster parent respondents conducted between May 2005 and January 2006, 49.2 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the court system and the child welfare agency inform the caregiver about court dates for foster children in plenty of time.

In addition to survey findings, the Statewide Assessment also notes that caseworkers do not post information routinely on notification in UNITY. The Statewide Assessment notes that obstacles remain in promoting the actual participation of foster parents and other caregivers in the court hearing process.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that notice sometimes is received too late to allow the caregiver to attend the hearing.

Despite these comments, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that foster parents receive notice of hearings consistently via certified mail from the agency and that they have the opportunity to be heard.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

Status of Quality Assurance System

Nevada is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance (QA) System. Nevada was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The State had not developed and implemented procedures to ensure that children in foster care were provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.
- The State did not have a comprehensive QA system that measures program Strengths and Areas Needing Improvement.

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

- Revised and implemented standards to improve the quality improvement (QI) supervisory review process
- Implemented a statutory change that granted State licensing authority over all emergency shelters
- Formalized a comprehensive QICR system to evaluate the quality of services and identify and analyze the strengths and needs of the service delivery system
- Developed and implemented a case review system
- Convened a QI group to develop and monitor the QI and QA processes

The State met its goals for this systemic factor 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 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 the State has standards, protocols, and guidelines in place related to foster home licensing, child visitation, and service contracts. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State has implemented standards for service providers and services in child protection, foster care, and foster care licensure of homes and residential facilities. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the following factors ensure that children are provided quality services to protect their safety and health:

- SAFE provides for child and family assessment to determine family needs.
- The case planning policy provides guidelines for service assessment and delivery, including concurrent planning.
- Staff members of child welfare agencies and child care facilities must meet personnel requirements for appropriate licensure and training, including supervision and regular evaluation of work and performance.
- To promote the safety and health of the child, limitations are imposed on the authority of foster parents to administer appropriate discipline and supervision.
- Caseworkers monitor foster homes during monthly visitation and work with licensing agencies to cross-report any activity that may affect the safety or health of the child in placement.
- Regulations outline the number of children that may be placed in a foster care or group home and the physical requirements for the home or facility.
- A child welfare specialist from the Legislative Counsel Bureau has the authority to visit any child placement facility to review and assess operations and case records, and to conduct interviews with children and staff as needed.
- The Grants Management Unit monitors contract performance of service providers.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Clark County Child Haven facility is licensed as a child care institution and monitored for compliance with State standards.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the safety of children in foster care is protected by standards, protocols, and guidelines for foster home licensing, child visitation, service contracts, and casework practice. Some Clark County stakeholders indicated that new policies recently implemented are designed to improve service quality and the standards of service provision.

In addition, State-level and Washoe County stakeholders indicated that an element of child fatality reviews is to ensure the effectiveness of safety protocols.

Although some Washoe County stakeholders indicated that services are of a high quality, some Clark County and State-level stakeholders indicated that the services available are not consistently of high quality. State-level stakeholders noted that there are procedures in place for evaluating contracts in relation to compliance with performance standards and withdrawing contracts with service providers that do not provide high-quality services.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength. Nevada is operating an identifiable QA system based on the CFSR tool and methodology and results in an Agency Improvement Plan (AIP) for each child welfare agency that is monitored by the Decision Making Group (DMG) at the State level. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Although the State is operating an identifiable QA system, the findings of the 2009 CFSR raise questions regarding the State's QA process. Specifically, the State's ratings for many individual items were considerably higher than the ratings of the Federal 2009 CFSR case review findings. As a result, there is a concern that the State's QICR system may not be effective in identifying the strengths and needs of the service delivery system, and therefore may not result in an accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of program improvement measures.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires audit teams to evaluate and determine whether all child welfare services provided throughout the State are in compliance with Federal and State statute, regulations, and policies and to develop corrective actions plans. The Statewide Assessment reports that the State has developed a QICR, which is based on the CFSR tool and methodology and is conducted by the Family Programs Office. The QICR is conducted quarterly, ensuring that each county is reviewed at least once per year.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the QICR results in the development of an AIP for each child welfare agency that is monitored by the DMG at the State level. The Statewide Assessment notes that the State's three child welfare agencies have QI staff dedicated to the QI process, and that these 11 members are part of the QI Committee, which meets quarterly to evaluate program performance and measures. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that the QI Supervisory Review Tool and protocol require the continuous review of a sample case from each caseworker's caseload on a regular basis.

