

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



**Nevada Child and Family Services Plan**  
**(CFSP)**

**SFY 2010-2014**

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**NEVADA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN SFY 2010-2014  
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## Section I. Final Report for the CFSP 2005-2009

Information for this section may be found in the 2009 Nevada APSR document submitted separately. Please refer to the checklist document in Attachment A for a mapping to the specific page numbers in that document.

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## Section II. Child and Family Services Plan 2010-2014

### A. State Agency Administering Plans

The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) is responsible for Children's Mental Health (in Clark and Washoe, the two largest populated counties), Youth Corrections, Child Welfare Services and Child Care Licensing. As such, the implementation and administration of the Child and Family Services Plan is the responsibility of DCFS. This includes: Title IV-E, Title IV-B, Subpart I (Child Welfare Services) and Subpart 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Child Abuse and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). Our work encompasses:

*Protection and Permanency for Children:* The Division creates opportunities and programs that prevent and respond to issues of parental/caregiver maltreatment, mental health, and delinquency. The Division strives to support permanency within the child's biological or primary and extended family so children may grow and develop within stable environments. The Division also recognizes the responsibility to create and support alternative permanent environments when biological or primary families are unable or incapable of caring for their children. The Division will collaboratively craft public policies to promote the strength and well-being of families.

*Preservation of Families:* The Division supports the value that the family is the best structure to assure stability, nurturing, care, and safety of its members and communities. Services are designed to build upon family strengths, honoring the family's traditions, history, and culture.

*Juvenile Justice Services for Youth:* The Division recognizes that services must balance youth rehabilitation, treatment, and community safety. Many juvenile offenders have been victims of maltreatment and therefore accountability must be balanced by the provision of services addressing trauma, loss, substance abuse, and mental health issues. Juvenile offenders are held accountable through a comprehensive system of graduated sanctions that include commitment to state-operated juvenile facilities.

*Children's Mental Health:* The Division uses a system of care model that strives to provide creative, individualized, strength-based, and culturally responsive services for families with children that experience severe emotional disturbances. A developing continuum of care focuses on meeting the needs of children and families in the least restrictive environment, including utilization of the wraparound process to coordinate effective service delivery that enables children to reside with families when possible and with the assistance of informal supports rather than dependency on government or paid providers.

### **Mission**

DCFS, together in genuine partnership with families, communities and county governmental agencies, provide support and services to assist Nevada's children and families in reaching their full human potential.

### **Vision**

DCFS recognizes that Nevada's families are our future and families thrive when they:

- Live in safe, permanent settings;
- Experience a sense of sustainable emotional and physical well being; and
- Receive support to consistently make positive choices for family and common good.

## ***Guiding Principles***

Service principles guide our work towards achieving this vision and are consistent with children and family services principles specified in federal regulations [45 CFS 1355.25(a) through 1355.25(h)]. These practice model principles are:

- Protection - Children's safety is paramount;
- Development - Children, youth, and families need consistent nurturing in a healthy environment to achieve their full human potential;
- Permanency - All children need and are entitled to enduring relationships that provide a family, stability and belonging, a sense of self that connects children to their past, present and future;
- Cultural Responsiveness - Children and families have the right to be understood within the context of their own family, traditions, history, culture, and community;
- Partnership - The entire community shares accountability for the creation of an environment that helps families raise children to reach their full potential;
- Organizational Competence - Effectively structured and managed organizations with committed, trained, skilled staff are necessary to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.
- Continuous Quality Improvement - Strategic sequencing of continuous quality improvements must occur to reach Nevada's child and family services vision; and
- Professional Competence - Children and families need a relationship with skilled and empathetic case managers who can provide ethical support, confront difficult issues, and effectively assist them towards positive change that reinforces safety, permanency, well-being, and community safety.

## ***Purpose***

The Division is responsible for accomplishing the following purposes:

- Protecting and promoting the welfare and safety of all children, including individuals with disabilities; homeless, dependent or neglected children;
- Preventing or remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems that may result in the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or delinquency of children;
- Preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems and assisting families in resolving their problems and preventing the breakup of the family where the prevention of child removal is desirable and possible;
- Restoring to their families' children, who have been removed and may be safely returned, by the provision of services to the child and the family;
- Assuring adequate care of children away from their homes in cases where the child cannot be returned home or cannot be placed for adoption; and
- Placing children in suitable adoptive homes in cases where restoration to the biological or primary family is not possible or appropriate.

## **B. Child Welfare in Nevada**

### ***Demographics***

Nevada uses a state-administered and county operated structure for the management of child welfare services. The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, under the umbrella of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, provides oversight to child welfare and direct child welfare services. The organizational structure of DCFS and program delivery are influenced by the state size and concentration of county population. NRS 432B.325 states that in counties where population is 100,000 or more, that the county shall provide protective services for children in that county and pay the cost of those services in accordance with standards adopted by the state. In 2001, the state legislature expanded the county's responsibility to include all child welfare services of child protection, foster care and adoption (NRS 432B.030 and NRS 432B.044).

Nevada has been the fastest-growing state for 19 years in a row with an overall population increase of 2.9% between July 1, 2006 and July 1, 2007. In 2006, the population reached 2,617,610 inhabitants, with 82% of the state's population growth occurring in Clark County. Overall, Clark County (Las Vegas/Henderson area) has a population of 1,874,837, making it 71.6% of the overall state population. Washoe County (Reno/Sparks area) has the second most populous area, with 409,085 residents (15.6% of the overall state population). The Nevada rural area is vast, covering approximately 95,000 square miles, with the distance between most towns at an hour or more apart; the 15 remaining counties comprise 333,688 or 13.80% of Nevada's population. Therefore, the Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) located in Las Vegas, Nevada and Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) located in Reno, Nevada provide child welfare services directly and DCFS provides child welfare services to the remaining 15 counties in the state through its Rural Region offices.

The DCFS Rural Region is separated into four districts, each providing services to multiple counties each. District 1 covers the northern part of the State with its main office based in Elko. This District provides services to Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln and White Pine Counties. District 2 covers the western/central part of the state and is based in Carson City. This District provides services to Carson City, the State's Capitol, Douglas County, Storey County, and a portion of Lyon County. District 3 covers the eastern/central part of the state and is based out of Fallon. This office provides services to Churchill, Lyon, Pershing and Mineral Counties. District 4 covers the southern rural part of the state and is based out of Pahrump. This office provides services to Esmeralda and Nye Counties. *Figure 1* provides a map of the state with each county outlined. For the most part, growth in Nevada's rural counties has been fairly stable. Elko has seen substantial growth in the past few years. In addition to federal requirements, DCFS and child welfare agencies are governed by the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), Nevada Administrative Code (NAC); and statewide child welfare policy.

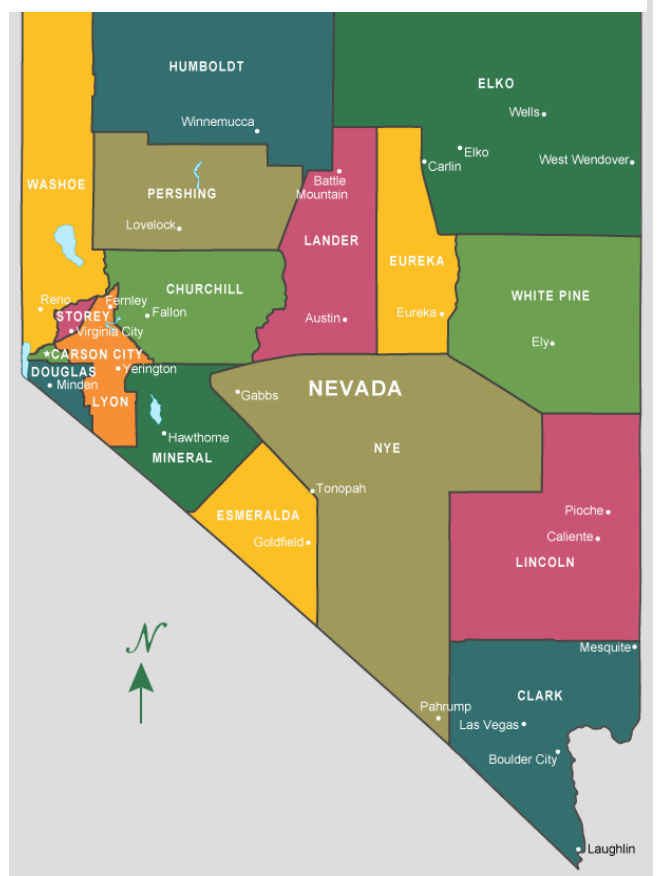
The Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) may be found in their entirety at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/>. Applicable chapters include:

- NRS 62A-I (Juvenile Justice);
- NRS 63 (State facilities for detention of children);
- NRS 127 (Adoption of Children and Adults);
- NRS 128 (Termination of Parental Rights);
- NRS 424 (Foster Homes for Children);
- NRS 425 (Support to Dependent Children);
- NRS 432 (Public Services for Children);
- NRS 432A (Services and Facilities for Care of Children);
- NRS 432B (Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect); and
- NRS 433B (Additional Provisions Relating to Children).

The Nevada Administrative Code contains all of the permanent regulations pertaining to child welfare agencies in Nevada. These were adopted under chapter 233B of the Nevada Revised Statutes. The NAC can be found at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/>. NAC chapters include:

- NAC 127 (Adoption of Children);
- NAC 423 (Assistance to Former Foster Youth);
- NAC 424 (Foster Homes for Children);
- NAC 432 (Public Services for Children);
- NAC 432A (Services and Facilities for the Care of Children); and
- NAC 432B (Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect).

**Figure 1: Map of Nevada Counties**



The Division of Child and Family Services through its Family Programs Office (FPO) is responsible for ensuring quality child welfare services statewide, including the safety, permanency and well-being of children in care. The FPO is responsible for ensuring that there are statewide collaborative child welfare policies that provide interpretation and procedures for accomplishing the tasks set out in the NRS or NAC. Currently, there are 17 policy chapters, available on the DCFS website at [www.dcf.state.nv.us](http://www.dcf.state.nv.us).

Additionally the FPO has the responsibility of reviewing services provided by the three child welfare agencies across the state. Through a quality improvement process; collaborative meetings and discussions with key personnel in the child welfare agencies; and regular monitoring of child welfare reports out the state's UNITY (SACWIS) system, The Family Programs Office is able to complete the following tasks:

- Monitor federal or state laws related to child welfare;
- Develop statewide policies and procedures for child welfare;
- Provide agency technical assistance;
- Conduct quality improvement activities to monitor child welfare agency compliance with state and federal laws and state policy;
- Offer agency staff additional training to improve compliance;
- Negotiate agency corrective action when needed; and
- Impose fines, when required, for agency non-compliance.

### **Children in Care**

Nevada Kids Count (2008) reports that there are an estimated 295,566 families in Nevada with their own children under the age of 18 present in the home (this does not include foster families). *Table A* shows the breakdown of children and youth in Foster Care (DCFS – Report CFS721 2004-2008; Nevada Kids Count, 2008). Based a comparison of data from Nevada's SACWIS System – UNITY and information provided by the Nevada State Demographer for population characteristics for children age 0-18 in 2006, there are a disproportionate number of African American children in Foster Care in Nevada.

**Table A: Statewide race/ethnicity distribution of children entering foster care**

<b>Race</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2006 Actual Population Children age 0-18</b>
African American	1771	2150	2472	2531	2475	54,896
American Indian/Native American	20%	21%	22%	22%	23%	8%
American Indian/Native American	141	148	177	184	209	9,102
American Indian/Native American	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	243	302	356	332	303	41,916
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	13%
Caucasian	5139	5899	6336	6465	5859	320,873
Caucasian	59%	58%	56%	55%	54%	49%
Hispanic (All Races)	1389	1683	2011	2170	2085	230,009
Hispanic (All Races)	16%	17%	18%	19%	19%	35%
<b>Statewide Total:</b>	<b>8,683</b>	<b>10,182</b>	<b>11,352</b>	<b>11,682</b>	<b>10,931</b>	<b>656,796</b>

## ***Child and Family Services Continuum & Service Description***

**Family Preservation Services (Title IV-B Subpart 2 Services):** The State provides Family Preservation Services programs which are characterized by high intensity immediately accessible treatment and ancillary services for at-risk children and families. The goals of Family Preservation Services' programs are to reduce the risk of child abuse/neglect and thus eliminate unnecessary out-of-home placement of children and to strengthen the family to better care for the developmental needs of their children. Program staff provides crisis intervention, clinical assessment, and family preservation services to a protective services population in nine areas: Washoe County, Clark County, Carson City, Fallon, Wells, Pahrump, Mesquite, Elko and Ely. The parents have better supports and resources to deal with stress and crisis within the family.

Clark County utilizes an array of prevention services to help children at risk of abuse and neglect to remain safely with their families. These services include flexible funding to support families in areas such as rent, utilities, apartment deposit, bus tokens, food vouchers and other basic needs, and contract services with community agencies. Drug court remains another option for families where substance abuse is a contributing factor to child abuse or neglect. Clark County maintains collaboration with community agencies, such as Safe House and Safe Nest, to provide services to high-risk families of domestic violence. Parent training classes are offered through numerous community agencies, as well as the Clark County Parenting Project.

Family Preservation services in Washoe County include strength-based treatment utilizing pro-social adaptive behavior modification techniques to teach clients to change socially and personally maladaptive behavior; individual and group counseling to assist clients and their children to adopt strategies and behaviors that sustain recovery and maintain daily functioning including conflict resolution; couples and family therapy; supportive and instructive interventions to address life management needs; case management; assistance to families who were involved with or at-risk of becoming involved with child welfare agencies; assessments of strengths and needs of clients related to life and home management skills; development of individualized plans based on assessment results and client assistance in job seeking, resume development and application for employment.

Community providers receiving IV-B funds are a primary source for pre-placement services for the DCFS Rural Region Intensive Family Services staff, which provides both clinical assessments and home-based family preservation services, is also a significant pre-placement service. State Rural Mental Health Clinics are responsible for providing children's mental health services in the Rural Region. The Rural Region also has four full-time Family Support Workers that are utilized similarly to the Human Services Specialist positions in Washoe County to provide additional needed support to families. The 2005 Legislature allocated 15 positions to enhance the Rural Region's service delivery capability. Two Social Work Supervisors, 11 Social Workers and two Support Staff were funded. Recruitment and retention of licensed social work positions is an ongoing challenge in rural Nevada. Other services utilized by the Rural Region include services available through community based non-profit agencies to provide substance abuse counseling, domestic violence interventions, truancy, tutoring, parenting and other prevention programs for children. County welfare programs and/or other community based resources are frequently accessed for temporary housing, vouchers for clothing, food, gas, utilities, transportation and other needed services. Community coalitions exist in many rural communities in an attempt to increase availability and accessibility through coordinated efforts between public and private agencies. The State has operated Family Preservation Services (FPS) existing in nine sites throughout the state for over 10 years – Las Vegas, Mesquite, Pahrump, Elko, Fallon, Carson City, Hawthorne, Wells and Reno. Services, like other FPS programs, are brief, intensive, home-based and family centered.

**Family Support Services:** Awards to sub-grantees that provided Family Support services in Clark County include after-school and summer programs which offered activities and supervision to school-aged children, ages 9 to 12 within a safe environment while their parents were at work, which enabled parents to achieve and maintain better job performance in knowing that their child was in a safe environment; case management; budgeting classes in both English and Spanish and computer skills classes and developmental screenings. Sub-grantees that provide Family Support services in Washoe County include tutoring; counseling; case management and linkage with supportive services; home visits; needs assessments; budgeting classes and goal planning. Funding for Family Support services to sub-grantees in the Rural Region enhance their capabilities to collaborate with other service providers; provide counseling; basic needs; case management; coping with stress, budgeting and parenting classes; youth / teen prevention programs focusing on drugs, alcohol, anger management, self-esteem, teen pregnancy prevention and communicable disease awareness; mentoring, tutoring and literacy for families which advanced their academic abilities; home visits; respite care and transportation.



**Time-Limited Reunification Services:** Funded programs that provide Time-Limited Reunification services in Clark County include comprehensive assessments for both mental health and substance abuse issues for individuals, and groups as well as individual and family treatment. Under the Time-Limited Reunification category, services in Washoe County include psychological testing for adults and adolescents; psychiatric evaluations for adults; drug and alcohol evaluations; group counseling for drug and alcohol; individual counseling for addictions, sessions on depression, substance abuse, parenting, stress, family violence, sexual and physical abuse, loss and grief and marital and couple issues and mental health and family issues for adults. Time-Limited Reunification services in the Rural Region include case management; counseling; parenting classes; youth / teen prevention programs focusing on drugs, alcohol, anger management, self-esteem, teen pregnancy prevention and communicable disease awareness; mentoring, tutoring and literacy for families that advanced their academic abilities; home visits and mentoring.

**Adoption Promotion and Support Services:** Funding for Adoption Promotion and Support Services allow sub-grantees in Clark County to educate the public, community leaders, policy makers and child welfare administrators by providing informative feedback on the foster parent perspective on adoption recruitment issues to better serve the foster parent community's needs and training for mental health professionals to help them understand why treatment strategies must be different for adoptive families. Funding also supports diligent search activities which focus on identifying and locating parents and relatives who might be placement resources for children utilizing multiple resources such as Accurant, Internet sources, telephone books, Department of Motor Vehicles information and diligent search programs in other states. Adoption Promotion and Support Services funding to sub-grantees in Washoe County and the Rural Region enhance their capability to collaborate with agencies to produce "child / family matching" events where children awaiting adoption were exposed to potential adoptive families; provision of series of training workshops for foster and adoptive parents; awareness promotion of special needs adoptive homes for children 12 years and older and sibling groups and increase interest in special needs adoption, ultimately impacting the number of finalized special needs adoptions. Washoe's Adoption Program and the Clark's CAC continue to utilize trained clinical staff to support families' adoption of children with emotional/behavioral needs. This service combined with the development of a "transition" case plan is a promising practice designed to better support and prepare both foster-adoption and stranger adoptions; and to increase the success of the child's placement.