The Statewide Assessment notes that UNITY produces monthly online reports for program areas including adoptions, foster care, CPS, eligibility, juvenile justice, and licensing. These monthly reports monitor caseload size, adoption subsidies, child fatalities, open CPS investigations, and other issues.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported the following QI activities:

- The State conducts annual reviews in each jurisdiction that are modeled on the Federal CFSR.
- The State-level reviews result in an AIP developed by each child welfare agency that is reviewed monthly by the State-level DMG.
- Supervisory case reviews are conducted at the local level to monitor casework practice.
- Management reports from UNITY are reviewed regularly to monitor key case contacts and milestones.

Some State-level stakeholders indicated that the Children’s Justice Act (CJA) task force and the Citizen Review Panel (CRP) conduct QI reviews of specific elements of the child welfare system statewide.

Despite these positive comments, several stakeholders indicated that UNITY and other data reports are not useful in tracking and improving the quality of services. Some State-level stakeholders indicated that the findings of QI activities do not result in changes to the caseworker training curriculum. In addition, some Carson City, Clark County, and Washoe County stakeholders indicated that, although the results of supervisory case reviews and other data are shared with State-level policymakers, no feedback is provided to the localities on how these reviews are used to inform policy or monitor improvement.

IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

Status of Staff and Provider Training

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. Nevada was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 CFSR and was not required to address this 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 Nevada provides a comprehensive New Worker Core Training program, information from the stakeholder interviews indicates that in some areas of the State, this training is not adequate to provide caseworkers with the skills to support the goals and objectives of the CFSP, including conducting investigations, case-level documentation, and ICWA issues. This item was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State provides a new, full-staff development and training program that includes a minimum of 40 hours of training related to the principles and practices of child welfare services. The Statewide Assessment notes that the New Worker Core Training curriculum has been in operation since January 2009 and that a minimum of eight sessions of the 10-week training curriculum are offered per year. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the training program, which is provided by the Nevada Partnership for Training, consists of classroom instruction, individual assignments, and on-the-job training. The Statewide Assessment indicates that evaluation components have been established throughout the process to assess not only the competency development of each individual staff member but also the effectiveness of the curriculum as a whole in preparing caseworkers.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the Rural Region requires all caseworkers to be licensed by the Board of Examiners for Social Work prior to employment but that, although Washoe County gives preference to B.S.W. and M.S.W. candidates, it does not require caseworkers to possess a Nevada Social Worker License.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that, although State policy requires the provision of training for caseworkers prior to assigning a caseload, Clark County is the only agency to maintain this standard.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Among the questions asked by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether initial training is provided for new caseworkers and new supervisors and whether that training prepares new caseworkers for the job.

With regard to whether initial training is provided for new caseworkers, stakeholders expressed the opinion that New Worker Core Training is provided to all new caseworkers on a timely basis. In addition, stakeholders indicated that training attendance is tracked and monitored at the agency level. Although Washoe County and Clark County stakeholders indicated that caseworkers are assigned

to a training unit initially and must complete training prior to receiving a caseload, Carson City stakeholders indicated that caseworkers in the Rural Region sometimes are assigned cases prior to the completion of training when there is an office with only one caseworker or when the new caseworker is experienced.

With regard to supervisory training, some Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders indicated that management training is provided for new supervisors.

With regard to whether initial training prepares new caseworkers for the job, stakeholders expressed different opinions. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that training prepares caseworkers for the job. However, others disagreed and suggested that more training was required in critical areas such as conducting investigations; substantiating child abuse and neglect allegations; case-level documentation; documentation for the court, the law, and court process; and ICWA issues. In addition, some stakeholders indicated that training provided is not of a high quality and does not prepare caseworkers to provide services.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that, although Nevada requires licensed social workers to complete continuing education requirements and maintain licensure, not all caseworkers are licensed social workers. The State does not have minimal ongoing training requirements for caseworkers who are not licensed social workers. In addition, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although some ongoing training is available to caseworkers in various parts of the State, not all caseworkers have the opportunity to access ongoing training. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires employees to be responsible for their basic professional training needs. Licensing regulations require licensed social workers to complete a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education every 2 years; however, not all caseworkers are licensed social workers. The Statewide Assessment reports that training needs are identified currently through the Training Management Team. The Statewide Assessment notes that DCFS is in the process of implementing significant changes to the training system and developing a training plan to include agency-specific and caseworker-specific components. The Statewide Assessment indicates the following ongoing training activities:

- Clark County caseworkers are assigned to specialized units that are trained accordingly in hotline, intake, CPS investigations, DR, permanency, and adoptions.

- Clark County supervisors instituted monthly supervisor learning labs.
- Washoe County provides supervisor training focused primarily on providing supervision regarding the interface between the Safety Assessment and the NIA.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that barriers to the provision of ongoing training include a lack of funding until State FY 2008. The Statewide Assessment also acknowledges that, although the State offers training via videoconferencing, caseworkers in rural offices have difficulty accessing sufficient training due to the long travel distances.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that child welfare agencies do not require ongoing training, although caseworkers who are licensed social workers are required to complete 30 hours of continuing education every 2 years to maintain their licenses with the licensing board. Some stakeholders indicated that although all Carson City caseworkers are licensed social workers, not all Washoe County or Clark County caseworkers are licensed social workers.

Some stakeholders indicated that specialty training is available to caseworkers but that caseload concerns reduce the ability of caseworkers to access ongoing training opportunities. In addition, Carson City and Clark County stakeholders indicated that caseworkers must arrange for and pay for continuing education.

Some stakeholders reported that there is no requirement for supervisory training, but Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders noted that supervisors have organized “paired” teams of supervisors across units to promote continuous learning.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that State licensing regulations require both initial and ongoing training for foster parents, relative caregivers, adoptive parents, and staff of child care facilities and that training must be completed prior to the placement of a child in the home. This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada’s 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires potential foster parents and child care facility employees to participate in mandatory training and ongoing annual training. The Statewide Assessment reports that the State’s three child welfare agencies use the Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) training curriculum.

The Statewide Assessment notes the following:

- Statute requires that family foster care providers, including kinship and adoptive homes, must receive a minimum of 8 hours of initial training and 4 hours annually thereafter.
- Regulation requires that foster homes must receive 20 hours of training prior to placement and 20 hours after placement.
- Regulation requires that treatment foster care providers must receive 40 hours of initial training and 20 hours annually.
- Regulation requires that foster group home employees must be provided training within 30 days of employment and 30 hours annually.
- Regulation requires that child care facility employees must receive 9 hours of training within 90 days of hire, plus 3 hours in child development and 3 hours in child care within 12 months of hire, followed by 15 hours annually.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that Clark County works with the Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association to provide advanced training opportunities for foster parents. Washoe County and the Rural Region work with the Sierra Association of Foster Families to provide support to foster parents through peer mentors, advanced training, and foster parent support groups.

The Statewide Assessment reports that 79.3 percent of 388 foster parent training participants surveyed in 2008 and the first quarter of 2009 reported that the training program was clear and understandable and 87.1 percent found the materials to be useful to them in their role as a caregiver. The Statewide Assessment also reports that a stakeholder survey conducted in 2009 shows that 86.7 percent of foster parents believed that the PRIDE training was excellent and 95.7 percent believe the information presented in the PRIDE training gave them the tools to be an effective foster parent or special needs adoptive parent.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there is a requirement for initial and ongoing training for foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of child care facilities. Several stakeholders indicated that the agency provides initial training and foster parent associations provide ongoing training statewide. Some State-level stakeholders indicated that training is provided for foster parents and caseworkers to attend jointly. Some Carson City stakeholders noted that the PRIDE training is complete and prepares foster parents for the challenges of parenting children in foster care. Some Clark County stakeholders noted that in that county a new training protocol was being implemented: Partnering for Safety and Permanency—Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP). Some Carson City stakeholders noted that in rural areas the agency offers flexible and condensed training to facilitate the completion of training where transportation is limited.