**Table B: Title IV-B Subpart 2 Grantees by Funding Category and Region for Federal Fiscal Year 2008**

Sub-Grantee Name and Region	Family Support	Family Preservation	Time-Limited Family Reunification	Adoption Promotion/Support
<b>Clark</b>				
Bridge Counseling, Las Vegas		✓	✓	
CCDFS - Diligent Search, Las Vegas				✓
Nevada Children's Center, Las Vegas				✓
Virgin Valley FRC, Mesquite	✓	✓		
Women's Development Center, Las Vegas	✓			
Adoption Exchange, Las Vegas				✓
<b>Washoe</b>				
Children's Cabinet, Incline Village	✓			
Children's Cabinet of Reno	✓	✓		
Family Counseling Services, Reno			✓	
Sierra Association of Foster Families, Reno	✓	✓	✓	✓
STEP 2, Reno		✓		
Washoe Co. FRC Coalition, Reno	✓	✓		
<b>DCFS Rural Region</b>				
FRC of Northeastern Nevada, Elko	✓	✓	✓	
FRIENDS FRC, Fallon	✓	✓		
Hawthorne FRC, Hawthorne	✓	✓	✓	✓
Little People's Head Start, Ely	✓			
No to Abuse, Pahrump	✓	✓	✓	
Ron Wood FRC, Carson City	✓	✓		
Wells FRC, Wells	✓	✓		

**Clark County:** Through the six IV B, Subpart II funded sub grantees in Clark County, 2,065 families, 5,181 individuals, 3,942 children, 285 persons with a disability and 862 single heads of household were provided the services listed below in SFY 2009:

- *Children/Youth Development Services* – Child Development Classes/Activities and Teen/Youth Support Group, After-School and Summer Programs for Children.
- *Health Services* – Nutrition Classes and Health Education.
- *Information and Referral Services* – Referrals to Outside Agencies, Community Awareness Campaigns and Resource Libraries.
- *Life Skills/Development Training* – Budget/Financial Counseling, GED Classes, Life Skills Group, Employment Training, Literacy Training, Pre-Adoptive Counseling, Training Workshops for Foster and Adoptive Parents, Parenting Training, Translation Services, English as Second Language (ESL) Classes, Job Search/Placement Assistance and Parenting Classes/Training.
- *Support Services* – Assessment Services, Crisis Intervention, Home Visits, Case Management, Domestic Violence Services, Individual Counseling, Support Groups, Client Advocacy, Family Counseling, Relative Searches and Therapy.
- *Basic Needs Services* – Transportation Assistance, Clothing, Housing, Food, Rental Assistance and other Basic Needs that include the following:
  - Services to minority families such as ESL classes and translation services;
  - Home- and center-based assessment, counseling/treatment services for families with children at risk of removal due to family issues including domestic violence, poverty, substance abuse, etc.;
  - Case management services for families with children having behavioral and emotional problems;
  - Respite care including recruitment and training of respite care providers and respite reimbursement for low to moderate-income families having one or more children with a disability;
  - Family self-sufficiency mentoring programs (for both youth and their families);
  - Leadership skills development; after-school and parenting programs (bi-lingual and teen parenting);
  - Domestic violence counseling;
  - Transitional housing services including case management services, supportive services, and education for women with children;
  - Intensive services to families referred by DCFS/CPS with first contact at the courthouse immediately after the court hearing; and
  - Services to locate relatives of children for placement as an alternative to placing the child(ren) in foster care.

**Washoe County:** Through the six sub grants awarded to agencies within Washoe County a total of 2,695 families, 9,870 individuals, 5,546 children, 744 persons with a disability and 1,483 single heads of households were provided the following services during SFY 2009. These families received the following services:

- *Children/Youth Development Services* – Child Care, Child Development Classes / Activities, Mentoring Programs, Teen/Youth Support Group, Tutoring, Day Care Assistance and Playgroups.
- *Health Service* – CPR Training, Nutrition Classes, Health Education and Health Screening.
- *Information and Referral Services* – Referrals to Outside Agencies, Community Awareness Campaigns and Resource Libraries.
- *Life Skills/Development Training* – Budget/Financial Counseling, GED Classes, Life Skills Group, Employment Training, Homemaker Services / Training, Literacy Training, English as Second Language (ESL) Classes, Job Search / Placement Assistance and Parenting Classes / Training, and Computer Skills Training.
- *Support Services* – Assessment Services, Crisis Intervention, Home Visits, Respite, Case Management, Domestic Violence Services, Individual Counseling, Support Groups, Client Advocacy, and Family Counseling, Parent Support Groups, Relative Searches and Therapy.

- *Basic Needs Services* – Child Safety Seats, Transportation Assistance, Clothing, Housing, Utility Assistance, Food, Rental Assistance and Other Basic Needs that include the following:
  - Home-based crisis intervention and counseling services for families with children who have been removed from their homes or who are at imminent risk of removal due to family issues including domestic violence, poverty, substance abuse;
  - Home-based homemaker services to prevent removal of children;
  - Services to Spanish-speaking families as well as translation services;
  - Washoe County's Child Protective Services (CPS) Family Assessment;
  - Family counseling/therapy (bilingual, home- or center-based);
  - Prevention/education services;
  - Advocacy and assistance for families with children with disabilities;
  - Families with children having special health care needs;
  - Transient/homeless services to families;
  - Family visitations;
  - Medical and dental care; and
  - Substance abuse outpatient and residential treatment for women with one child, including, transitional housing, life skills training, and parenting.

**DCFS - Rural Region:** Seven agencies within DCFS, Rural Region served 793 families, 1,429 individuals, 1,273 children, 163 persons with a disability and 544 single heads of households were provided the following services during SFY 2009.

- *Children/Youth Development Services* – Child Development Classes/Activities, Mentor Programs, Teen/Youth Support Group, Playgroup, Tutoring, Child Care, Development Screening, Pre-Kinder Classes and Day Care Assistance.
- *Health Services* – Nutrition Classes, CPR Education, Health Education and Health Screening.
- *Information and Referral Services* - Referrals to Outside Agencies, Community Awareness Campaigns and Resource Libraries.
- *Life Skills/Development Training* – Budget/Financial Counseling, GED Classes, Life Skills Group, Parenting Skills Training, Coping Skills Training, Employment Training, Homemaker Services/Training, Literacy Training, English as Second Language (ESL) Classes, Job Search/Placement Assistance and Parenting Classes/Training.
- *Support Services* – Assessment Services, Crisis Intervention, Home Visits, Respite, Case Management, Domestic Violence Services, Individual Counseling, Support Groups, Client Advocacy, and Drug and Alcohol Evaluations.
- *Basic Needs Services* – Child Safety Seats, Transportation Assistance, Clothing, Housing, Utility Assistance, Food, Rental Assistance and Other Basic Needs that include the following:
  - Family Assessment Services (formerly CPS Differential Response Services) to families referred to Title IV-B Funded community-based programs by DCFS;
  - Child Protective Services (CPS). FASS services include family preservation services, including family assessment and case management;
  - Housing and services for homeless families;
  - Marriage and family therapy;
  - Basic education and job skill training;
  - Dental and medical care;
  - Family activity evenings;
  - Family visitation; and
  - Rural Homemaker Services.

Statewide, Nevada has experienced expansion of Title IV-B Subpart 2 services in seven sub grantee programs and the addition of one new program providing Title IV-B Subpart 2 services to a rural geographical portion of the State. These expansion activities enhance community based service provision being available to Nevada's families and children.

During the past year the sub grantees statewide have provided the above services to 16,480 new individuals (an increase of 24% from last year), 5,553 new families (an increase of 41% from last year), 10,761 new children (an increase of 20% from last year), 1,192 new individuals with disabilities (an increase of 24% from last year) and 2,889 new single heads of household (an increase of 93% from last year).

**Estimated Expenditures for Services/Future Funding:** Based upon previous annual expenditures it is anticipated that approximately \$345,710 will be available for each of the service areas (25% of the total funding is spread between the four categories). Services will be provided in the four areas under the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program: Family Preservation; Family Support; Time-Limited Family Reunification; and Adoption Promotion and Support Services in accordance with Federal expenditure guidelines.

### ***Decision Making Process***

In Nevada, decisions regarding child welfare policy and practice are made by the Decision Making Group (DMG). DMG is comprised of top level administrators of the three public child welfare agencies, DCFS - Rural Region, Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) and Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) and the DCFS Administrator and Deputy Administrator. The DMG provides recommendations to the DCFS Administrator regarding CFSR and PIP activities including the direction for statewide collaborative policy development, training and Quality Improvement (QI) activities. The DMG provides guidance to statewide, cross-agency policy teams to respond to any policy refinement needs discovered through the continuous quality assurance and improvement process and policy workgroup activities. This team meets monthly, or more often as needed.

### ***Evaluation and Technical Assistance***

Nevada has no current requests for evaluation or technical assistance.

### ***Disaster Response Plan***

This plan was submitted with the June 30, 2008 APSR report. Nothing has changed in this document.

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## **Section III. Quality Improvement Framework and Methods**

### **Goals, Objectives and Methods of Measuring Progress**

Nevada has an established process for measuring the safety, permanency and well-being of children in the child welfare system. This process is modeled after the federal Child and Family Services Review of state cases. However, this process will be expanded in the next five year cycle to include all 45 CFSR performance indicators and the individual processes that examine compliance in each area through a variety of methods. This section will review the overall goals, objectives and methods related to measuring all 45 performance indicators as well as provide an overview and timetable for how these processes will be accomplished. Section IV of this document focuses on the 23 safety, permanency and well-being performance indicators and Section V focuses on the 22 Systemic performance indicators. Each performance indicator section outlines a separate delineation of each performance indicator's goals and objectives that Nevada plans to accomplish over the next five years.

#### ***Overall Goal:***

- To ensure that the child welfare system in Nevada is meeting compliance in all Safety, Permanency, Well-Being and Systemic Outcomes as outlined in individual 45 performance indicator items.

## **Overall Objectives:**

- The State will ensure a comprehensive ongoing review process using a variety of methods for examining compliance on Safety, Permanency, Well-Being and Systemic Performance Indicators by:
  - Redesigning the existing Quality Improvement Framework for Nevada to include:
    - A process for ensuring the ongoing coordination and collaboration with key child welfare stakeholders to be involved in all levels of the Quality Improvement Framework.
    - An updated process for the annual review, required revision, and new development of statewide policies and procedures related to Safety, Permanency, Well-Being and Systemic Performance Indicators. The review and improvement of existing quantitative reports and/or to ensure the development (where needed) of new quantitative reports for measuring progress toward specific measurable outcomes under individual performance indicators;
    - The review and improvement of existing stakeholder survey instruments and/or to ensure the development (where needed) of new qualitative review methods for assessing system performance through the regular consultation with stakeholders key to the child welfare system in Nevada.
    - The review and improvement of the existing Quality Improvement Case Review (QICR) process in current use in Nevada, including requesting technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement (NRCOI) to redesign the case review process to include conducting a minimum of annual Quality Improvement Case Reviews of each child welfare agency to determine compliance with individual performance indicators.
    - A clearly defined quality improvement loop through the development and implementation of future Statewide Quality Improvement Committee Work Plans (as part of the Annual Progress Service Report) that ensure that findings under each performance indicator gathered from the above methods are put into future training programs, future policy and/or changes in practice.

## **Overall Methods for Measuring Progress:**

### **Redesign of the Quality Improvement Framework:**

Several methods will be used by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) to revise the Quality Improvement Framework for Nevada for final approval by the Decision Making Group (DMG) and full implementation by March 2011. The SQIC, through the newly developed Quality Improvement (QI) Framework Subcommittee and Quantitative and Qualitative (Q&Q) Report Subcommittee and in conjunction with the technical assistance to be provided by NRCOI, will develop a plan to revise the Quality Improvement Framework by March 2010. This plan will include six elements/processes, including: A clearly designed plan for the coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders; an updated process for the review, revision and development of statewide policies and procedures; a quantitative report element; a qualitative report element; a review and redesign of the Quality Improvement Case Review process; and development and annual updating of a comprehensive Statewide Quality Improvement Committee Work Plan for ensuring that findings gleaned from the above processes are translated into future training, policy revision or development, and/or changes in practice. A rating methodology that corresponds with the federal CFSR process of giving ratings of "strength" or "area needing improvement" with a given performance indicator will be applied annually and will be reported as part of the APSR, which will be posted on the DCFS Website upon federal approval of the APSR document.

### **Method for Coordinating and Collaborating with Stakeholders:**

Throughout the quality improvement process for the State of Nevada; Family Programs Office (FPO) representatives, child welfare agency representatives and key external stakeholders will be involved in the process. To ensure that maximum coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders is occurring in the quality improvement process, the following will occur:

- The existing Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) will develop a plan for identifying key stakeholders to participate in the review and redevelopment of the Nevada Quality Improvement Framework by February 2010. Key stakeholders will include representatives from the judiciary, child advocates, caregivers (foster parents, adoptive

parents, relative caregivers, etc.), foster youth, tribal representatives, educational representatives, medical/behavioral health representatives, differential response representatives, service providers (substance abuse, domestic violence, etc.) and other members as identified. Existing stakeholder groups to be utilized in the process include:

- **Child Death Review (CDR):** The child death review account was established to support statewide child death review activities of the mandated Administrative Team and the Executive Committee to Review the Death of Children. The activities of the committees include the following outcomes:
  - Development of statewide policies, procedures, strategies, and initiatives undertaken by public child welfare;
  - Issuance of public awareness messages surrounding relevant topic areas;
  - Report on the number of training held each year;
  - Conduct annual evaluations completed of combined statewide prevention efforts; and, monitor and report the number of contacts with statewide boards and commissions.

*Executive Committee:* The Executive Committee to review the death of children, formed in 2003 is composed of representatives from local multidisciplinary child death review teams whose statutory purpose (NRS 432B.403) is to:

- Review the records of selected cases of deaths of children under 18 years of age in this State;
- Review the records of selected cases of deaths of children under 18 years of age who are residents of Nevada and who die in another state;
- Assess and analyze such cases;
- Make recommendations for improvements to laws, policies and practice;
- Support the safety of children; and
- Prevent future deaths of children.

Local teams members must include (a) a representative of any law enforcement agency that is involved with the case under review; (b) medical personnel; (c) a representative of the district attorney's office in the county where the case is under review; (d) a representative of any school that is involved with the case under review; (e) a representative of any agency which provides child welfare services that is involved with the case under review; and (f) a representative of the coroner's office; or other representatives of other organizations concerned with the death of the child as the agency which provides child welfare services deems appropriate for the review per NRS 432B.406. Local teams review child deaths and make recommendations regarding various agency laws, regulations, policies and practice, training and public education to the Administrative Team.

The Executive Committee makes decisions about funding initiatives to prevent child maltreatment and death, which may be based on recommendations from the Administrative Team. Additionally, the Executive Committee adopts statewide protocols for the review of the death of children; designates the members of the Administrative Team; oversees training and development for the regional CDR teams; and compiles and distributes a statewide annual report. Funding for the work of the Committee was also established as a result of AB 381, and is derived from a \$1 fee collected from death certificates issued by the State. The funds are intended to be used for prevention efforts and training of the local CDR teams.

- *The Administrative Team:* The Administrative Team is comprised of Administrators of agencies which provide child welfare services, and agencies responsible for vital statistics, public health, mental health and public safety per NRS 432B.408. The purpose of the Administrative Team is to provide oversight for local teams and to receive the reports and recommendations from local multidisciplinary teams for review and make appropriate responses back within 90 days after receiving the report. These recommendations are made by Administrators who are able to affect agency policy or may make other recommendations to other entities regarding policy, laws, regulation or practice, and public education. The Administrative Team members may be able to resolve issues that local child death review teams have identified. The Administrative Team works with the Executive Committee in developing the annual budget, public education campaigns and public policy. Both teams work together to prevent child fatalities. The Administrative team reviews reports and recommendations from the regional CDR teams and makes

decisions regarding the recommendations for improvements to laws, policies, and practices and also makes recommendations about funding for improvements, initiatives, and public education requiring expenditures.

- **Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJA):** The CJA task force is composed of professionals with knowledge and experience related to the criminal justice system and issues of child physical abuse, child neglect, and child sexual abuse and exploitation, and child maltreatment related fatalities. The purpose and function of the CJA is to comprehensively:
  - Support, promote and initiate systematic change that will improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.
  - Review and evaluate Nevada's investigative, administrative, and both civil and criminal judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly of child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, federal-state, and state-tribal;
  - Make policy and training recommendations in each of the following categories:
    - Experimental, model, and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and,
    - Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.
- **Citizen Review Panels (CRP):** Nevada's CRP's have been a great asset to the State and the field of child protection due to their ongoing commitment and continued involvement in Quality Improvement (QI) and training activities that benefit the child welfare system. The Statewide CRP was established in 1999 per NRS 432B.396 and has federally mandated responsibilities under Title I, Section 106, of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Statewide CRP consists of representation from community-based organizations and professionals with backgrounds related to child protective services (CPS), child advocacy, children's mental health, and foster parents. In essence, the CRP's work consists of the review of internal policies and procedures within the CPS system, accomplished mainly through individual CPS case reviews. In response to meeting the federal requirement for three CRP's based on the Basic State Grant funding increase for Nevada, both the Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) were invited into the CRP process in 2006. Approval to join as a CRP was given by the Northern CAC in late 2006 and by the Southern CAC in early 2007. During 2007 and 2008, the Statewide CRP members continued to serve as regular, external stakeholders in quarterly case reviews implemented as part of the DCFS Quality Improvement Framework. Statewide CRP recommendations for 2007 focus on CPS staff training and practices, improving the DCFS QI case review process and expansion into other areas of review such as differential response and differential response training. Northern CAC/CRP recommendations for 2008 focus on CPS caseworker unit restructuring, family involvement in the child welfare system, and differential response. Southern CAC/CRP recommendations for 2008 focus on increased funding for child welfare services, policy and procedure redesign, and CPS caseworker training.
- **Court Improvement Project (CIP):** Nevada's CIP was formed to address changing roles of court oversight in child abuse and neglect cases brought on by federal guidelines and Nevada statutes and is supported with federal funding. CIP continues to work closely with DCFS and other stakeholders to plan and develop changes statewide that will significantly improve the handling of child welfare cases throughout the state. The monthly schedule of meetings between the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)/CIP and DCFS is ongoing. Issues requiring a collaborative approach are discussed and items of mutual concern are identified for strategic planning. In the last year, extensive child welfare training was made available and delivered to Judges and Attorneys statewide. In addition to trainings, a final draft of the bench book, a guide for the judiciary on child welfare proceedings has been completed and is currently under review by the judiciary, the Office of the Attorney General and the DCFS Eligibility Unit. DCFS and CIP have had monthly meetings regarding a variety of child welfare topics and children assigned to youth parole and have been exploring UNITY data reports that could be useful for judges during court proceedings. CIP also received a presentation by the Eligibility Unit and were provided with recommendations for language in court orders to maximize IVE funding opportunities.

- **Mental Health Consortia:** The 2001 Legislature, per NRS 433B.333 established a Mental Health Consortium in three jurisdictions: Clark County, Washoe County the Rural Counties, to encourage cross system referral, ongoing collaboration and accessibility to services. The functions of the Mental Health Consortia are to assess the need for behavioral health, mental health and substance abuse services for children and families in each jurisdiction; to determine how well the current system is meeting those needs, and to develop an annual plan on how the need can be better met. This information is reported to the Legislative Committee on Children and Youth regularly. This group serves as an integral part of the service array process and facilitates the linkages between child welfare and children's mental health.
- **Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT):** The Nevada Partnership for Training is a partnership, in collaboration with the Family Programs Office, the Rural Region, Clark County Department of Family Services, Washoe County Department of Social Services, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). Individuals from these entities work collaboratively together to improve the child welfare training delivery system. The goal of the NPT is to assess Nevada's training delivery needs and develop and implement a comprehensive training delivery system.
- **Foster Parent Associations:** The Sierra Association of Foster Families (SAFF) a non-profit organization in Washoe County and the Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (CCFAPA) a non-profit organization in Clark County are comprised of caregivers whose purpose is to ensure licensed foster/adoptive families have the information, tools and support they need to provide safe, quality care to abused, neglected and otherwise dependent children. These organizations also provide support for the 15 rural counties. SAFF primarily serves the counties in the Northern part of the State, and CCFAPA primarily services Clark County and the community of Pahrump in Southern Nye County.
- **Out-of-State Placement Workgroup:** Members of the Out of State Placement Workgroup consist of representatives each with a specialization unique to the diagnosis and placement of Nevada youth in out of state facilities. These members include staff from Children's Mental Health, DCFS FPO, DCFS Rural Region, WCDSS, CCDFS and Juvenile Justice as well as support from management, legal and fiscal representatives as needed. Children are placed in out-of-state placements when instate services are not available to meet their needs. The Ensuring that these out of state resources are adequate and meet the standards set by the State requires inspection, review and, sometimes, revision of State policy. This workgroup makes itself available to participate in meetings and assignments that meet these objectives and tasks. The Out of State Placement Workgroup will continue to meet periodically with the goal of developing a schedule of inspections and an equitable and fiscally responsible way to divide the travel among all participants. The workgroup recognizes that, in most cases, it is preferable to keep children in their home state and to facilitate permanency in a healthy environment. The workgroup remains committed to ensuring that when out of state placement is the only alternative for a Nevada youth that the facility meets all of the requirements set forth by State and Federal requirements.
- **Youth Advisory Board (YAB):** The YAB assists foster and former foster youth to make the transition to adulthood. The YAB exists to provide exemplary leadership and empowerment opportunities for youth who have or will experience out of home care.

### **Method for the Review, Revision and Development of Policies and Procedures:**

The following methods will be used to ensure that statewide policies related to Safety, Permanency, Well-Being, and Systemic Performance Indicators are reviewed and up-to-date:

- Family Programs Office Specialists will review the Federal CFSR requirements under each performance indicator to determine policy development or revision requirements and will present these recommendations for review to the Policy Approval Review Team by May 2010, or in conjunction with the implementation of the approved Program Improvement Plan (PIP), whichever is later.
- Based on the recommendations from PART, FPO Management will revise the existing Policy Development and Review Schedule to accommodate the annual review of existing policies and the development plan for new policies through June of 2014. This schedule will be presented to the DMG for review and approval by June 2010 or in conjunction with the implementation of the approved PIP, whichever is later.



- Policies will be reviewed, revised and/or developed based on the process outlined in the PART Charter. The Policy Development and Review Schedule will be monitored monthly by DCFS FPO Management and reported on quarterly to the DMG. Progress on individual policies will be reported under the specific performance indicator as part of the Annual Progress Service Review (APSR) report each June.

### **Method for the Review, Revision and Development of Quantitative Reports:**

Through the use of the newly formed SQIC - Qualitative and Quantitative (Q&Q) Report Subcommittee (made up of members from DCFS-FPO, the child welfare agencies and key stakeholders), committee members will review each of the 45 CFSR performance indicator data elements and will provide recommendations for quantitative reports through the following steps:

- The Q&Q Report Subcommittee will develop a work plan for the review of the 45 CFSR performance indicators for the revision or development of quantitative reports to SQIC by February 2010.
- The Q&Q Report Subcommittee will review existing quantitative UNITY data reports; the Federal data profile; the 2009 Nevada CFSR findings; and any other identified data sources; etc. relating to the 45 CFSR performance indicators and will provide recommendations to SQIC for refining or enhancing these reports, or recommendations for data elements to be included in all new reports as part of a Report Development Schedule by July 2010.
- The delivery of quantitative UNITY reports will begin by April 2011 (or sooner as reports are finalized) and will continue according to the Report Development Schedule. Each Performance Indicator Item will have specified quantitative UNITY reports, where available, and this information will be reported on a quarterly basis to DMG and will be included in required Quarterly PIP reports, as well as annual roll up data for the APSR report due each June.

### **Method for the Review, Revision and Development of Surveys and Qualitative Reports:**

Through the use of the newly formed SQIC – Q&Q Report Subcommittee (made up of members from DCFS-FPO, the child welfare agencies and key stakeholders), committee members will review each of the 45 CFSR performance indicator data elements and will provide recommendations for qualitative data elements through the following steps:

- The Q&Q Report Subcommittee will develop a work plan for the review of the 45 CFSR performance indicators for the revision or development of existing or new Stakeholder Surveys and/or other Qualitative Methods by February 2010.
- The Q&Q Report Subcommittee will review the Statewide Assessment Surveys used in 2009 and provide recommendations for the inclusion of new and/or retention of existing questions or exclusion of existing questions from these surveys and will develop new Stakeholder Surveys and required protocols for delivery and analysis to SQIC by October 2010 for review and for final approval by DMG by December 2010.
- The annual Stakeholder Survey process will begin in February 2011 and will continue in January of each following year thorough 2014 Statewide Assessment. Survey results will be reviewed annually with DMG and key stakeholders and will be reported in the annual APSR reports and will be posted on the DCFS Website upon federal approval of the APSR.
- The Q&Q Report Subcommittee will review the 45 CFSR performance indicators and will design protocols for any additional qualitative methods required (i.e. targeted reviews; interviews with stakeholders, etc.) to ensure that each data element not covered by quantitative reports or Stakeholder Surveys is examined in the overall Quality Improvement Framework Methods Section. Recommendations for these methods and protocols will be presented to SQIC by October 2010 for review and for final DMG approval by December 2010.

### **Method for the Review, Revision and Redesign of the Quality Improvement Case Review (QICR) Process:**

Through the use of the newly formed SQIC – QI Framework Subcommittee (made up of members from DCFS-FPO, the child welfare agencies and key stakeholders), committee members, in conjunction with technical assistance from the NRCOI will review and redesign of the existing QICR process through the following steps:

- DCFS will apply for technical assistance from the NRCOI to assist with the redevelopment of the Quality Improvement Case Review (QICR) Process by December 2009.

- In conjunction with the technical assistance to be provided by NRCOI, the QI Framework Subcommittee will review the existing case review tool and methodology and provide recommendations to SQIC for improvement, including methods for more equitable case sampling by May 2010 for DMG approval.
- The existing process to be reviewed and redesigned is described in the Quality Improvement Case Review Process section below. Results of the Quality Improvement Case Reviews will be included in the Quarterly PIP reports for the agency under review for that period, and will be included in the annual APSR roll up report due each June.

**Quality Improvement Case Review Process**

Each of the 23 Safety, Permanency and Well-Being Performance Indicators has specific goals to be addressed as part of the Quality Improvement Case Review System. Specific objectives are listed under each performance indicator. These objectives are to be reviewed through the Quality Improvement Case Review process at minimum annually for each child welfare agency. The tentative schedule for agency reviews is outlined below. Results of each review will be included in the quarterly PIP report in the quarter in which the review was conducted. Additional Quantitative UNITY Reports will supplement the case review process and will provide current data for each quarterly PIP report.

**Table C: Case Review Schedule – Performance Indicator Items 1 -23**

State Fiscal Year	Clark County	Washoe County	DCFS – Rural Region
July 2009 – June 2010	CFSR - August 2009	CFSR - August 2009	CFSR - August 2009
July 2010 – June 2011	QICR - August 2010	QICR - December 2010	QICR - April 2011
July 2011 – June 2012	QICR - August 2011	QICR - December 2011	QICR - April 2012
July 2012 – June 2013	QICR - August 2012	QICR - December 2012	QICR - April 2013
July 2013 – June 2014	QICR - August 2013	QICR - December 2013	QICR - April 2014

**Case Review Sample:** Cases used in the review process will be drawn from a sample of all open cases during the established period under review for the child welfare agency of interest. The period under review include cases open in a 24 month period from the end date of review with activity in the last 12 months of that period. DCFS Information Management Services (IMS) will select a sample of cases from UNITY. For each the reviews conducted in 2008, a total sample of 40 cases was pulled for each review, including 20 in-home and 20 out-of-home cases. This resulted in a total sample of 24 cases for a review, including an over-sample of 16 cases for each agency. An equal number of foster care and in-home cases were pulled for the final review sample (12 in-home and 12 out-of-home). The resulting total sample for an entire year of reviews totaled approximately 72 cases statewide, with an approximate equal number of in-home and out-of-home cases reviewed.

This sampling method will be reviewed for 2010 reviews as part of the Quality Improvement Framework Redesign to ensure that a sample of cases is pulled annually will more closely resemble the CFSR case review sampling method, or will be modified as recommended by technical assistance from the NRCOI. The majority of cases will be pulled in the largest urban site - Clark County, the second urban review site will be Washoe County and the third review site will be the Rural Region. The only difference from the federal process is that Nevada will ensure that six cases minimum are reviewed from each rural district office (3 in-home and 3 out-of-home) during each Rural Region Annual Review. A total of 24 cases reviewed each year from the entire region, which will provide more information to the Rural Region on the operations of the child welfare services in the 15 rural counties than would reviewing only one rural district at a time. . The new sampling methodology, including clearly defined definitions for in and out-of-home cases will be included in the newly revised Quality Improvement Framework. This will include newly developed policy to ensure that this case information is entered into the UNITY system consistently statewide.

The current process defines the difference between in and out-of-home cases as whether or not a placement decision removes the child from the home for more than 24 hours. Specifically, the current Quality Improvement Case Review Process Policy defines an in-home case as any “open for services following a determination of investigation finding (i.e. substantiated or unsubstantiated case), whether formal (court ordered custody) or informal, where no child in the family was in an out-of-home placement for 24 hours or more during the period under review.” On the other hand, an out-of-home placement is one that removes a child for placement outside of the parental/custodial home for a period of more than 24 hours.

**Case Review Teams:** Review teams will be composed of workers and/or supervisors from the Clark County Department of Family Services, Washoe County Department of Social Services, DCFS Rural Region, additional stakeholders and

Program Specialists from the DCFS Family Programs Office. Agency representatives will be paired with representatives from outside the region, resulting in eight review teams. The review process will be supervised by two quality assurance team members from the DCFS Family Programs Office.

**Case Review Process:** The review teams will use a standardized review instrument to assess sample cases for the agency under review. The teams also conduct interviews, where appropriate and available, with case participants, caregivers and caseworkers. Case assessment and interview results are scored using a categorical rating system to characterize review findings. Preliminary results are presented to the agency on the last day of review and final results are presented at the DMG meeting a minimum of 30 days after the case review date.

- **Review Instrument:** The current case review process uses a Qualitative Case Review Instrument adapted from the federal CFSR review protocol for the second round of CFSR Reviews. The instrument is currently available in electronic format, using the forms function in Microsoft Office Word. The instrument includes one section of case-specific demographic and other information that case reviewers must complete for each review. This is followed by an interview summary section, completed when interviews were conducted in conjunction with the case review. The instrument is divided into four additional main sections which capture seven outcome areas covered by the 23 performance indicators from the federal CFSR and a series of additional compliance items focusing on Documentation, Case Closure and Supervisory Oversight. Reviewers also use the instrument to assess host agency compliance with pertinent requirements regarding policy, regulation and statute. The Qualitative Case Review Instrument provides comprehensive instructions for each item rated. These instructions lead reviewers through the instrument with step-by-step instructions, guidance and hints. Instructions help ensure case review process uniformity across all child welfare agencies. Review Teams receive a full-day training on the review materials, Tablet PC functionality and related processes several weeks prior to the formal review. This training provides review teams an opportunity to work through the instrument using a mock case and allows time for questions and clarification following the training. The Qualitative Case Review Process was originally approved for content by the Nevada Decision Making Group (June 6, 2006) and had formatting revisions and additional explanation on review items completed in May 2007 by the Quality Improvement Office. The current electronic version of the tool was reviewed and approved for use by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) in the spring of 2008. The SQIC included representatives from each of the three child welfare jurisdictions and the Division of Child and Family Services, Information Management Services (IMS) and Family Programs Offices. This tool will be converted in the future to a UNITY based system as outlined in Performance Indicator Item 31 in Section V of this document.
- **Review Interviews:** The Case Review process includes information gathered from Case Review Team interviews with caseworkers, parents, foster parents, children (when applicable and available), and other stakeholders associated with the reviewed sample cases. The second section of the Qualitative Case Review Instrument records interviewee name(s), case relationship, date and method (in-person or telephone) in which the interview was conducted. In the event review teams do not feel interviews with caseworkers, parents, foster parents, etc. are necessary, they are encouraged to interview case participants to explore their feelings regarding the case handling and results.
- **Review Ratings:** The Qualitative Case Review Instrument provides Case Reviewers a series of questions for each of 23 performance indicators categorized under the seven outcome ratings in the areas of Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being. Each performance indicator (item) is rated as a "strength," an "area needing improvement," or "not applicable." The criteria for outcome ratings differ for each outcome. Item ratings interact in various combinations to provide the outcome ratings of "substantially achieved," "partially achieved," "not achieved" and "not applicable." A single item rating as a "strength" is not directly transferable to an outcome rating of "substantially achieved." Reviewers complete final outcome ratings for each of the seven outcome areas. Percentages are calculated using the number of applicable cases for each outcome.
- **Exit Conference:** A preliminary debriefing or Exit Conference is held via teleconference following the review. Participants include agency designated representatives from the agency under review. The Quality Improvement Program Office Manager and Program Specialists from the DCFS Family Programs Office deliver preliminary findings and briefly outline how each of the outcomes and performance indicators have changed or remained the same since the previous baseline scores. The Exit Conference provides the agency under review an opportunity to discuss the results and ask questions. The findings in the final report are used to identify areas needing improvement in practice and policy, as well as training needs. The results may also assist in identifying resources needed within the agency and service gaps in the communities served by the agency under review.

- **Process Evaluation:** The Quality Improvement Office provides each of the case review team members with a process evaluation form examining the usability of the case review instrument, interview questions, training, review location and overall experience of the team members in conducting the case reviews. This form was first implemented at the March 2007 case review of Clark County, and was revised to include questions examining the training content in August, 2008. Results from the process evaluation are used to improve the case review process and training. Results are reported separately in a final report once all three child welfare agencies have been assessed in an annual round of reviews.

**Post Review Process:** Beginning with the March 2007 CCDFS Review, the Quality Improvement Office introduced an improved ranking system that assisted the child welfare agencies in implementing their Agency Improvement Plans (AIP). This ranking system was approved by the DMG in July 2007. In the past, AIP's have included any performance indicator with any cases listed with area's needing improvement. As a result, any performance indicator item that did not reach either the federal guideline (one of the top ten items identified in 2004) or 100% compliance for all cases reviewed was included on the AIP. This resulted in nearly every performance indicator needing action steps. Beginning with the August 2008 round of reviews, all child welfare agencies began to be assessed based on a compliance level of 95% of cases rated as a "strength" for each item. In an effort to move the child welfare agencies to this level of compliance, new rankings will be displayed, showing all items and their Strength rating. Results will compare current strengths against previous and baseline scores. This system allows the agency to see areas where they have met and exceeded standards, along with those areas that may require some improvement.

- **Agency Improvement Plans:** After receiving a DMG approved copy of the agency final report, the agency under review is responsible for addressing all those case areas reflecting an "Area Needing Improvement" in a post-review AIP. The agency under review is provided with a list of outcomes that must be addressed with measurable action steps in the updated AIP. The measurable action steps for addressing priorities in the AIP should include tasks and responsibilities at the Agency, Supervisor and Caseworker level and will include timeframes for completing requirements. The Quality Improvement Office will work with individual agencies to amend and streamline current AIP's to reflect the new measurable outcomes format and to ensure that there are no duplicative items. As in the past, once an agency's AIP is approved, they will continue reporting monthly to DMG on progress being made in achieving its measurable outcomes. The AIP will reflect a plan in spreadsheet form for how the outcomes will be achieved by the next review period, including the following plan areas: Outcome Code; Measurable Outcome; Causative Factors; Measurable Action Steps (including responsibilities at the Agency, Supervisor and Caseworker level); Methods for Measuring Improvement; and Status Updates (a column for reporting progress in monthly reports). Any items that are part of the 2010 PIP will not be duplicated on Agency Improvement Plans, unless the review demonstrates that a previously met item is no longer being achieved as of the date of the review.

### **Development of a Continuous Quality Improvement Loop:**

This section of the Quality Improvement Framework will outline the process for ensuring ongoing quality improvement feedback loops to and from DCFS, the child welfare agencies and key stakeholders. The SQIC will be responsible for developing the process for completing the required Annual Services Progress Report (APSR) and the process for making recommendations for the upcoming year's Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) Work Plan (as part of the APSR). This process will ensure that findings gleaned from the previously described sections are reflected in the training of Nevada's workforce and placement resources, future policy revision or development, and/or future changes in child welfare practice. The data gathered from the above processes will be included annually in the APSR and will be used in outlining the upcoming year's SQIC Work Plan. The following steps will be taken to outline this section of the framework:

- The SQIC will draft an outline of the 2010 APSR Report document (to be modeled after the CFSP) and recommendations for the development and tracking of the Annual SQIC Work Plan by March 2010.
- The SQIC will present their process recommendations to DMG for approval by April 2010.
- The FPO will compile all required preliminary information (data reports updated through March 31<sup>st</sup>) for the APSR by April 15<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year and will submit to SQIC, DMG members, and key stakeholders for review and comment in preparation for the development of the upcoming fiscal year's work plan.
- SQIC & DMG Members will review and provide comments on the APSR and will collaborate on the development of a finalized SQIC Work Plan to FPO Management by May 15<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year.
- FPO Management will make any required updates and include data from reports for April, May and June in the final document to be delivered to ACF on June 30<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year.

## Section IV. Safety, Permanency and Well-Being Performance Indicators

Each of the performance indicators listed in this section mirrors the 23 items from the Federal Child and Family Services Review Instrument. The overall structure for each performance indicator includes the legal requirements for each item, past case review data and other applicable data for each item, the overall goal to be reached, and specific objectives for that item. In general, the goal will mirror the federal compliance question and may or may not include more specific compliance areas to be reached based on state statute, regulation or policy.