V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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

Status of Service Array and Resource Development

Nevada is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. Nevada also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2004 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2004 review:

- The State did not have in place a sufficient array of services that would enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable or that would help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency. Critical gaps in the service array were bilingual services (particularly Spanish services), mental health services, substance abuse services, and health and dental services (because many providers did not accept Medicaid).
- Many services were not available at all in rural areas.
- The State did not have a sufficient service array to ensure that workers were able to individualize services for children and families served by the agency.

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

- Developed a service array assessment in all three regions to identify areas for service enhancement
- Developed the Case Planning Policy and the Concurrent Planning Policy to enhance the individualization of services to children and families
- Focused on improving a collaborative relationship with community partners in Clark County to address gaps in services
- Identified strategies for funding family preservation and family support services

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

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 concerns were identified during the onsite CFSR about the accessibility of services (as indicated in item 36) and about caseworker practice with regard to assessing and meeting the service needs of children and families (as indicated in item 17), information in the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Nevada has an adequate array of key services in the State to meet the needs of children and families and has embarked upon an extensive service array assessment. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Clark County completed a Service Array Assessment and developed an extensive child and family data profile that resulted in findings that there are gaps in the availability of family preservation and family support services. The Statewide Assessment notes that the results of the assessment are tracked in an action plan through quarterly progress reports. In 2008, Washoe County initiated the service array assessment process to create and implement a resource and capacity development plan focused primarily on the three well-being outcomes of the Federal CFSR. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Rural Region will begin to assess the service array when Washoe County has completed its assessment.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following promising practices throughout the State:

- WIN is an intensive case management model to provide support to youth and families with complex needs.
- CFT meetings provide families and caseworkers with an opportunity for the cooperative development and monitoring of case plans.
- The DR program allows families to obtain needed linkages to services to enable children to remain home safely.
- Four chapters of Foster and Adopted Youth Together were initiated in Clark County.
- The Educational Voucher Program provides funds to youth to attend secondary educational or vocational training programs.
- The Regional Treatment Grant expanded methamphetamine abuse treatment options for mothers involved with the child welfare system.
- Four rural Family Resource Centers provide IL services to youth.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there is an adequate array of services available to address the needs of children and families that includes prevention, placement, reunification, adoption, mental health, and

treatment services. Some Washoe County stakeholders noted that the county has conducted a service array assessment to identify effective services (such as in-home family preservation services, Drug Court, and Project Wraparound) and to identify opportunities to develop additional services.

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 many key services are not accessible to families and children in all areas due to gaps in services and in transportation resources in some parts of the State, especially in rural areas. Key services noted to be insufficient to meet needs were in-home services, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, domestic violence treatment, foster homes, and post-adoption services. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS revised the allocation formula to align more closely with population distribution: 70 percent of resources are allocated to Clark County, 20 percent to Washoe County, and 10 percent to the Rural Region. The Statewide Assessment reports that the Clark County Service Array Assessment noted that stakeholders rated all of the top 10 services as having an accessibility rating of 70 percent or higher, including the following: case management services (94 percent), health-care services for children (93 percent), dental care services (89 percent), transportation assistance (83 percent), educational services (82 percent), emergency or case assistance (76 percent), and food assistance (70 percent).

The Statewide Assessment indicates that although the State is required to ensure that children and families receive the care and treatment services that they need, there is a lack of availability of a full range of services in the community to meet the identified needs of children and families. The Statewide Assessment reports that the following are insufficient to meet needs and often result either in long waiting lists for services or in children and families not receiving any services:

- Preventive in-home services for children at imminent risk of removal
- Timely investigations of maltreatment reports in rural areas
- Comprehensive risk assessments
- Substance abuse treatment services
- Mental health assessment and treatment services
- Post-adoption support services

The Statewide Assessment also reports the following findings of the regional service array needs assessment:

- Clark County identified a need for services in family preservation, homemaker services, substance abuse assessment and treatment, mental health assessment, domestic violence response, and home studies and social summaries.

- Washoe County identified a need for services in family counseling and substance abuse treatment.
- The Rural Region identified a need for services in mental health assessments and treatment, and in-home family preservation services.