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

#### ***Item 1: Timeliness of initiation investigations of reports of child maltreatment***

##### ***Requirements:***

NRS sets forth parameters for developing regulations establishing reasonable and uniform standards for child welfare services across the state to include criteria mandating certain situations be responded to immediately (NRS 432B.260) and that determinations of abuse and/or neglect be made in cases in which an investigation has occurred. NAC requires a process be established when receiving a referral and determining if that referral constitutes a report of abuse or neglect.

Statewide Intake and Nevada Initial Assessment policies have standardized Child Protective Services (CPS) Intake procedures and investigations statewide. The intake policy requires upon receipt of a referral and prior to disposition of the report, the intake worker must complete a thorough data search in the UNITY system to locate and review prior allegations or reports of child maltreatment in Nevada. Nevada also implemented an Information Collection Standard (IOC). The IOC refers to six critical areas that are used for assessing and analyzing family strengths, risk of maltreatment and child safety. Intake decision-making is influenced by the information obtained from a reporting party. Structuring intake information collection contributes to more efficient practice and has resulted in a better quality of information upon which staff base screening and urgency response decisions.

Nevada Supervisors or their agency designees, (or lead workers, based on child welfare agency preference) must review reports received by the child welfare agency regardless of the screening recommendation made by the intake worker. In addition, Washoe County requires that a manager review and approve an Information Only (I/O) screening recommendation by a supervisor if the report involves young children and the case circumstances include both domestic violence and methamphetamines. The manager determines if an investigation will be conducted even if the initial report did not contain a clear allegation of abuse or neglect. Although Washoe County has established this additional procedure, it has not been adopted statewide.

Statewide collaborative policy 0506 Intake sets parameters for child welfare agency response times which are dependent upon the vulnerability of the child, the level of safety (present and Impending Danger) as indicated in the report. Present and/or impending danger is the essential safety standard(s) that is used to determine how urgently an investigation needs to be initiated as indicated below:

- Priority 1: Present Danger, initiate face-to-face contact by an urban child welfare agency within 3 hours; however Rural priority 1 requires that the child welfare agency initiate face to face contact within 6 hours (when the location of the family is more than 50 miles from the nearest worker).
- Priority 2: Impending Danger; initiate face-to-face contact by child welfare agency within 24 hours.
- Priority 3: Maltreatment Indicated, but no safety threats identified; initiate face-to-face contact by the child welfare agency within 72 hours. NAC 432B.155 does permit for investigations to be 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 and on each successive business day until the supervisor determines that a resolution has been achieved. "Business day" means Monday through Friday, excluding state and federal holidays.

In addition in Clark County if an investigation remains open beyond 45 days children must be seen once every fourteen days by the assigned CPS worker until the investigation is closed.

### Statewide Data:

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was initially given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that Nevada’s child welfare agencies were 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 or within reasonable timeframes. Subsequent case reviews results shown in Table 1 below indicate an increase in percentage of cases rated as a “strength”. In addition, the 07B08A data profile shows the mean time to investigation in hours as 38 hours.

<b>Table 1.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.	69.6% (n=27)	69.7% (n=37)	92% (n=50)	83.4% (n=47)

Nevada’s negotiated PIP goal for Item 1 was 90%. The CFSR rated the state at 69.6% and the first round of case review data indicated a similar finding. During the case reviews in 2007, which was the established non-overlapping PIP year, the data compiled during that time frame would determine whether the state had met the negotiated PIP goals. The Initial submission indicated a 68.1% rating, however upon further evaluation of the case reviews completed in 2007, it was determined that the difference in state policy response times resulted in the skewed data. Thirty six cases were reviewed and out of the thirty six, thirty four (92%) had the investigation initiated within the appropriate timeframe allowed by state policy related to priority levels. Following the non-overlapping PIP period and comparing 2007 data to 2008, there has been a decrease, which may be attributed to the particular sample pulled, the revised case review tool and/or the sample used for the DCFS Rural Region. Prior to 2008, a specific district within the Rural Region was chosen and reviewed each year, resulting in a 90% or above outcome for the DCFS, Rural Region two years in a row. In 2008 all the districts within the Rural Region were combined and a representative sample was pulled which included cases from each district. While Clark County has not achieved the timeliness goal for this item it should be noted that they made significant strides toward the goal, moving from 50% in 2006 and 2007 to 77.8 % in 2008. It should also be noted that Washoe County met the timeliness goal in 2007 and exceeded the goal in 2008.

Washoe County has four bilingual human service specialists (case aides) who provide Spanish interpretation and available to respond with English speaking case workers during the investigative process. It is unclear if this capacity has had any impact on Washoe’s timeliness, but does have the potential to do so.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an: **Area Needing Improvement.**

### Goal:

- To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received are initiated and face-to-face contact with the child has been made, within the timeframes established by statewide policy.

### Objectives:

- The State will ensure that responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports are initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child is made within the timeframes established by statewide policy and that appropriate documentation (including reasons why timelines were not met, if applicable) is made in UNITY in 95% of cases reviewed.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

**Measures of Progress:**

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 1.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 1**

Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	83.4% (n=47)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	77.8% (n=14)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	94.7% (n=18)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	75.0% (n=15)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 2: Repeat maltreatment**

**Requirements:**

Nevada statute requires the child welfare agency to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe any child has been abused or neglected, to determine the immediate and long term risk to the child if he remains in the same environment and sets forth options if a determination is made that the child needs protection but is not in imminent danger from abuse or neglect.

NAC 432B.150 requires that evaluations or investigations are conducted in such a manner as to determine how the child is being affected by the situation and whether the child is: currently safe, at risk of abuse or neglect, or threatened with harm and whether the child and his parents should receive child welfare services or whether the family should be referred to an agency which provides family assessment services. Caseworkers are to consider the circumstances of the entire family and assess the protective needs of all the children in the family during the investigation.

There are several statewide policies that pertain to this item. The NIA is a methodical, investigative process for interacting with a family for the purpose of identifying negative factors or conditions that are known to contribute to the likelihood of maltreatment, as well as determine the strengths and/or protective capacities that can help mitigate risk and safety threats. The NIA utilizes the Information Collection Standard (ICS), which refers to six critical areas of casework-family study that must be understood in order to effectively assess child safety. The six areas are: 1) surrounding circumstances accompanying the maltreatment. 2) child functioning on a daily basis; 3) adult functioning with respect to daily life management and general adaptation (including mental health functioning and substance usage); 4) disciplinary approaches used by the parent; 5) overall, typical, pervasive parenting practices; and 6) the extent of maltreatment. The interviewing of family members and collateral parties outlined in the Interview Protocol was designed to ensure that sufficient information is obtained to fully assess parental functioning and protective capacities. The assessment process

results in a conclusion regarding the existence of present and/or impending danger. The NIA is used for all investigations. Information gathered from the tool should result in more individualized case plans that are tailored to each family's unique situation.

The Risk Assessment identifies the level of future risk of maltreatment. A statewide collaborative policy on Risk Assessment was developed and implemented requiring the use of a standardized risk assessment tool that includes family violence and substance abuse components. The tool is designed to be used at the completion of the investigation. The final risk level is meant to guide the decision to close an investigation or to provide ongoing services to the family. In the instance of a family with a risk score of high or very high, the investigation should be opened for services and only closed with supervisory approval. Investigations of families with moderate or low risk scores can be closed, but should be opened and provided services if any safety threats are identified.

Finally, the Differential Response (DR) Program was piloted in Washoe, Clark and Elko Counties in 2007 and expanded statewide in 2008-2009. Policy was developed that outlines the process for referral to Differential Response programs from child welfare agencies, it dictates type of cases that can be referred and timeframes for the DR agency to both respond and complete their family assessment. Reports assigned to a DR program are limited to Priority 3 reports in the following categories: educational neglect, environmental neglect, physical neglect, medical neglect and improper supervision.

**Statewide Data:**

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that both the data profile and case reviews indicate the state is not effective in preventing recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period. 2004 CFSR findings also indicated that Nevada was not consistent in providing services to children and families to ensure children's safety while they remain in the home or at addressing risk of harm to children by monitoring case progress through ongoing safety and risk assessments at case milestones. Subsequent case reviews results shown in Table 2 indicate a large increase in percentage of cases scored as a "strength", with a slight decline in the review done in 2008. SOAR Reports indicate that Nevada was not meeting the standard of ≤6.1% as the reported score for December 2007 was 7.4%. In addition, absence of repeat maltreatment occurred at a rate of 93.6% in the 2008 Data Profile.

<b>Table 2.2: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>CFSR 2004</b>	<b>QICR 2006</b>	<b>QICR 2007</b>	<b>QICR 2008</b>
Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment	43% (n=44)	94.4% (n=40)	96% (n=52)	87.5% (n=41)

Nevada has continued to work diligently for the last 2 years developing our safety model. During that time extensive training in the NIA and safety concepts has occurred in addition to QICR activities to assess practice statewide. Due to concerns about field level application of the model that arose from QICR reviews, in September 2008 the state contracted with Action for Child Protection to do a review of 178 cases, specifically targeting the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) and safety assessment practices. The review resulted in recommendations for changes to the policy and the tool. The state has begun the process to establish an additional contract with Action for Child Protection to make the necessary revisions. The staff at Action for Child Protection will assist Family Programs Office staff in developing changes for the existing NIA and safety assessment policy and development of UNITY tools to enable documentation that fits and supports casework practice. Action for Child Protection will also focus efforts on capacity building in Nevada by developing purveyors who are experts in the safety practice model. The goal is to develop internal child welfare agency experts with the Nevada Initial Assessment and Safety Assessment to lessen the need for outside and additional resources/support.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

**Goal:**

- To determine if any child in the family experienced repeat maltreatment within a 6-month period.



*Objectives:*

- Children in the child welfare system in Nevada will not have experienced an incidence of repeat maltreatment within a 6-month period in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 2.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 2**

Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	87.5% (n=41)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	87.5% (n=14)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	81.3% (n=13)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	93.3% (n=14)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible**

**Item 3: Services to families to protect children in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care**

*Requirements:*

Pursuant to NRS 432B.340, when an agency which provides child welfare services determines that a child needs protection, but is not in imminent danger from abuse or neglect, the agency may offer the parents a plan for services and inform the parents that the agency has no legal authority to compel the family to accept the plan or file a petition pursuant to NRS 432B.490 and if the child is need of protection, request that the child be removed from the custody of his or her parents. NRS 432B.393 requires that the agency which provides child welfare services makes reasonable efforts to keep the child safely in the home before consideration is made to place the child outside of the home

Nevada is operating in accordance with NAC 432B.160 and policy 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) which establishes a methodical investigative process for interacting with a family for the purpose of identifying negative factors or conditions that are known to contribute to the likelihood of the maltreatment, as well as determine the strengths and/or protective capacities that can assist in mitigating risk and safety threats. Pursuant to NAC 432B.150, the assessment process results in a conclusion regarding the existence of present and/or impending danger. Assessments of risk and safety must be made at the appropriate case milestones in accordance with NAC 432B.180. Those decisions include the provision of child welfare services for the child, from intake through case closure. The assessment must be future-oriented rather than based solely on the child’s injuries or current condition. Risk assessments identify the level of risk for future maltreatment.

Pursuant to NAC 432B.185 the safety assessment is the systematic collection of information about threatening family conditions and current, significant, and clearly observable threats to the safety of a child. The purpose of assessing safety is to determine whether a child is likely to be in present or imminent danger of serious physical or other type of harm that may require a protective intervention. The purpose of developing a safety plan is to insure the immediate protection of a child while safety threats are being addressed.

Policy 0503 Differential Response procedures outlined in the policy are activated when reports alleging child neglect and a determination has been made that the report does not rise above a priority three, however based on the information provided at Intake, it appears that the family is likely to benefit from early intervention through an assessment of the family for appropriate services.

It is the responsibility of the agency which provides child welfare services per NAC 432B.240 to provide a range of services and commit its resources to preserve the family and prevent placement of the child outside his/her home when possible and appropriate. All cases open for service must have a written collaborative case plan (NAC 432B.240 and Policy 0204 Case Planning) 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.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that of 20% of the cases reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to provide the services necessary to maintain children safely in their own home. Results from subsequent case reviews conducted in the three years following show a steady increase in the percentage of scores rated as a “strength”. These scores are listed in Table 3.1. In addition, 62.5% of judges felt that the child welfare agency was effective in referring for or providing services, when appropriate to prevent the removal of children from their homes.

<b>Table 3.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.	80.0% (n=48)	87.8% (n=33)	92.85% (n=52)	93.2% (n=63)

Data from the surveys conducted for the current Statewide Assessment in Table 3.2 below show that there are many services needed to help ensure that children remain safely in their homes. Respondents from the Tribal, Judicial, Stakeholder, Child Advocate and Caregiver Surveys are represented in this table. The importance of each service (on a

scale of 1 – 6, with 6 being “Very Important”) is presented in descending rank order, with the most important service listed first.

**Table 3.2: 2009 Survey Responses Child Advocate, Judicial, Stakeholder and Caregiver Surveys**

<b>Importance of Services to Ensuring that Children Remain Safely in their Homes</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD*</b>
Substance Abuse Treatment for the Parents	303	1	5	1450	4.79	0.70
Mental Health Treatment for the Parents	298	1	6	1393	4.67	0.79
Anger Management Classes for the Parents	295	1	6	1357	4.60	0.83
Mental Health Treatment for the Child	293	1	5	1343	4.58	0.85
Behavioral Services	292	1	5	1309	4.48	0.85
Domestic Violence Prevention	297	1	5	1327	4.47	0.90
Parenting Classes	299	1	5	1334	4.46	0.92
Medical Care (Child and Parent)	300	1	5	1338	4.46	0.89
Educational Services for Children with Learning and Related Disabilities	297	1	6	1316	4.43	0.91
Medicaid Providers	296	1	5	1289	4.35	0.92
Substance Abuse Treatment for the Child	276	1	6	1189	4.31	1.20
Family Preservation	293	1	6	1249	4.26	1.06
Child Care Assistance	290	1	6	1204	4.15	1.06
Developmental Services	281	1	6	1143	4.07	1.03
Low Income Housing	286	1	5	1156	4.04	1.13
Dental Services	291	1	6	1174	4.03	1.06
Transportation	299	1	5	1178	3.94	1.13
Income Assistance	294	1	6	1154	3.93	1.12
Parent Aid Services	275	1	6	1058	3.85	1.10
Homemaker Services	274	1	6	960	3.50	1.24

Table 3.3 shows the responses of caseworkers and supervisors, reflecting the number of cases each of the services impacted the most. Substance Abuse Treatment for Parents is the top service reflected in both sets of surveys. The next top five services impacting the majority of cases for children in care are different from those listed as the most important by stakeholders of all types. Overall, 68.8% of judges reported that the most important service need in their district was mental health treatment for the parents, followed by 43.8% reporting that substance abuse treatment for the parents was the most important need.

**Table 3.3: 2009 Survey Responses Caseworker and Supervisor Survey**

<b>Importance of Services to Ensuring that Children Remain Safely in their Homes</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>No Cases 0%</b>	<b>Minority of Cases 20-40%</b>	<b>Majority of Cases 60-100%</b>
Substance Abuse Treatment for Parents	295	2.7	12.6	84.8
Parenting Classes	295	4.1	24.4	71.5
Low Income Housing	289	4.5	25.9	69.6
Medicaid Providers	289	5.5	29.7	64.8
Income Assistance	290	6.6	29	64.5
Medical Care (Child and Parent)	293	4.1	33.5	62.5
Mental Health Treatment for the Parents	290	4.1	34.8	61.1
Behavioral Services	289	3.8	37.4	58.8
Transportation	293	5.5	37.5	57.1
Child Care Assistance	295	5.4	39.3	55.3
Anger Management Classes for Parents	290	5.9	44.9	49.4
Family Preservation	294	7.5	43.1	49.4
Domestic Violence Prevention	289	5.9	45.7	48.5
Educational Services for Children with Learning and Related Disabilities	293	6.8	49.8	43.3
Mental Health Treatment for the Child	287	5.9	50.9	43.2
Dental Services	287	12.9	47	40
Developmental Services	291	7.6	59.8	32.7
Parent Aid Services	293	20.1	53.3	26.7
Homemaker Services	290	23.1	50.7	26.2
Substance Abuse Treatment for the Child	280	53.6	42.2	4.3

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

**Goal:**

- To determine whether the State is making concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

**Objectives:**

- The State will evaluate case records to determine that concerted efforts to provide or arrange for appropriate services for the family to protect children and prevent their entry into foster care or re-entry into foster care after a reunification and that this information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that if a child was removed from the home without providing for or arranging for services that the action was necessary to ensure the child's safety and that this information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### Measures of Progress:

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 3.3: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 3**

Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	93.2% (n=63)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	83.3% (n=20)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=21)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	95.7% (n=22)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

### Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management

#### Requirements:

Per NAC 432B.150, when an agency which provides child welfare services receives a report made pursuant to NRS 432B.220, or from law enforcement, an initial evaluation must be conducted to determine if the situation or condition of the child makes child welfare services appropriate.

If an agency assigns the report for investigation, a safety assessment is required to be completed upon the initial face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim pursuant to NAC 432B.185. Policy 0510 defines the purpose of assessing safety is 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. In addition, NAC 432B.185 requires the development of a safety plan to ensure the immediate protection of a child while safety threats are being addressed. A Safety Assessment is required to be completed at case milestones as outlined in NAC 432B.185.

Assessments of risk must also be made at the appropriate case milestones in accordance with NAC 432B.180 and Policy 0511 Risk Assessment, which states that an assessment of risk to a child must be conducted and considered as part of each significant decision made in a child welfare case. The assessment must be future-oriented rather than based solely on the child’s injuries or current condition. Risk assessment identifies the level of risk for future maltreatment. Policies 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment and 0503 Differential Response are also applicable to this item.

All cases open for services must have a written collaborative case plan per policy 0204 Case Planning which is developed based on the needs identified in the Safety and Risk Assessments, 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. When the case plan has been successfully completed pursuant to NAC 432B.310, services must be terminated once an assessment of safety and risk of future harm to a child have been completed determining; the child is safe, the risk of future harm to the child is minimal; and the parent is protecting the child.

**Statewide Data:**

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that in 67% of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the child. One key concern was that cases were being closed without conducting a safety assessment when there was substantial evidence that risk issues had not been addressed. Subsequent case reviews conducted by the State since that time indicate an increase in the number of cases rated as a “strength”.

	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	67.0% (n=24)	67.84% (n=40)	86.93% (n=52)	79.7% (n=62)

In the 2009 Statewide Assessment Surveys Caseworkers and Supervisors additionally reported that workers use the Nevada Initial Assessment in the 60-100% of their cases 50.5% of the time, and 16% of the minority of cases (20-40%). The Safety Assessment is reported to be used in 60-100% of cases 84.9% of the time, and Risk Assessment is used in the majority of cases 64.7% of the time. The largest barriers affecting the majority of cases to using these assessments as reported by caseworkers and supervisors include caseload size (53.1%) and caseload growth (52.3%). Inadequate training and issues with the tool itself are also reported to be an issue in a minority of cases (43.9%).

In addition, judges and child advocates indicated that they were somewhat aware of policy requirements for conducting safety assessments; specifically, 53.3% of judges and 59.7% of child advocates. In addition, 63.6% of child advocates, 68.8% of judges, and 63.9% of stakeholders indicated that in their perception, child welfare agencies are somewhat to moderately effective in identifying and assessing safety and risk of harm issues at key decision making points throughout the case. Further, 78.6% of judges who responded to the survey indicated that caseworkers’ court action requests for removal and placement are appropriately based on assessments of safety. Finally, 86.7% of judges indicate that they use the results of the safety assessment for their determination in removing the child.

In the 2009 agency survey, caseworkers and supervisors reported that out of 300 responses, 92 had cases where the child felt unsafe while in care (30.7%). Of these, they indicated that it was another teen or child that made the child in care feel unsafe in a majority of cases this occurred 30.4% of the time, followed by foster parents (28.8%) and other adults (20%). Table 4.2 below shows the use of assessments in casework practice.

**Table 4.2: 2009 Survey of Caseworkers and Supervisors - Use of Assessments in Casework Practice**

Assessment	N	No Cases 0%	Minority of Cases 20-40%	Majority of Cases 60-100%
NIA-Nevada Initial Assessment	269	33.5	16	50.5
Safety Assessment	291	7.9	7.2	84.9
Risk Assessment	274	20.1	15.3	64.7
Other Assessment	171	41.5	12.3	46.2

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a: **Strength.**

**Goal:**

- To determine whether the State is making concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

**Objectives:**

- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to conduct an initial assessment of risk to the target child in foster care and/or any children in the family remaining in the home will ensure that this information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to conduct an ongoing assessment of risk (as outlined in policy\*) of the target child in foster care and/or any children in the family remaining in the home will ensure that this

information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases. \*Policy 0509 indicates that on-going risk assessment occurs by the review of case plans with caregivers and at Child and Family Team meetings, monthly in-home contacts and by monitoring the family's progress with treatment providers.

- The State will ensure that all safety concerns related to the target child in foster care or any children in the family remaining in the home are adequately and appropriately addressed and that this information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that all visitations with family members include appropriate measures to ensure the child's safety during the visit and that this information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that appropriate measures are taken to ensure the child's safety in his or her foster care placement and that this information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that all children who are discharged from foster care to be reunited with parents or relatives or returned home on a trial home visits have a thorough safety assessment completed prior to placement and that this information is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 4.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 4**

Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	79.7% (n=62)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	75% (n=24)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	95.8% (n=23)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	62.5% (n=15)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

### Item 5: Foster care re-entries

#### Requirements:

Nevada statutes and regulations state that one of the key objectives of the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is to plan and coordinate the provision of services for the support of families, in order to maintain the integrity of families and ensure that children are not unnecessarily removed from their homes (NRS 432.011(2)(b)). This includes providing counseling, training, involvement of parents in case planning, and other services to families, even if a report of abuse or neglect is received but it is determined that an investigation is not warranted at the time (NRS 432B.393).

Nevada statute also requires an agency which provides child welfare services to make reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify the family of a child before the placement of the child in foster care, to prevent or eliminate the need for removal from the home. Regulations require caseworkers to identify and utilize the family's strengths and resources (NAC 432B.200), and to provide services designed to strengthen parental capacity to care for the children (NAC 432B.210).

DCFS Policy regarding Case Planning (0204) reiterates these same requirements in greater detail, providing guidance to staff in how to accomplish the goals of the statutory and regulatory framework. Child welfare agencies in Nevada have adopted a practice of maintaining legal custody of the child for up to six months after the child has been physically reunified. This practice is designed to ensure that parents are continuing to utilize the available services outlined above and to provide post-reunification services, including intensive family preservation services, when problems arise.

#### Statewide Data:

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Strength" based on the finding that in 98 percent of the applicable cases, children entering foster care during the period under review were not entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode, and the data from the State Data Profile indicated that Nevada's re-entry rate of 6.9 percent exceeds the national standard of 8.6 percent or less. Stakeholders commenting on this item during the previous CFSR expressed the opinion that re-entry into foster care is relatively rare. They attributed this to the practice of the child welfare agency maintaining legal custody of the child for up to six months after the child has been physically reunified.

Subsequent reviews conducted by the state in 2006 – 2008 show a consistent increase in the percentage of strength scores. These are listed in Table 5 below. In addition, the current data profile (12/01/2008) reflects the State's scaled composite score for Permanency Composite 1 is 152.8, which exceeds the national standard of 122.6. The Component B, measure C(1)-4 score for Re-entries to foster care in less than 12 months is 8.7%. This measure is one of the instances where a lower score is preferable, and Nevada has scored below the national median (15.0%) and the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile (9.9%).

Table 5.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	98% (n=24)	88.9% (n=14)	100% (n=15)	100% (n=28)

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a: **Strength**.

#### Goal:

- To assess whether children who enter foster care at a given point in time are re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

#### Objectives:

- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to prevent re-entry episodes for children who are in the foster care system and that this information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.



- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 5.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 5**

Item 5: Foster care re-entries	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	100% (n=28)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	100% (n=9)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=9)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	100% (n=10)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

*Requirements:*

Nevada Statue and 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. Relatives are the first placement option considered for all children placed in out-of-home care. Child welfare agencies are also required to place siblings together when possible. Policy requires that the agency provides the foster care provider with appropriate information about the child's family, medical, and behavioral history, as well as discussing the child's plan for permanency and any needs prior to placement. The purpose of sharing such information is to identify and provide for the most appropriate matched foster home (NRS 424.038(1), NAC 424.465). NAC further requires that information about the child's situation and needs are to be continually shared by the child welfare agency and the foster care providers in a timely manner; thereby ensuring that the child's needs are continually addressed with appropriate services, including a requirement of the agency to provide a program of respite for the foster providers (NAC 424.810, NAC 424.805). NAC supports placement stability by requiring that a foster provider provide the agency with 10 working days' notice of any request for the removal of the child from that home unless: they have a contrary agreement or if there are immediate and unanticipated safety issues, giving the agency time to respond to issues that may have caused the instability (NAC 424.478).

Placement stability is further supported by NRS, NAC and statewide policy by encouraging child welfare agencies to attain permanency in a timely fashion. State laws and regulations require that the agencies adopt a plan for the permanent placement of the child. This plan is to be monitored by the court at the time the youth is placed in foster care and annually

thereafter. The plan for permanent placement or case plan is to include a statement addressing goals and objectives; a description of the home or institution the child is placed; and a description of the safety and appropriateness of the placement, so to ensure proper care and accomplishment of case plan goals; and that a description of the manner in which the agency ensures services are provided to the child and foster parents, which address the needs of the child. The agencies are further required to document all progress towards permanency; and in the event that a termination of parental rights requires the agency to identify and document the obstacles to permanent placement of the child and specific steps to find a stable and permanent home (NRS 432B.553, NAC 432B.400, NAC 432B.2625, Policy 0204).

Other statewide policies require caseworkers to visit children in foster care once every month and directs a portion of this monthly visit by the case workers to assess the child’s adjustment to the placement and the stability of the placement; the case workers are to meet with the foster care provider and discuss the service needs of the child or provider, that may support the placement (Policy 0205). Lastly, statewide policy supports foster care placement stability by directing agencies to utilize a Child and Family Team approach to the engagement, teaming, assessment, planning, intervening, tracking and adapting of services to achieve the well-being, permanency, and stability of children and families (Policy 0203).

**Statewide Data:**

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that only 62.5% of the cases reviewed had fewer than two placements or were currently in a stable setting. The Quality Improvement Case Reviews have shown a considerable increase in the percentage of cases that would be rated as a “strength”, however since the first round of the CFSR these results have fluctuated. These results are reported in Table 6.

<b>Table 6.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	62.5% (n=24)	94.4% (n=27)	85.0% (n=33)	92.2% (n=33)

As indicated in Table 6.2, Nevada’s SOAR data has also indicated a statewide increase in the placement stability. SOAR reports were found to be inconsistent with the QICR data in regard to how different child welfare agencies are rated over the last 5 years. This inconsistency can be best explained by a solely quantitative measure of the SOAR reports and the qualitative measure of the QICR, as SOAR data does not capture whether or not placement moves are in the best interest of the youth or if they were planned moves that related to establishing permanency for the child.

<b>Table 6.2 SOAR Data (as reported in QICR reports)</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Placement Stability	≥74.9%	no data	75.43%	76.96%

The Nevada CFSR Data Profile indicates a slight decrease in the state score from the 12-month period ending 03/31/2007 and the score for the 12-month period ending 03/31/2008. Again the data captured in the CFSR Data Profile, like SOAR data, is solely quantitative and while it is consistent with the SOAR data, it is inconsistent with QICR data. Despite these inconsistencies, overall, the Data Profile, SOAR data, and the QICR results all show and increase in cases that would be rated a “strength” since the CFSR reviews in 2004.

In the 2009 Statewide Assessment Surveys, 51.2% Caseworkers and Supervisors report that children have had more than one placement after being removed from their homes in a minority (20-40%) of cases. In addition, 60.3% of child advocates, 66.7% of judges, 65.1% of caregivers and 47.7% of stakeholders indicate that in their perception, child welfare agencies are somewhat to moderately effective in providing placement stability for children in foster care (minimizing placement changes).

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an: **Area Needing Improvement.**

**Goal:**

- To determine if the child in foster care is in a stable placement and that any changes in placement that have occurred are in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goals.

**Objectives:**

- The State will ensure that the child’s placement is stable and if a placement move was necessary, that they were made in an effort to achieve the child’s case goals or meet the needs of the child and that this information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

**Measures of Progress:**

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 6.3: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 6**

Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	92.2% (n=33)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	83.3% (n=10)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	91.7% (n=11)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	100% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 7: Permanency goal for child**

**Requirements:**

NRS 432B.393, .540, .553, .580 and .590 require the agencies that provide child welfare services to adopt a plan for permanency in accordance with the requirements and timeframes in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA); including periodic case review by the Courts. NAC 423B.013, .1364, .1366, .160, .180, .185, .190, .200, .210, .240, .261, .2625 and .263 provide the authority and requirements for assessing the child’s safety needs, child and family strengths, needs and risk factors to determine the most appropriate permanency goal(s).

The statewide 0204 Case Planning policy, based upon the existing statutory authority and regulations cited, was developed by a statewide team to fulfill Action Step 7.1 in the state’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Steps required to determine the most appropriate permanency goal for a particular child include; a collective assessment process beginning with solution focused and strength based engagement and partnering with the family, an immediate diligent search for possible non-custodial parents, relatives or fictive kin, who are able to commit to permanency or to providing emotional support/relationship for the child, a determination of the applicability of Indian Child Welfare Act, and use of the Concurrent Planning Guide to identify indicators suggesting the likelihood of early reunification or suggesting the need for concurrent planning.

The 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), 0511 Risk Assessment and 0510 Safety Assessment policies guide the collection of information used to determine the appropriate case plan goal(s) and the services needed to support achievement. The ASFA policy specifically directs development of an appropriate and comprehensive case plan to address the safe return of the child to the family when a child cannot remain safely in their home during crisis period. Diligent Search Process and Relative Placement Decisions directs the identifying, locating and contacting of relatives regarding their interest in providing a temporary or permanent placement for or adopting a child prior to or when the child is placed in substitute care.

**Statewide Data:**

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of an “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that in 29% of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the child welfare agency had not established an appropriate goal for the child in a timely manner. However, in subsequent reviews conducted by the state, Nevada has shown a steady increase in performance as shown in Table 7.1.

<b>Table 7.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>CFSR 2004</b>	<b>QICR 2006</b>	<b>QICR 2007</b>	<b>QICR 2008</b>
Item 7: Permanency goal for children	71% (n=24)	83.3% (n=18)	92.9% (n=20)	94.6% (n=34)

The State’s performance on permanency data profile element III and first-time entry cohort profile data element III concerning placement goals for children in care demonstrate that the majority of children in both instances have a permanency goal of reunification (51% and 55.1%, respectively in FFY 2007). The second most prevalent goal is that of adoption, with 27.8% and 5.9% respectively.

Results of the 2009 Statewide Assessment surveys indicate that 100% of judges surveyed are aware of child welfare policy requirements regarding permanency and that 60% of judges frequently agree with the child welfare agencies recommendation in making case goal decisions for children in foster care whenever the family’s circumstances change. In addition, 57.1% of judges feel that the child welfare agency is somewhat effective in concurrent planning efforts. Caseworkers and supervisors report that the concurrent planning guide is used to determine the need for concurrent planning in the majority (60-100%) of cases 42.1% of the time; that cases include a concurrent planning goal when one is warranted 74.5% of the time; and that the concurrent plan is implemented at the same time as the primary goal 64.6% of the time. Focus groups with the managers in child welfare do not agree with this finding and suggest that concurrent planning is occurring at a much lesser rate.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a: **Strength.**

**Goal:**

- To determine whether appropriate permanency goals are established for the child in a timely manner.

**Objectives:**

- The State will ensure that the child’s initial permanency goal and any amendments to the child’s initial permanency goal are established in a timely manner and that the goal is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that the child’s permanency goal is appropriate to the child’s needs for permanency and to the circumstances of the case and that the information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.

- The State will ensure that cases that meet ASFA and statewide policy criteria for termination of parental rights (TPR) have a TPR petition filed in a timely manner (unless there is a compelling reason documented not to do so) and that the information is documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

**Measures of Progress:**

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 7.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 7**

Item 7: Permanency goal for children	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	94.6% (n=34)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	91.7% (n=11)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	91.7% (n=11)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	100% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

**Requirements:**

NRS 432B.390 specifically mandates that relatives of the child within the third degree of consanguinity be given preference for placement over an unrelated caregiver, when removal from the parents' home is necessary for the child's safety (effective July 1, 2009, Senate Bill 342 from the 2009 Legislative Session, gives preference to relative placements within the fifth degree of consanguinity). NRS 432B.393 requires agencies to make reasonable efforts to prevent a child's removal from the parents' home, or if removal is necessary, reasonable efforts to make their safe return possible. NRS 432B.540 requires that if the agency believes it is necessary to remove the child from the physical custody of his/her parents, it must submit a plan designed to achieve placement of the child in a safe setting as near to the residence of

his/her parent as is possible and consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child. NAC 432B.190, 200, 210 and 220 each place emphasis on the ways in which the agency is to engage the family and their natural, informal supports such as extended family, fictive kin, close friends, members of their faith community, teachers, etc. to keep the child safe while committing to the long-term support of the child and family.

In addition, 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), 0510 Safety Assessment and 0511 Risk Assessment policies guide the collection of information used to determine the appropriate case plan goal(s), identify the strengths (including protective capacity) of the family and the services needed to support achievement of a goal of reunification. The 0501 Adoption and Safe Families Act 1997 (ASFA): Reasonable Efforts to Maintain Child in Home policy specifically directs that “reasonable efforts” must be made to prevent the removal of children from their homes and, whenever, possible, to reunify children placed in foster care with their families. Reasonable efforts must be determined on a case-by-case basis and the child’s health and safety must be of paramount concern. 1001 Diligent Search Process and Placement Decisions policy directs the identifying, locating and contacting of relatives regarding their interest in providing a temporary or permanent placement for or adopting a child prior to or when the child is placed in substitute care.

**Statewide Data:**

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that in 42% of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the child welfare agency had not made concerted efforts to attain the goal of reunification in a timely manner. However, during the three following years, reviews conducted by the state have shown a steady increase in the number of cases scored as a “strength”.

<b>Table 8.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>CFSR 2004</b>	<b>QICR 2006</b>	<b>QICR 2007</b>	<b>QICR 2008</b>
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	58% (n=19)	75.6% (n=13)	91.7% (n=24)	97.1% (n=31)

The 2009 Statewide Assessment surveys show that caseworkers and supervisors that out of 280 respondents statewide, 87.9% felt that caseworkers gave preference to relative caregivers, when appropriate, in 60-100% of their cases. In addition, judges felt that the courts and the agencies were effective (50% Effective, 50% Somewhat Effective) in working together to achieve permanency goals of reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a: **Strength.**

**Goal:**

- To determine whether concerted efforts are being made to achieve reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner.

**Objectives:**

- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to achieve the permanency goal of reunification in a timely manner and that efforts are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to achieve the permanency goal of guardianship in a timely manner and that efforts are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to achieve the permanency goal of permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner and that efforts are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall

functioning on this item.

- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

**Measures of Progress:**

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 8.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 8**

Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	97.1% (n=31)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	91.7% (n=11)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=8)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	100% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 9: Adoption**

**Requirements:**

NRS 432B.553 requires agencies which provide child welfare services to adopt a plan for the permanent placement of the child for review by the court. NRS 432B.580 and .590 mandate court review of the progress toward achievement of the permanency goal at a minimum of six month intervals. Further, NRS 432B.590 and NAC 432B.261-.262 presume that termination of parental rights for the purpose of adoption is in the best interest of a child who has been in out-of-home placement. Policy requires 14 months of any 20 consecutive months (a more stringent requirement than the federal 15 out of 22 months). NAC 432B.2625 requires the agency to identify and document the obstacles to placement of the child, specify the steps that will be taken to find an appropriate home for the child in a report to the court if a child has not been placed into an adoptive home within 90 days after the termination of parental rights.