In addition to service needs, the Statewide Assessment identified the following challenges with regard to ensuring that there are sufficient services to meet the needs of children and families:

- There are ongoing challenges in identifying, recruiting, and retaining qualified service providers in rural counties.
- Service resources in Clark County have not kept pace with the county's rapid population growth.
- Staffing shortages and high caseloads make it difficult for caseworkers to conduct effective assessments and ensure adequate access to services.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally does not have the capacity to provide services to meet the needs of children and families throughout the State. In addition, many stakeholders raised concerns about the lack of service providers willing to accept Medicaid and the general lack of transportation resources to assist children and families in accessing services, particularly in the Rural Region. In addition, various stakeholders identified the following services as insufficient to meet the needs of the children and families served by child welfare agencies:

- Residential treatment for children
- Post-adoption support services
- Health services
- Mental health assessment and treatment services, including psychiatric services for children
- In-patient and out-patient substance abuse treatment services
- Placement prevention and in-home family support services
- Domestic violence services
- Foster homes
- Housing

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 Nevada has the assessment and planning tools to identify individualized service needs to meet the unique needs of children and families, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State does not have the capacity to provide these services consistently to all or most families statewide due to the lack of accessibility of many of the key services in some parts of the State. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Case Planning Policy and the Concurrent Planning Policy both enhance the individualization of services to children and families. The Statewide Assessment notes that the CFT meeting allows for the individualization of services because it encourages families to be involved in decision-making about desired outcomes and service needs.

With regard to the capacity to individualize services for non-English speaking families, the Statewide Assessment reports that the Rural Region provides translation services through the use of the Language Line and Clark County provides an Interpreter's Office for translation services.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State's three child welfare agencies generally have the assessment and planning tools to individualize service plans to meet the unique needs of families. These stakeholders noted that families participate in the design of service plans through the CFT and that these service plans are individualized. Some Carson City and Washoe County stakeholders noted that individualization of services is enhanced in those areas due to the use of Spanish-speaking service providers, but there are not enough Spanish-speaking service providers to meet the needs of the population. In addition, some Washoe County stakeholders noted that in that county, individualization of services is enhanced by the use of flexible funding.

However, some Clark County stakeholders indicated that budgetary restrictions result in case plans that are built based on the services available rather than the needs of the family. A few Clark and Washoe County stakeholders indicated that, although service plans can be tailored to meet the needs of families, case plans reflect similar sets of services provided to all families.

VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Nevada is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Nevada also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2004 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. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State engages in ongoing consultation with key stakeholders in the development of the goals and objectives of the CFSP. This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS collaborates with a variety of entities in the process of developing the 5-year CFSP. External stakeholders provide information about program functioning, policy, practice, and protocol development through workgroups, focus groups, meetings, public presentations, and surveys and share resources that are used in program development and planning through these partnering relationships. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the DCFS website facilitates both the dissemination of the CFSP and coordination of stakeholder feedback regarding the CFSP. The Statewide Assessment reports that DCFS consults with organizations and representatives in the following fields: research, drug and alcohol abuse, health, mental health, education, domestic violence, juvenile courts, youth, foster family associations, Tribal interests, citizen review panels, and training. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Indian Child Welfare Steering Committee provides Tribal consultation on ICWA and child welfare concerns regarding Indian children. There are 27 Federally-recognized Tribes, bands, and colonies within the State of Nevada.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that they participate in the development of the CFSP through consortia, committees, and community boards and that DCFS policy-making is a transparent process. Various stakeholders identified the following key stakeholder groups that are represented in the DCFS planning process: CIP, CASA and the court, CRP, CJA, foster parents, Tribes, caseworkers, local agencies, community service providers, and educational institutions.

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. The State develops the APSR based on ongoing consultation with key stakeholders through consortia, advisory boards, committees, workgroups, and community boards. This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS is responsive to input from the community received on an ongoing basis in developing APSRs. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following advisory boards, committees, and workgroups that provide feedback to DCFS with regard to the goals and objectives of the CFSP and the APSR:

- Administrative Team to Review the Death of Children
- CIP
- CJA Task Force
- Clark County Department of Family Services
- Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
- CRPs
- Executive Committee to Review the Death of Children
- ICWA Steering Committee
- Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada
- Nevada Division of Child and Family Services—Rural Region
- Nevada Partnership for Training
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
- Sierra Association of Foster Families
- Washoe County Department of Social Services
- Youth Advisory Board

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in engaging in annual consultation in developing the APSR. Most stakeholders noted that they participate in the development of the APSR through standing consortia, committees, and community boards and that DCFS policy-making is a transparent process. However, some stakeholders indicated that DCFS does not solicit input into the development of the APSR.

Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same population

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that there are concerns at the State level regarding information sharing and coordination of services among State departments operating Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same populations, including programs operated by the Tribes. This item was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS is responsible for children's mental health, youth corrections, and child welfare services. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are global coordination concerns with regard to information sharing among large departments and stakeholders across the State.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in coordinating child welfare services with services supported by other Federal programs. Some State-level, Carson City, and Washoe County stakeholders noted that DCFS and the local child welfare agencies work with the following programs: Medicaid, juvenile justice, behavioral health, mental health, Tribal programs, and education. However, other State-level and Clark County stakeholders indicated that services are not coordinated with services provided by other programs, including Tribal programs, that serve the same population.

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

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

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

Nevada is in substantial conformity with this systemic factor. Nevada also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2004 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Status of 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. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are monitored regularly through licensing procedures that have been established in each of the State's three child welfare agencies. This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, standards for foster homes, adoptive homes, and child care institutions include requirements related to training, staff qualifications, maintenance of records, fire safety, space, health, food preparation, grounds, nutrition, and other safety factors. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, there are different entities and procedures pertaining to monitoring the standards for child care institutions and family foster homes. The Statewide Assessment reports that the Bureau of Services for Child Care, a State-level office, is responsible for monitoring child care institutions. State regulations require the Bureau's Licensing Surveyors to complete quarterly, semiannual, and annual inspections of facilities to ensure that child care institutions are in compliance with regulations.

With regard to foster family homes, the Statewide Assessment reports that the State's three child welfare agencies are responsible for licensing, monitoring, and conducting inspections of foster and adoptive homes to ensure compliance with State regulations. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the SAFE instrument is used as a standardized licensing home study tool by those three child welfare agencies.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the standards in place for foster family homes and child care institutions include background checks, home studies, safety checks, licensing, and oversight by caseworkers and licensing staff. Most stakeholders also noted that licenses for foster homes and institutions are renewed annually.

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. Although the State did not provide analysis or evaluation in the Statewide Assessment, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State's standards for foster family homes and child care institutions are applied equally to all entities receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds, including licensed relative foster family homes. In addition, the title IV-E Eligibility Review held in June 2008 found that cases reviewed were in compliance with all licensing requirements. This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment

According to the Statewide Assessment, all foster homes and child care institutions receiving title IV-E or title IV-B funds must meet the same licensure requirements. No distinction is made between relative and non-relative applicants. The Statewide Assessment reports that any complaints or concerns relating to the operation of family foster homes require prompt investigation. Family foster homes that do not comply with initial licensing requirements or do not maintain compliance as verified by annual inspections and license renewals will not receive title IV-E or title IV-B funds.

The Statewide Assessment notes that relative caregivers who wish to become licensed foster families must complete a minimum of 9 hours of PRIDE training prior to placement in Washoe County and the Rural Region, and 12 hours in Clark County.

The Statewide Assessment reports that 486 waivers were granted to 1,155 foster and group homes licensed during the 3-year period from 2006 to 2008. State regulations do not permit approvals to waive the criminal violations stipulated in ASFA. The Statewide Assessment describes the procedures used by the three child welfare agencies to grant waivers as follows:

- The Clark County Administrator may approve a waiver on a case-by-case basis for a specific requirement of the Nevada regulations with regard to background check results.
- In Washoe County only the director of the agency may approve a waiver to license an individual with a criminal history if it is demonstrated that the placement is in the child's best interests.
- In the Rural Region, approvals to waive negative results from criminal background checks are signed by the licensing supervisor with final approval by the social services manager prior to licensing a home.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that in the Rural Region, caseworkers have limited access to resources to conduct criminal background checks on relatives.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that standards for foster homes and child care institutions are applied to all licensed placements throughout the State. Stakeholders noted that relative caregivers who choose to become licensed foster parents must meet the same standards as nonrelative foster families; however, relative caregivers may complete an abbreviated training program and may receive a waiver of a nonsafety requirement such as the square footage requirement. In addition, some stakeholders noted that prior to the placement of any child in the home of a relative, caseworkers must