Although there is nothing in policy that repeats these requirements, 0204 Case Planning and 0103 Adoption of Children 12 Years and Older policies are explicit that adoption is the preferred permanency goal when it is determined that a child cannot be reunited with his or her birth family. Legal adoption is preferred because it offers the highest level of physical, legal and emotional safety and security for each child within a family relationship. 1001 Diligent Search Process and Placement Decisions policy directs agencies to begin search activities and identification of family members during the initial contact with the family and requires they be initiated no later than at the time the Safety Plan is completed. Once a non-custodial parent or relative is found, they must be contacted within five working days to discuss interest as a placement option and/or emotional support for the child. 0514 Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) policy requires the agency to make and finalize permanency plans by no later than 12 months after the child's removal. ASFA requires that adoption proceedings be completed within 24 months of the child's entry into foster care and requires that permanency-

planning decisions involving adoption be made timely, are consistent with state and federal time frames, and consider the best interest of the child. At the end of the 14th month of the child's stay in substitute care the worker must calculate the time from the date the child entered foster care, trial home visits of up to six months, and runaways are not counted in calculating the 14 months. If the child has been in out-of-home placement for 14 of the most recent 20 months, the petition to terminate parental rights must be filed by the end of the 14th month. 0103 Adoption of Children 12 Years and Older Policy instructs agency workers to introduce to youth the need for permanent connections with caring adults and the concept of adoption; and take advantage of all opportunities during visits and collateral contacts, to engage older children in conversations about this important permanency planning requirement.

**Statewide Data:**

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that in 67 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the State had not made concerted efforts to achieve an adoption in a timely manner. Additional data from Nevada's Solutions for Online Activity Reporting (SOAR) reporting system also reflect that the state has achieved the goal of a composite score of 106.4 or higher for Adoption measures in every quarter since December 2007.

In addition, Table 9 shows that subsequent case reviews conducted by the state have shown a steady increase in the number of cases scored as a "strength".

	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 9: Adoption	33% (n=6)	88.9% (n=7)	91.7% (n=10)	100% (n=7)

However, the State's performance on permanency data profile shows a decline in the percentage of adoptions finalized within 24 months of removal from 29.5% in the 12 months ending 03/31/2007 to 20.9% in the 12 month period ending 03/31/2008. Concurrently, the median length of stay in foster care from the latest removal from home to the date of discharge to adoption increased from 31.9 months from removal to a finalized adoption the 12 months ending 03/31/2007, to 36.4 months in the 12 month period ending 03/31/2008.

Table 9.3 shows the UNITY report CFS732 – Adoptions in Less than 24 Months. This report will be used in future APSR's as a source of data to determine compliance on this item, as well as using case review results as listed above.

	Adoptions with a Custody Date in UNITY	Custody to Adoption Average Months	Number Adopted in less than 24 Months	Percent Adopted in less than 24 Months
Adoptions in Less than 24 Months – May 2009	58	39	13	22%

As the State is not minimum requirements for timely adoptions, therefore based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

**Goal:**

- To determine whether concerted efforts are being made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner.

**Objectives:**

- The State and court will ensure that concerted efforts are made to achieve the goal of finalized adoption in a timely manner and that efforts are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The state will ensure that 100% of adoption policies are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with federal regulations, state statute and regulation, and updated practice needs.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.



- The State will ensure that quantitative reports, including CFS732, utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- Objectives will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 9.3: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 9**

Item 9: Adoption	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	100% (n=7)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	100% (n=2)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=4)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	100% (n=1)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

*Inter-Country Adoptions*

State and County Child Welfare Agencies serve families who adopt internationally, as they are able, contingent upon caseloads and staffing ratios. Home studies, post placement supervision, information and referral and other support services are provided. Social services, including adoption subsidy, may be funded by Adoption Incentive Grant funds, Titles IV-B and XX, when special needs eligibility requirements are met.

*Adoption Incentive Grant Funds*

The state was awarded \$126,147 for FFY 2008. Annual membership fees for the Adoption Exchange Association were paid from these funds and the balance was sub-granted to the three public child welfare jurisdictions, based upon their respective shares of finalized adoptions. Funds awarded from the Adoption Incentive Grant are used to facilitate inter-jurisdictional placements; including travel for pre-placement transitional visits, post-placement supervision, specialized assessments, respite care and privatized delivery of therapeutic services not covered by Medicaid. The grant funds also support specialized recruitment and adoption finalization activities, including National Adoption Day, as well as contracts with additional social workers to complete home studies and compile documentation necessary for social summaries and timely filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions.

## Item 10: Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

### Requirements:

Nevada statute and policy require that a written case plan be developed for children with this permanency goal and that the plan includes programs and services designed to assist older youth to transition out of care. NRS 432B.553 requires a plan for the permanent placement of children. NAC 432B.410 requires child welfare services must ensure that each child in foster care is eligible for services related to independent living has a written plan for his transitional independent living based on the assessment of his skills. Statewide policy 0801 Youth Plan for Independent Living was developed to address the needs of youth who were likely to remain in care until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and prepare them for the transition into adulthood. This policy requires agencies which provide child welfare services to establish self-sufficiency goals for youth beginning at age 15, regardless of their level of functioning or independence. This is implemented in concurrence with all permanency planning to include, but not limited to, reunification, guardianship, adoption and another planned permanent living arrangement. All youth must be actively involved in his or her independent living planning. The planning process must be youth focused and driven with emphasis on the youth's expressed interests, needs and priorities. In addition, the new statewide policy requires that all older youth have a case plan that included services and programs based on their individualized needs. In addition to a case plan, every youth 15 ½ and older has an independent living plan completed. This plan identifies the youth's needs and goals for the youth to work towards independence. The plans are reviewed regularly at the child and family team meetings to discuss progress and to continue to address the youth's needs. The workers work with the youth's placement including group homes to identify ways in which the youth can be successful in reaching their goals and addressing their needs. Although a youth may have a permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement, workers continuously review this permanency goal and continue to work with youth in identifying other options outside the foster care system (i.e. adoption, guardianship, mentor families).

### Statewide Data:

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was assigned an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" because one of the two applicable cases reviewed scored 50%. The reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to assist the child in attaining his goals related to another planned permanent living arrangements. Stakeholders interviewed during the last statewide assessment in December 2003 believed that older children were receiving independent living services in most areas of the State. However some stakeholders voiced concern regarding the inconsistent quality of the services and whether or not the youth were able to receive them. Since this review, the State has made a concerted effort to monitor the quantity and quality of services provided through the QICR process and has begun to develop UNITY windows to track data for youth in this category. The Fund to Assist Former Foster Youth (FAFFY) has enabled the State to develop and expand independent living services to youth. Reviews conducted in the years following the past CFSR have shown a steady increase in the number of cases scored as a "strength" as shown in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement	50% (n=2)	50% (n=2)	100% (n=3)	100% (n=3)

2009 Statewide Assessment survey data related to this item shows that 71.4% of judges and 66.7% of child advocates feel that agencies are somewhat effective in making timely decisions for cases with the permanency goal of OPPLA. In addition, 83.3% of judges and 64.9% of child advocates additionally feel that the agencies provide adequate documentation of compelling reasons for choosing APPLA as a permanency goal.

A total of 84.6% of judge's report that they receive an independent living plan. In addition, 87.5% of youth responding to the statewide assessment survey indicated that they participated in developing their independent living plan and 80% of youth felt that they had a voice in determining their permanency goal. 64.7% Caseworkers and Supervisors surveyed indicated that they had children age 15 ½ or older in only a minority of their cases (20-40% of cases). Of these, 34% indicated that most of their cases had an independent living plan developed.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

**Goal:**

- To determine whether the State is making concerted efforts to ensure:
  - That the child is adequately prepared to make the transition from foster care to independent living (if it is expected that the child will remain in foster care until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated).
  - That the child, even though remaining in foster care, is in a “permanent” living arrangement with a foster parent or relative caregiver and that there is a commitment on the part of all parties involved that the child remain in that placement until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated.
  - That the child is in a long-term care facility and will remain in that facility until transition to an adult care facility.

**Objectives:**

- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to provide the child with a permanency goal of OPPLA with services to adequately prepare him or her for independent living when the he or she leaves foster care (at age 16 or older or for any age child with a goal of emancipation/independence) and that these efforts are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to achieve the goal of OPPLA in a timely manner by placing the child in a living arrangement that is “permanent” and the child will remain in the living arrangement until his or her discharge from foster care and that these efforts are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

**Measures of Progress:**

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 10.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 10**

Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	100% (n=3)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	0% (n=0)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	0% (n=0)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	100% (n=3)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

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

*Requirements:*

NAC 432B.400 requires that placements for children in foster care will be made in the best interest of the child, with particular consideration given to the safest, least restrictive familial environment available. This statute further states that if the child’s goal is reunification with his or her family, then particular consideration will be given to a placement that is in close proximity to the home of the parent of the child. If the placement requires that a child be placed in a family foster home or institution for child care that is located a substantial distance from or in a different state than where the family of the child resides, then there must be clear documentation of the reasons why such a placement would be in the child’s best interests. In addition, the proximity of the child’s school (where he or she is enrolled at the time that he was placed in foster care) may also be a factor in the selection of the placement. Statewide 1003 Kinship Care policy states that whenever possible, children need to be placed with relatives or someone with whom they have a significant and positive connection. The policy emphasizes the importance of seeking and supporting kinship placement, as well the preservation of familial bonds by making clear that our preferred practice is to minimize the impact of separation from parents and the familiar environment, taking into account community, church and schools, as well as family. First preference is given to adult relatives, over non-related care providers, for the placement of children in Nevada.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Strength” based on the finding that of the 20 cases reviewed, 100% demonstrated that the children were placed in close proximity to their parent’s home or in the home of a relative unless not doing so was in the best interest of the child. Other reasons for not placing the child with a close relative included no relative caregivers or family foster homes in close proximity to the birth parents were available or that an alternative placement, such as a residential treatment facility, or other placement was determined to be appropriate based on the best interest of the child. This item has consistently scored high in case reviews conducted by the state.

<b>Table 11.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>CFSR 2004</b>	<b>QICR 2006</b>	<b>QICR 2007</b>	<b>QICR 2008</b>
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	100% (n=20)	100% (n=18)	80.5% (n=26)	100% (n=35)

On the 2009 Statewide Assessment surveys, caseworkers and supervisors indicated that a child is placed in the same community or neighborhood in roughly 20%-40% of cases (54.6%) and in a majority of cases (24.6%). In addition, children tend to go to the same school in a minority of cases (49.6%), rather than in the majority of cases (23.5%).

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

*Goal:*

- To determine whether concerted efforts are being made to ensure that the child’s foster care placement is close enough to the parent(s) to facilitate face-to-face contact between the child and the parent(s) while the child is in foster care.

**Objectives:**

- The State will ensure that the child’s current placement is close enough to his or her parents or other potential permanent caregivers to facilitate frequent face-to-face contact between the child and the parents/permanent caregivers while the child is in foster care (unless the placement is based on the child’s needs and intended to ensure that the child’s case plan goals are achieved) and is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

**Measures of Progress:**

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFRS review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFRS results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 11.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 11**

Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	QICR 2008	CFRS 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	100% (n=35)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	100% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	100% (n=11)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

**Item 12: Placement with siblings**

**Requirements:**

NRS 432B.580, as well as, the statewide 1001 Diligent Search Process and Placement Decisions policy requires that children be placed together unless there is justification for not doing so based on the best interest of the child. NRS 432B.3905 (Effective January 1, 2008 and January 1, 2009), specifies that a child under the age of 3 (2008) and 6 (2009) can be placed in a child care institution only if being placed with a sibling unit, due to medical services being available only in such an institution or appropriate foster care is not available at the time there is of placement in the county in which the child resides.

### Statewide Data:

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Strength” based on the finding that 87% of children placed were found to be placed with siblings unless it was found to not be in the child’s best interest to do so. During stakeholder interviews conducted during the last CFSR there was concern that many sibling groups were being placed in a shelter setting rather than in appropriate family foster homes. Reviews conducted by the state in the subsequent three years showed a consistent increase in the number of cases rated as a “strength”.

<b>Table 12.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 12: Placement with siblings	87% (n=15)	85.7% (n=14)	100% (n=17)	100% (n=15)

The state has been successful in placing siblings together when determined to be in the best interest of the child. In the past two years, the QICR reviews have shown 100% of cases reviewed achieved Item 12 when rated on placing siblings together. On the 2009 Statewide Assessment youth survey, 67% of youth reported that they had one or more siblings, however, these youth reported that only 34% had siblings living with them in the same placement.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

### Goal:

- To determine if concerted efforts are being made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

### Objectives:

- The State will ensure that the child and his or her siblings who are also in care are in the same placement (unless there is a valid reason not to do so) and that this information is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

### Measures of Progress:

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 12.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 12**

Item 12: Placement with siblings	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	100% (n=15)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	100% (n=4)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=5)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	100% (n=6)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

*Requirements:*

NRS 423B.550(5)(a) provide that a parent of a child that has been removed from the home retains the right to reasonable visitation with the child unless this right has been restricted by the court. NRS 432B.550(5)(b) was amended by AB 42 in 2005 to create a presumption that it is in the best interest of the child for siblings to be placed together and to require that if siblings are not placed together, there must be report made to the court detailing the agency’s efforts in this area, including a visitation plan for approval by the court. NRS 432B.580(2)(b) covers compliance with the visitation plan. Failure to comply with the plan is punishable by contempt. NAC 432B.400(o) requires that the case plan specifically provide for family visitation, including, without limitation, visiting siblings if the siblings are not residing together. This visitation must be regular and frequent, so as to preserve the family for reunification if possible (NAC 432B.220(4)).

Statewide policy on Case Planning requires that a plan for frequent and purposeful visitation with parents and siblings, for the purpose of family preservation, be included in the case planning documentation. Visitation between children and parents, and children and separately placed siblings, must be regular, frequent, and purposeful in order to facilitate family preservation. The caseworker shall not limit visitation as a sanction for the parent’s lack of compliance with court orders or as a method to encourage a child to improve his/her behaviors. Visitation is determined by the best interest, health, safety and well-being of the child. Visitation shall only be limited or terminated when the child’s best interest, safety, health or well-being is compromised. In addition, recommendations to limit or terminate visitation must be presented to the court.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that in 29% of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation between parents and children and between siblings was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the child. Subsequent case reviews conducted by the state have shown a consistent increase in scores over time.

<b>Item 13.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	71% (n=21)	64.4% (n=19)	82.2% (n=19)	87.8% (n=28)

In addition, respondents on the 2009 Statewide Assessment Caseworker and Supervisor survey reported that children in care visit with their mothers in the majority of cases 76.3% of the time, and with their fathers (in the majority of cases) 64% of the time. Caseworkers and supervisors further report that children in care visit with their siblings in the majority of cases 89% of the time. In addition, 26.7% of youth responding to the youth survey reported that they never communicated or visited with their siblings, with 33% reporting that they visited once a month or more.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

*Goal:*

- To determine if concerted efforts are being made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

*Objectives:*

- The State will ensure that the frequency and quality of visits (or other forms of contact if visits are not possible) between the child and his or her mother are of sufficient frequency to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that visits between the child and his or her mother, including the typical pattern of visitation, are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that the frequency and quality of visits (or other forms of contact if visits are not possible) between the child and his or her father are of sufficient frequency to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that visits between the child and his or her father, including the typical pattern of visitation, are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that the frequency and quality of visits (or other forms of contact if visits are not possible) between the child and his or her sibling(s) are of sufficient frequency to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that visits between the child and his or her sibling(s), including the typical pattern of visitation, are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFRS review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFRS results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:



**Table 13.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 13**

Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	87.8% (n=28)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	90.9% (n=10)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	90.9% (n=10)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	80.0% (n=8)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 14: Preserving connections**

*Requirements:*

NRS 432B.390 requires that priority be given to family members for placement of children who are removed from their birth families unless doing so would not be in the best interest of the child. DCFS policy (1001 Diligent Search, 1003 Kinship Care, and 1004 Structured Analysis Family Analysis) requires workers to complete a diligent search for any possible adult family member within the third degree of consanguinity to the child. Once located, those identified family members are assessed for appropriateness in much the same manner as regular family foster care providers. Policies 0203 Case Management Practice Model, 0204 Case Planning Policy and Concurrent Planning Guide, and 0205 Caseworker Contact with Children, Parents and Caregivers provide for best practice design regarding competencies and skills required to implement the standardization of the practice model and improve safety, permanency and well being outcomes for children and families. Finally, state policy 0504 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) prioritizes the recognition of a child being an Indian child and assures that the child’s tribe be contacted immediately when an Indian child is taken into custody. The Tribe then becomes an active participant in any further proceedings regarding the child.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Strength” in 79% of the 24 cases reviewed based on the finding that the state preserved family connections in 70.8% of the cases, preserved the child’s connections with school, community, and friends in 29.2% of the cases, preserved the child’s connections with religion and ethnic/racial heritage in 16.7% of the cases, and preserved the child’s connections with former foster parents in 8.3% of the cases during the period under review. Some stakeholders during this CFSR did show concern regarding the number of times youth change schools during the time they are in foster care which they thought was disruptive to connections as well as achieving educational goals. Subsequent QICR reviews have shown a steady increase in performance on this item, with a 17.9% increase from the last CFSR. The increased compliance since the last review may be due primarily to the enhancement of existing child welfare policies, the standardization of practice guidelines, new caseworker training, and quality improvement efforts that included case and supervisory reviews.

	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 14: Preserving connections	79% (n=24)	83.3% (n=18)	95% (n=20)	97.3% (n=33)

Respondents to the 2009 Statewide Assessment surveys indicate that children are having their important connections preserved. Caseworkers and supervisors report that children are involved in culturally relevant activities in the majority of cases 76.3% of the time. General stakeholders feel that this is only present 46.3% of the time. Child advocates agree that the agency is effective in preserving cultural connections (55%) or extended family connections (67.4%), but that traditions are harder to preserve (57%). General stakeholders feel that extended family connections are maintained (87.1%). In addition, implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and documentation of discussing Native American Heritage of children in Nevada has been an important indicator for Nevada over the past four years. Results of the 2009 surveys indicate that 86.7% of judges perceive that the child welfare agency appropriately documents a child's Native American Heritage. In addition, 76.7% caseworkers and supervisors report that workers discuss each child's potential Native American Heritage with birth parents or relatives in a majority of cases and 87% report that it is documented in the majority of case files.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

#### *Goal:*

- To determine whether concerted efforts are being made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school and friends.

#### *Objectives:*

- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to maintain important connections for the child and that these efforts are documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that sufficient inquiry is conducted with the parent, child, custodian or other interested party to determine whether the child may be a member of, or eligible for membership in, a Native American Tribe and that these efforts are documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that if a child is a member or may be eligible for tribal membership that the tribe is provided timely notification of its right to intervene in any State court proceedings seeking an involuntary foster care placement or termination of parental rights and that these efforts are documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that if a child is a member of, or eligible for tribal membership that concerted efforts were made to place the child in foster care in accordance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) placement preferences and that these efforts are documented appropriately in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

#### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFPSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFPSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 14.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 14**

Item 14: Preserving connections	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	97.3% (n=33)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	100% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	90% (n=9)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 15: Relative placement**

*Requirements:*

NRS 432B.390 requires that priority be given to family members for placement of children who are removed from their birth families unless doing so would not be in the best interest of the children. DCFS Policy (1001 Diligent Search, 1003 Kinship Care, and 1004 Structured Analysis Family Analysis) requires workers to complete a diligent search for any possible adult family member within the third degree of consanguinity to the child. Once located, those identified family members are assessed for appropriateness in much the same manner as regular family foster care providers. SB 342, from the 2009 Legislative Session will expand the diligent search process to give preference to relative placements within the fifth degree of consanguinity. This will go into effect on July 1, 2009.

Clark County Department of Family Services policy differs from statewide policy 1004 Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) regarding the specific child welfare agency practice of using the SAFE tool as a part of the licensing process. For Clark County, the staff person responsible for completing the SAFE is a Licensing Representative instead of a Caseworker. Washoe County has a parent locator unit comprised of two full-time staff to find missing parents or relatives. They are accessed at the beginning of the case and through out the case if necessary. The unit also supports DNA testing of putative parents.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that showed even though the percentage of cases reviewed that were applicable to this item met standards in two of the three agencies and concerted efforts were made to locate maternal relatives as placement options, paternal relatives were not sought as possible placement options. The State placed an emphasis on diligent search in locating family members, paternal as well as maternal, to be placement options for children under their care. This indicated a gain in performance and practice over the previous Statewide Assessment data. However, when looking at the QICR data for annual aggregates, there was a significant increase in compliance in 2006, a decline in 2007 and an increase again in 2008.

<b>Table 15.1. Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 15: Relative placement	77% (n=22)	94.1% (n=18)	71.1% (n=20)	91.5% (n=29)

Overall placement data for State Fiscal Year 2008 showed 25.81% (n=2206) of children in foster care were in relative placements. Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) youth placed out of state reflects a similar percentage of relative placements in SFY 2008 (29% during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of SFY 2008 and 25% during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of SFY 2008).

2009 Statewide Assessment survey data indicates that 86.7% of judges feel that the child welfare agency conducts diligent searches for maternal relatives and uses them as placements, and 80% of judges feel that diligent searches are conducted and placement resources used for paternal relatives. In addition, 61% of caseworkers and supervisors report that diligent searches for the absent birth parent are conducted in a majority of their cases. In addition, 59.2% report that that searches for maternal relatives are conducted in the majority of cases and 52.5% report that diligent searches for paternal relatives are conducted in the majority of cases.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

*Goal:*

- To determine whether concerted efforts are being made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

*Objectives:*

- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to identify, locate, and evaluate maternal relatives as potential placements for the child and that these efforts are documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that there are concerted efforts are made to identify, locate, and evaluate paternal relatives as potential placements for the child and that these efforts are documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that a child placed with relatives is stable and appropriate to the child's needs and that this is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 15.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 15**

Item 15: Relative placement	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	91.5% (n=29)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	90.9% (n=10)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	77.8% (n=7)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

*Requirements:*

While the State does not have a specific statute which addresses the parent-child relationship guidelines, there are several statutes which do imply the importance of maintaining such a relationship. NRS 432.390.7C, .393, .397, and .190(k) require the following: That agencies which provide child welfare services to adopt a plan to give preference to relatives of child in care; that efforts toward preservation and reunification of family of a child to prevent or eliminate the need for removal from home before placement in foster care be made and to make a safe return to home possible; a determination of whether reasonable efforts have been made; to conduct inquiry to determine whether a child is an Indian child; and to plan for the permanent placement of a child. NAC 432B.190 provides requirements for case plans and agreements with parents, provides that when a child welfare case is opened, that the caseworker must assume responsibility for planning the child welfare services to be provided whether the child remains in the home or not. Parents must be encouraged to participate in the development of a written agreement for services, which must be for a specified period to engage in the processes for receiving resources.

State Policy 1001 emphasizes the need to preserve the parent-child relationship by requiring diligent search for non-custodial parents when there is a need for a child to be removed from their home and the 0204 Case Planning policy refers to the structured, solution-based process of considering all of the information gathered through the needs assessment process to develop a strength-based case plan while working towards family reunification at the same time, implementing an alternative permanency plan. In addition, WCDSS Section 24 Visitation (4/1/02) policy addresses visitation between parents and child, frequency and quality of contacts, supervision of first visits after child placement, contacts and staffing with emergency shelter to ensure information sharing about child/parent contact and needs. Section 9 (Adoption Manual) (6/06) Placement Review Team Policy references an internal multi-disciplinary team who reviews sibling separation and visitation.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that reviews determined that the agency did not promote parental involvement with the child or attempt to strengthen the parent-child relationship through visitation or participation in other activities. However, subsequent reviews conducted by the state have shown a consistent increase in the number of cases scored as a “strength”, with a 50.8% increase in number of cases scored as a “strength” from the previous CFSR to 2008.

	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	43% (n=23)	76.5% (n=17)	80% (n=20)	91.2% (n=32)

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

**Goal:**

- To determine whether concerted efforts are being made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregivers(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

**Objectives:**

- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to promote, support, and otherwise maintain or strengthen a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother and that these efforts are documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that there are concerted efforts are made to promote, support, and otherwise maintain or strengthen a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father and that these efforts are documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

**Measures of Progress:**

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 16.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 16**

Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	91.2% (n=32)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	91.7% (n=11)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	91.7% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	90% (n=9)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

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

*Requirements:*

NRS 432B.190 and .550 requires child welfare agencies to provide services to preserve families, prevent placement of children if possible, and if not possible provide a plan describing those services that would facilitate safe return of the child. NAC 432B.190, .200, and .240 requires agencies to provide case planning and agreements with parents using strengths and resources in planning, and requires the agency to provide a range of services to preserve the family. NAC 432.B.400, .405 and .410 requires the agency to provide case planning and services to children in foster care and their parents. NAC 432B.1362, .1364 and .1366 provide provisions for provider agreements of child welfare services and assurances of conducting timely assessments to ensure adequate provision of services.

Several state policies are applicable to this item. Policy 0203 Case Management Practice Model was developed as a principle based framework for frontline practice. Policy 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment was developed to provide better initial assessments, and 0204 Case Planning Policy and 0205 Caseworker Contacts with Children, Parents and Caregivers were developed to clarify case planning and frequency of contacts required with children, parents and caregivers. Policy 0801 Independent Living Policy was developed to ensure youth age 15 and older in foster care receives adequate case planning and services for transition to adulthood and 0503 Differential Response policy was developed to standardized procedures for a pilot to initiate use of family assessment rather than investigations on certain child abuse cases. Finally, policy 1004 Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) Assessment covers the assessment of the appropriateness of potential foster families, licensed relatives and adoptive families.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that in 49% of the cases reviewed it was determined that the child welfare agency had not adequately assessed and/or addressed the service needs of children, parents, and fosters parents. This item obtained a “strength” in only 51% of cases reviewed. In the 2004 CFSR findings a key concern pertained to the lack of assessment and service provision to fathers. The father’s needs were not assessed in 35% of the applicable cases; services were not provided to the father to address identified needs in 47% of applicable cases. The case reviews conducted since the previous CFSR have shown improved performance from 2006-2008, with a 30.3% increase in cases rated as a “strength”.

<b>Table 17.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>CFSR 2004</b>	<b>QICR 2006</b>	<b>QICR 2007</b>	<b>QICR 2008</b>
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents and foster parents	51% (n=49)	70% (n=40)	92.4% (n=52)	85.3% (n=57)

In addition, in the statewide assessment surveys conducted with stakeholders in the spring of 2009, judges were asked if the child welfare agency had increased their ability to meet the needs of children and families over the last five years. A total of 72.7% of judges indicated that this was true. Caseworkers and Supervisors were asked about meeting the needs of children and families as well. These respondents felt that in the majority of their cases that caregivers are a good match for the child (79.3%); that caregivers teach their foster children things that may be useful to them when they live on their own (68.3%); that caregivers have rules that are fair and consistent (81.2%); and that caregivers are honest and open with workers about the child’s needs (79.5%).

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

### *Goal:*

- To determine whether the State is making concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents (both at the child's entry into foster care and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and provided the appropriate services.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to conduct a formal or informal initial comprehensive assessment of the child's needs and/or ongoing assessments to provide updated information regarding the child's needs for case planning purposes and that this information is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to provide appropriate services to meet the child's identified needs and that this information is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to conduct a formal or informal initial comprehensive assessment of the mother's and father's needs and/or ongoing assessments to provide updated information regarding the mother's and father's needs for case planning purposes and that this information is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to provide appropriate services to meet the mother's and father's identified needs and that this information is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the needs of foster parents' or pre-adoptive parents' on an ongoing basis (with respect to the services they need in order to provide appropriate care and supervision to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in their care) and that this information is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that concerted efforts are made to ensure the provision of appropriate services to meet the foster parents' or pre-adoptive parents' identified needs and that this information is appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:



**Table 17.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 17**

Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents and foster parents	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	85.3% (n=57)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	91.7% (n=21)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	95.8% (n=23)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	56.5% (n=13)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

*Requirements:*

NAC 432B.190-220 encourages the participation of parents in the case planning process and requires engagement of the child’s family in using its own strengths and resources throughout the process for planning services. This is implemented by fully exploring the needs of the child’s family and alternatives to separation of the family, identifying each family member’s strengths and using those strengths in the process of solving problems, developing individualized goals for services and treatment and time-limited steps to accomplish these goals, and by setting target dates for their evaluation and completion. Emphasis is given to promoting the right of a child to be with his family and fully exploring all alternatives to placement of the child outside his home.

The 0204 Case Planning policy provides the basis for a link that ties the findings of the child and family assessments to identification of the permanency goal(s) and the selection of a set of services including both formal and informal services. It is a collaborative, strength based and solution focused process that empowers and motivates families to identify solutions that will remove barriers, increase functioning and build protective capacity. Policy requires a working partnership between the Case Manager and the family, which is critical to successful assessment and case planning. The family is to be assisted in identifying its strengths, needs, culture, supports and current resources that will affect its ability to achieve and maintain child safety, child permanency, and child and family well being through a “strength”-based, family-centered, individualized case plan. In the event a parent is not available or refuses to participate in case planning, the case plan team (foster parents, extended relatives, other providers and child, if appropriate) must still be formed and a plan developed. In all cases, every effort must be made and continue to be made to involve parents in the case planning process.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that in 53% of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. A key concern pertained to the lack of involvement of children in case planning. In the reviews following the last CFSR, the state has shown an increase in scores, however, there have been fluctuations between the cases reviewed from year to year.

<b>Table 18.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	47% (n=49)	71.9% (n=38)	84.6% (n=50)	81.6% (n=55)

2009 Statewide Assessment survey data indicates that 73.3% of judges have the perception that case plans are jointly developed with parents. Caseworkers and Supervisors report that 77.8% develop the case plan jointly with parents in the majority of their cases, and 32.7% indicate that foster parents are included in the case planning process. If including the child is age appropriate, 45.4% of workers and supervisors indicate that this occurs in the majority of cases.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

*Goal:*

- To determine whether the State is making concerted efforts to involve parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

*Objectives:*

- The State will ensure that there are concerted efforts to actively involve the child in case planning (if developmentally appropriate) and that these efforts are documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that there are concerted efforts to actively involve the mother in case planning and that these efforts are documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that there are concerted efforts to actively involve the father in case planning and that these efforts are documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 18.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 18**

Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	81.6% (n=55)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	87.5% (n=21)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	91.3% (n=21)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	56.5% (n=13)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

### **Item 19: Caseworker visits with child**

#### **Requirements:**

Nevada is operating in accordance with 45 CFR 1355.20 which requires that children in foster care or children under the placement and care responsibility of the state agency who are placed away from their parents or guardians must have contact by their caseworker every calendar month. This provision also applies to in-home cases. Statewide policy 0205 Caseworker Contact with Children, Parents and Caregivers requires a minimum of face-to-face contact with a child must occur at least once a calendar month. For cases where the child is placed in foster care, the contact must take place in the child's residence (51% or more). During all types of contacts, the caseworker must spend at least a portion of each time alone with the child and at least a portion of the time alone with the caregiver/foster parent, if requested. Documentation of the contact must be entered into UNITY within 5 days of the contact. Children placed in out-of-state institutions are subject to have a standardized policy for caseworkers visits with the child that defines the frequency of visits to ensure the child's safety, well-being and educational needs are met. On September 2006, the Federal government created the Child and Family Services Act of 2006. This act required the Caseworker Contact Policy to be revised to include a description of standards for the content and frequency of caseworker visits for children in foster care. The act requires a minimum of one monthly visit between the caseworker and child must focus on case planning and service delivery. The State, in a collaborative effort with the child welfare agencies, revised the current Caseworker Contacts with Children, Parents and Caregivers policy to reflect the Children and Safe Families Act and implemented policy on June 20, 2008.

#### **Monthly Caseworker Visits:**

DCFS is dispersing the caseworker visitation funds to the three child welfare agencies to fund additional positions to expand caseworker visitation capacity, fund overtime for caseworkers to increase the number of children visited, complete appropriate paperwork in a timely manner and to purchase needed equipment to facilitate caseworker visits and documentation. In response to recent federal legislation P.L. ACYF-CB-07-08, the Information Management System (IMS) staff has developed a monthly report which tracks caseworker visitation as well as visit location based on the federal requirements listed. The new Federal guidelines were used to determine the monthly visitation and in-placement visitation compliance rates and include the following provisions:

- Children who have been in custody for a full calendar month during the report period are included in the compliance calculations "Custody Visit Months" and "In-Placement Visit Months" are calculated and displayed.
- Children who have more than one foster care episode, whether under same Person ID or not, are included only once in the report. They are displayed in the report under the organizational unit that handled the most recent custody during the report period.
- Children who are placed out of state are included in the population.
- The report now displays the number of visits by any Nevada worker.
- The report shows the monthly visitation and in-placement visitation compliance percentage goals.

This report has established a baseline and DCFS continues to monitor compliance monthly and has added caseworker visitation to the DMG agenda monthly to discuss strategies to share the information with the agencies and increase compliance. This monitoring schedule will allow the state and the jurisdictions to assess whether the state as a whole is improving monthly in order to meet the federal compliance rate of 90% by 2011. Discussions with the three child welfare agencies produced the following progressive targets, by year, to achieve compliance with the required 90% in 2011: The target for 2008 was 25%; the target for 2009 was 35%; the target for 2010 will be 65% and the target for 2011 will be 90%.

To achieve the targets set, several projects have been implemented. A current Casey Family Project implemented to improve timely reunification has Washoe County tracking caseworker-parent contacts, parent-child contacts, and sibling

contacts. Washoe County has also funded hand held recording devices and digital pens to help caseworkers ensure timely input of case contact documentation into UNITY. Recently Washoe County formed a “Visitation Workgroup” to review and submit recommendations to improve visitation between children and families. The workgroup is focusing on 1) Systematic improvements to assist workers in scheduling, location and transportation issues related to visitation to increase frequency; and 2) Improving the structure of visitation to enhance the quality of visitation to include parenting tips, modeling behavior, building mentoring relationships between parents and foster parents. Washoe County has Title IV-B Visitation Grant monies to pay overtime for monthly child contacts in their placement location. In addition, a Caseworker-Child Contact report is reviewed monthly with supervisors and managers to identify trends, barriers and solutions.

The Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) opened a Family Visitation Center in February 2008. The new visitation center is open seven days a week, including holidays, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The center is staffed full time and has vehicles available for transportation in an effort to provide flexibility and support to parents and their children during visitation activities. The Family Visitation Center is designed to promote meaningful visitation between children and their caregivers in a safe, child- and family-friendly setting that is conducive to assessing parent-child interaction.

**Statewide Data:**

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that in 45% of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were not of sufficient frequency and/or quality to ensure children’s safety and promote attainment of case goals. In addition, according to the 2003 Statewide Assessment, information from surveys of foster parents across the state showed discrepant results depending upon areas surveyed. Foster parents from the rural areas reported more contacts with caseworkers than did foster parents in Clark and Washoe counties. According to the surveys done at that time the rate of caseworkers who did monthly face-to-face meetings with families in rural counties was 70%, is nearly double the rate in Clark (36%) and Washoe (38%). Caseworkers also reported the frequency of contact most often occurred monthly (24.3%) followed by nearly equal rates of weekly or biweekly (approximately 20%). 56% of the caseworkers surveyed in 2003 conducted face-to-face visits with the children on their caseloads monthly or less frequently.

Case reviews conducted statewide since the last CFSR have shown substantial improvement in caseworker visits, with a 25.5% increase in number of cases rated as a “strength”. These results are shown in Table 19.1.

<b>Table 19.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>CFSR 2004</b>	<b>QICR 2006</b>	<b>QICR 2007</b>	<b>QICR 2008</b>
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	55.0% (n=49)	70.14% (n=39)	80.08% (n=52)	81.9% (n=58)

Reports of monthly contacts by caseworkers from May of 2007 through December of 2008 are shown in table 19.2 below. This table indicates that Nevada has exceeded its 2008 Target Goal of 25% with the data available. There has been at least a 23% increase over the 2008 targeted goal. For the first two months of 2009, Nevada exceeded its goal of 35% by 43%.

**Table 19.2: Statewide Monthly Caseworker Contact Report 05/07 – 05/09**

Month/Year	Overall Monthly Contact Compliance Goal >90%	Overall In Placement Compliance Rate Goal >50%
05/09	80.93%	67.68%
04/09	78.96%	73.12%
03/09	80.76%	69.06%
02/09	78.24%	69.54%
01/09	78.54%	69.45%
12/08	78.87%	72.05%
11/08	78.29%	67.20%
10/08	76.26%	68%
09/08	70%	67%
08/08	Data Unavailable	Report Being Developed
07/08	Data Unavailable	Report Being Developed
06/08	68%	70%
05/08	62%	68%
04/08	Data Unavailable	Report Being Developed
03/08	Data Unavailable	Report Being Developed
02/08	65%	67%
01/08	55%	68%
12/07	55%	66%
11/07	48%	62%
10/07	47%	59%
09/07	58%	58%
08/07	59%	60%
07/07	65%	62%
06/07	66%	65%
05/07	67%	59%

In addition, the 2009 Statewide Assessment survey data indicates that 92.9% of judges have the perception that case workers are conducting face-to-face visits in accordance with the requirements for foster care. Caseworkers and Supervisors report that in the majority of cases (60-100%) that workers talk on the phone with the child at least once per month in 43.7% of the time and that a face-to-face contact occurs in the child’s home 90.9% of the time.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

**Goal:**

- To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child or children in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the child and promote the achievement of case goals.

**Objectives:**

- The State will ensure that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworker and child are sufficient to address issues pertaining to the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote the achievement of case goals in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that caseworker visits with the child, including the typical pattern of visitation, are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.