conduct an emergency criminal background check and home safety inspection. Some stakeholders indicated that children are never placed in nonrelative, nonlicensed 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 Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength. Although the State did not provide analysis or evaluation in the Statewide Assessment, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State completes criminal background records checks for adults in foster homes, relative caregivers, and staff of child care institutions before placing children in a home. In addition, the title IV-E Eligibility Review held in June 2008 found that criminal background clearances were completed for all licensed foster homes. This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, potential foster parents and their family members are evaluated using the Nevada Central Registry on Child Abuse and Neglect Clearance, sworn statements pertaining to criminal convictions, a criminal history record check, and fingerprinting. Service providers must pass a criminal background and Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry check and submit to fingerprinting, as required by State statute. The Statewide Assessment notes that fingerprinting and background checks are mandatory in the State in order to work with children. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the State complies with the requirements of the Adam Walsh Act and responds to requests from other States for information within 24 hours.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the State completes criminal records checks before placing children in a foster or adoptive home. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that if a background check reveals a criminal history, licensing standards are waived in special circumstances. State regulations do not permit approvals to waive the criminal violations stipulated in ASFA.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that in the Rural Region there are delays in conducting criminal background checks on relatives due to limited resources. In addition, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that it can take up to 90 days to receive the National Crime Information Database results, which can lead to delays in the placement of children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that criminal background checks, child abuse and neglect registry checks, and fingerprinting are conducted routinely for all adults in foster homes, relative caregivers, and staff of child care institutions.

Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that, although one local jurisdiction continuously assesses the demographic data of its resource families, the State does not have a process for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS coordinates with each of the State's three child welfare agencies to recruit, train, and license providers of family foster care. The Statewide Assessment indicates that child welfare agencies conduct general, targeted, and child-specific recruitment activities.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Nevada illustrates an upward trend in the of number of foster care licenses, increasing 12 percent from April 2007 to April 2008. The Statewide Assessment reports that Clark County has seen an increase in foster parents by 9.97 percent as of June 15, 2008. The Statewide Assessment also reports that Washoe County has continuously assessed the demographic data of its resource families and children and has demonstrated a close correlation between the ethnic and cultural diversity of foster children and that of foster families.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the 2.9 percent population increase in the State of also has increased the diversity of the population. As a result of the ever-changing demographics in the State, there is a lack of available placement resources and a lack of available language-specific training resources, especially in the Rural Region where there are no Spanish-speaking trainers.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item and at the State level during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the there is no recruitment strategy or recruitment planning at the State level and that any recruitment efforts are initiated by local child welfare agencies. For example, Clark County stakeholders indicated that there was a significant and successful effort to increase the number of foster care placements in that county. In addition, some stakeholders indicated that child welfare agencies hold recruitment events using media outlets and campaigns. However, none of the efforts focus on the diligent recruitment of a diverse pool of foster and adoptive homes that reflect the demographic characteristics of children in foster care.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength. The State uses a variety of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive and permanent placements for waiting children, including national media, adoption exchanges, photo listings, and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). This item also was rated as a Strength in Nevada's 2004 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State uses the Heart Gallery, Rocky Mountain Adoption Exchange, **AdoptUsKids**, Adoption Parties, Wednesday's Child, Dave Thomas Foundation's Wendy's Wonderful Kids program, and various photo listing services to identify permanent placements for waiting children.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that a statewide committee meets weekly to review and make recommendations for any possible out-of-State treatment facility placement. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are delays inherent in the ICPC procedures related to the lack of timeliness in other States for providing information and reports to Nevada.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Nevada met time requirements to conduct a home study within 60 days in responding to all 535 ICPC requests from other States from February 2009 through June 2009.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State's three child welfare agencies use adoption exchanges, photo listings, and **AdoptUsKids** to facilitate timely adoptive placements for waiting children. Some stakeholders indicated that the State has instituted and adheres to strict timelines and procedures for response to ICPC requests from other States, including the electronic transmission of information. A few stakeholders noted that there are delays from other States in responding to ICPC requests from Nevada.