- The State will ensure that report CFS7D7, a quantitative report utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system, is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 19.3: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 19**

Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	81.9% (n=58)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	83.3% (n=20)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	91.7% (n=22)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	66.7% (n=16)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents**

*Requirements:*

DCFS policy 0205.0 Caseworker Contact with Children, Parents and Caregivers requires that caseworker contacts focus clearly on case planning, service delivery, safety, strengths and needs of the child and family, family progress and identification of resources and services the family needs in order to achieve case plan goals.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that the child welfare agencies were not consistent in efforts to establish sufficient face-to-face contact between agency case workers and parents on their caseloads. The overall rating for the CFSR for this item was 46%. During the 2003 Nevada Statewide Assessment of Child Welfare, for the most recent three months of case activity, case readers identified the frequency with which agency staff met with families in its care. Of the nine foster care cases and 38 in-home cases with complete data for this item, one-third of the foster care cases and 37% of the in-home cases showed at least one visit per month within the three week review period. The balance of parents whose children were in foster care and 50% of those children remained in the home had been seen only once during the three-month period. In response to the CFSR the state's PIP goal was 60%.

Based on QICR reviews conducted since the last CFSR, Nevada has shown a 30.3% increase in items rated as strength for this item from the 2004 review to 2008. The state overall in 2008 increased by 18.3% over the PIP negotiated goal. This means that more parents have taken an active role in case planning and permanency for their families. It also indicates that the agencies that provide child welfare services are spending more time getting families involved with achieving the goals outlined in a case plan. In addition, 87.6% of caseworkers and supervisors surveyed in 2009 reported that in the majority of cases foster parents or relative caregivers are visited at least once per month at the foster care residence.

<b>Table 20.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 20: Worker visits with parents	46.0% (n=48)	67.9% (n=38)	74.35% (n=51)	79.7% (n=50)

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

*Goal:*

- To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the children are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children and promote achievement of case goals.

*Objectives:*

- The State will ensure that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworker and mother are sufficient to address issues pertaining to the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote the achievement of case goals in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that caseworker visits with the mother, including the typical pattern of visitation, are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworker and father are sufficient to address issues pertaining to the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote the achievement of case goals in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that caseworker visits with the father, including the typical pattern of visitation, are appropriately documented in UNITY in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 20.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 20**

Item 20: Worker visits with parents	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	79.7% (n=50)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	78.3% (n=18)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	95.7% (n=18)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	60.9% (n=14)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

**Item 21: Educational needs of child**

*Requirements:*

NRS requires that in custody cases a report be made in writing by the child welfare agency concerning the child's record in school. Statue further requires that the agency exercise diligence and care in arranging appropriate and available services for the children (NRS 432B.540). The Program of School Choice for Children in Foster Care authorizes the legal guardians or custodians of certain children who are in foster care to apply to the Department of Education to participate in the program which allows such children to choose the school of their choice or remain at the school they were attending prior to being removed from their caretaker (NRS 392.040).

NAC 432B directs agencies to address the educational needs of children in custody. These codes direct agencies to complete a family assessment which is to include the educational needs of the child (NAC 432B.1364). NAC 432B.400 directs that every case plan for child receiving foster care will include the following: A statement indicating the proximity of the school in which the child is enrolled at the time that they were placed in foster care and if it was considered as a factor in the selection of the placement for foster care; that the case plan include education records, to the extent available, containing the names and addresses of those educational providers; the grade level at which the child performs; and such other educational information concerning the child as the agency determines is necessary. NAC 432B.230 directs the child welfare agencies to establish interagency agreements with related agencies including schools, to ensure that cooperative and mutually facilitative services are provided to children and families.

Statewide policy 0601 Documentation, instructs case workers to assess children and their families upon initial contact and continue to assess them through the life of the case; such assessments should include the educational needs of children in both in-home and out-of-home care. Policy 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment also directed agencies to complete in-depth assessments from the initial contact that focus on the emotional, behavioral and needs of children. Policy 0204 Case Planning requires that in custody cases the child's plan is to be developed in collaboration with the family and other members of the Child and Family Team (CFT), within required timeframes and have required elements including the child's educational needs. Finally, policy 0205 Caseworker Contact requires that caseworkers visit the child or youth and caregiver at a minimum of once per month and during those visits discussed the educational progress and needs.

In addition to complying with statewide policy the urban child welfare agencies have policies specific to their individual agency. While Clark County did not develop any policies that specifically relate to the educational needs of children their policy does include specific instructions as to how case workers are to assess and monitor that the needs of children are



met. These new policies include specific timelines for case workers to visit children and youth in their schools, have contact with educational personnel, and collect and document educational records and progress in the case file and UNITY. Section 4.14 of the Washoe County Department of Social Services Program Requirements for Foster Homes requires children and youth to be enrolled by their foster parent within one school day of placement. The foster parents are responsible to ensure the child's attendance and provide school supplies and are to notify the social worker of any communications from the school and refer any other of the child's educational needs to the social worker. Washoe County foster parents or the biological parents must consent to an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) if needed; when the biological parent is not available the foster parent will act as the surrogate parent and is to work with the school district on the child's IEP. Washoe County recently worked with the School Superintendent's Office to rewrite the interagency operating protocol and jointly provided training to School District and agency staff on the revised protocol.

**Statewide Data:**

During the 2004 CFSR, this item was received a rating of "Area Needing Improvement." The previous statewide assessment indicated that 42% of the 89 applicable cases considered the child's educational needs and had appropriate services to meet those needs. There was a disparity between in and out-of-home cases in that only 7% of the in-home cases were rated as a "strength" compared to the 92% of out-of-home cases. In the CFSR 70.4% of the 27 applicable cases were found to be a "strength". 17 of the 27 applicable cases reviewed in the CFSR were out-of-home. The item was rated as strength in 87.5% of DCFS cases, 83.4% in WCDSS, and 53.9% of CCDFS cases reviewed.

As seen in Table 21, the 2008 Quality Improvement Case Review (QICR) results for Item 21 showed a 16.9% increase from the 2004 Child and Family Service Reviews. A slight drop in the 2007 QICR results could be attributed to only the Fallon office being reviewed for DCFS (rather than all four districts) and two case reviews of CCDFS yielding different results in 2007. In March 2007 CCDFS had only 50% of the cases reviewed rate a "strength", however in December, 88.9% of their cases rated a "strength". Overall there has been a lower level in the difference between in-home and out-of-home cases ratings than those that were noted in the 2003 statewide assessment, indicating improved outcomes for in-home cases.

<b>Table 21.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>CFSR 2004</b>	<b>QICR 2006</b>	<b>QICR 2007</b>	<b>QICR 2008</b>
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	70.4% (n=27)	73.9% (n=34)	68.1% (n=32)	85.3% (n=33)

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

**Goal:**

- To assess whether the State is making concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child and on an ongoing basis, and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

**Objectives:**

- The State will conduct an assessment of the educational and/or developmental needs of each child in care according to the requirements in statewide policy in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure the provision of appropriate services to address the educational and/or the developmental needs of each child in care according to the requirements in statewide policy in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFPSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFPSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 21.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 21**

Item 21: Educational needs of the child	QICR 2008	CFPSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	85.3% (n=33)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	76.9% (n=10)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=6)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	85% (n=17)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFPSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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

**Item 22: Physical health of child**

*Requirements:*

In keeping with the federal statutory framework, Nevada statutes state that one of the key purposes for DCFS is to plan and coordinate the provision of services for the support of families, including providing counseling, training, or other services to families. NAC 432B.400 further addresses the requirements of the child welfare agency to have a case plan that includes plans for the coordination and provision of services to children and families who need assistance relating to the care, welfare, mental and physical health of children. State policy supports these mandates by outlining processes to ensure that physical, developmental and mental health needs of custodial children are identified and diagnosed through the use of standardized, periodic screenings. The purpose of these screenings is to ensure that all non-custodial children’s caregivers are aware of early preventative, diagnostic screening and treatment services available in their service area. The screenings facilitate the identification of physical, emotional or developmental needs and risks as early as possible and to link children to needed diagnostic and treatment services through the use of Nevada’s Healthy Kids Program periodicity schedule as set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Screenings include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Comprehensive Health and Development/ Behavioral History** - A comprehensive family medical and mental health history, patient medical and mental health history, immunization history, developmental/ behavioral, and nutritional history provided by the child’s caregiver or directly from an adolescent when appropriate.

- **Developmental/Behavioral Assessment** – An assessment of developmental and behavioral status that is completed at each visit by observation interview, history and appropriate physical examination. The developmental assessment should include a range of activities to determine whether or not the child has reached an appropriate level of development for age.
- **Comprehensive Unclothed Physical Exam** – An exam that must be performed at each screening visit and must be conducting using observation, palpation, auscultation and other appropriate techniques and must include all body parts and systems in accordance with the Medicaid Services Manual, Section 1503. This examination should include screening for congenital abnormalities and responses to voices and other external stimuli.
- **Immunizations** – The child’s immunization status must be reviewed at each screening visit and administered in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for pediatric vaccines.
- **Laboratory Procedures** – Age appropriate laboratory procedures including blood lead level assessment appropriate to age, risk, urinalysis, TST, Sickle-cell, hemoglobin or hematocrit and other tests ad procedures that are age appropriate and medically necessary, such as Pap smears.
- **Health Education** – Means the guidance, including anticipatory, offered to assist in understanding what to expect in terms of a child’s development and to provide information about the benefits of healthy lifestyles and practices as well as accident and disease prevention.
- **Vision Screening** – A screening to detect potentially blinding diseases and visual impairments such as congenital abnormalities and malformations, eye diseases, color blindness and refractive errors. The screening should include distance visual acuity, color perception and ocular alignment tests and should be given initially by age 3.
- **Hearing screening** – A screening to detect sensorial and conductive hearing loss, congenital abnormalities, noise-induced hearing loss, central auditory problems, or a history of conditions that may increase the risk for potential hearing loss. The examination must include information about the child’s response to voice and other auditory stimuli speech and language development, and specific factors or health problems that place a child at risk for hearing loss.
- **Dental Screening-** An oral inspection for a child at any age. Tooth eruption caries, bottle tooth decay, developmental anomalies, malocclusion, pathological conditions or dental injuries should be noted. The oral inspection is not a substitute for a complete dental screening examination provided by a dentist. An initial dental referral should be provided on any child age 3 or older.

In addition, policy requires as part of the CAPTA Part-C Requirement for Custodial and Non Custodial Children, that all children under the age of three, who are involved in a substantiated case of abuse/neglect, must be referred to an “Early Intervention Program,” for a developmental assessment pursuant to CAPTA-IDEA Part C. Documentation of the referral results of the referral and needs identified by any screening conducted by an Early Intervention Program must be entered into UNITY within five working days of receipt of the information.

**Health Care Services Plan:** While Nevada has addressed many of a child’s health care screening needs, a formal Health Care Services Plan as required by the 2009 CFSP instructions has not been implemented. Nevada has received an extension to implement this plan due to legislation needed. This will be addressed in the 2011 Legislative Session.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSP in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Area Needing Improvement” based on the finding that in 18% of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not adequately addressed the health needs of children. In the previous CFSP this item was rated as a “strength” in 82% of the applicable cases. This item was rated as a “strength” when reviewers determined that children's health needs were routinely assessed and services were provided as needed and as an “area needing improvement” when reviewers determined that there was clear evidence of health related needs that were not being addressed by the agency. Subsequent reviews, shown in table 22.1, conducted by the state have shown fluctuating scores, and an overall decrease from the 2004 CFSP to the last QICR review in 2008.

<b>Table 22.1: Statewide Quality Improvement Review Data</b>	<b>CFSP 2004</b>	<b>QICR 2006</b>	<b>QICR 2007</b>	<b>QICR 2008</b>
Item 22: Physical health of the child	82% (n=38)	71.8% (n=38)	90.3% (n=49)	78.9% (n=35)

Nevada has shown a slight increase in performance on cases rated as a “strength” for this item by 5.5% from 2004 to 2008, but there is not a consistent increase in scores. WCDSS showed the most improvement on this item, beginning with a baseline in 2006 of 64.3% rated as a “strength” and concluding with 100.0% rated as a “strength” in the most recent review conducted September 2008. This reflects an increase of 35.7% from the baseline score in 2006. CCDFS baseline score in June 2006 was 50.0% rated as a “strength”, a decline from the previous CFSR. Two reviews conducted in 2007 for Clark County resulted in an overall strength percentage of 67.3%. The most recent review, conducted in August 2008 reflected a “strength” score of 84.6%. This is a 21.4% increase over the baseline established in 2006. The DCFS Rural Region established a baseline score of 70% that was a result of the review conducted in the Elko District Office in the Rural Region. The second review in October 2007, conducted in the Fallon District Office found 88.9% rated as a “strength”, and the composite review of the Rural Region conducted in October 2008 resulted in a drop in score, finding 77.8% rated as a “strength.” It is important to note that the October review for the Rural Region included all districts as opposed to the first two reviews that included only one district each. Also noteworthy is the sample size for all reviews, which doubled in size with the 2008 review.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an: **Area Needing Improvement.**

*Goal:*

- To determine whether the State is addressing the physical health needs of the child, including dental health needs.

*Objectives:*

- The State will conduct an assessment of the physical health needs of each child in care according to the requirements in statewide policy in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure the provision of appropriate services to address the physical health needs of each child in care according to the requirements in statewide policy in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will conduct an assessment of the dental health needs of each child in care according to the requirements in statewide policy in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure the provision of appropriate services to address the dental health needs of each child in care according to the requirements in statewide policy in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a “strength” rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 22.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 22**

Item 22: Physical health of the child	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	78.9% (n=35)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	71.4% (n=15)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=6)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	77.8% (n=14)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

### **Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of child**

#### **Requirements:**

In keeping with the federal statutory framework, Nevada statutes state that one of the key purposes for DCFS to plan and coordinate the provision of services for the support of families to maintain the integrity of families and ensure that children are not unnecessarily removed from their home. This includes providing counseling, training, or other services to families, even if a report of abuse or neglect is received, but it is determined that an investigation is not warranted at the time. NRS 432.011 further addresses the coordination and provision of services to children and families who need assistance relating to the care, welfare and mental health of children. The statewide Case Planning Policy is specific in its discussion of the initial child and family assessment relative to needs including mental and behavioral health. In addition, statewide policy 0207 Early Preventative Diagnostic Screening and Referral requires a standardized screening of a child's mental and behavioral health history.

#### **Statewide Data:**

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that in 38 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. While item ratings did not differ as a function of case type, they did vary across CFSR sites. The item was rated as a "strength" in 74% of Clark County cases, compared to 50% of Carson City cases and 43% of Washoe County cases. The key concern identified pertained to a lack of mental health assessments in situations in which an assessment was warranted.

Statewide, this item showed an improvement over the CFSR 2004 score of 62%. Washoe County showed the most improvement on this item, beginning with a baseline score of 72.7% established by the QI review done in 2006. The most recent QI review (September 2008) for WCDSS resulted in 100% strength for this item. Clark County reported a baseline score of 81.8% strength in 2006. Two reviews conducted in 2007 both resulted in an increase in Strength percentage to 90%. The most recent review (August 2008) resulted in a slight decline. The Rural Region established a baseline score of 90% strength because of a review conducted in the Elko District Office. The second review in October 2007 was conducted in the Fallon District Office and resulted in a 100% strength rating for this item. The composite review of the Rural Region conducted in October 2008 resulted in a decrease in strength rating to 80%. It is important to note that the October 2008 review for the Rural Region included all districts as opposed to the first two reviews, conducted in one district only. Also noteworthy is the sample size for all reviews, which was doubled for the 2008 reviews.

	CFSR 2004	QICR 2006	QICR 2007	QICR 2008
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	62% (n=34)	81.5% (n=35)	95% (n=30)	84.8% (n=27)

In addition, judges surveyed in the 2009 Statewide Assessment surveys indicated that the majority of caseworkers either are adequately (46.2%) or somewhat adequately (46.2%) identified, assessed and addressed the mental and behavioral health care needs of children receiving in-home services.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an: **Area Needing Improvement.**

*Goal:*

- To determine whether the State is addressing the mental/behavioral health needs of the child.

*Objectives:*

- The State will conduct an assessment of the mental/behavioral health needs of each child in care according to the requirements in statewide policy in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure the provision of appropriate services to address the mental/behavioral health needs of each child in care according to the requirements in statewide policy in a minimum of 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually for each child welfare agency in Nevada through the quality improvement case review process described in the Methods section above and in Item 31. This process mirrors the federal CFSR review process and will result in a final statewide and individual child welfare agency percentages of cases reviewed that meet a "strength" rating. The QICR results from 2008 and the pending CFSR results for 2009 will be used as baseline scores. Results will be reported in aggregate on an annual basis, using the following format:

**Table 23.2: 2010-2014 APSR Reporting Format for Item 23**

Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	QICR 2008	CFSR 2009	NV GOAL	QICR 2010	QICR 2011	QICR 2012	QICR 2013	QICR 2014
Statewide	84.8% (n=27)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Clark County	86.6% (n=11)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Washoe County	100% (n=4)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
DCFS Rural Region	80% (n=12)	August 2009	95%*	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

\*Unless otherwise negotiated or if exceeds federal requirements

- This item will be also be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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## Section V. Systemic Factors

### Goals, Objectives and Methods of Measuring Progress

Each of the following performance indicators mirrors the 22 items from the Federal Statewide Assessment Instrument. The overall structure for each performance indicator includes the legal requirements, archival and anecdotal data, the overall goal to be reached and specific objectives for that item. In general, goals mirror the lead federal compliance question for each item. Objectives under each goal are modeled after specific data or program monitoring requested in the statewide assessment process and may include more specific compliance areas to be reached based on state statute, regulation or policy.

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#### Systemic Factor A: Statewide Information System

##### *Item 24: Statewide information system*

###### *Requirements:*

UNITY follows the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) requirements set forth by Public Law 103-66, which was authorized by Congress in 1993 to help states meet data collection and reporting requirements of the Social Security Act. UNITY, Nevada's automated system is the statewide solution for Child Welfare data collection. All information regarding foster care is entered into UNITY including, basic demographics, placements, addresses of placements, tracking of goals and legal status, adoptions, ICPC cases, independent living, and IV-E eligibility. In compliance with federal requirements, UNITY collects the data required to submit AFCARS and NCANDS.

###### *Statewide Data:*

In the 2004 CFSR, this item was rated as "Strength" because Nevada's statewide information system, UNITY, could identify the status, demographics, location, and goals for children in foster care. The effectiveness of UNITY can be measured to date by Nevada's decreasing error rates on internal data reports as well as increased element compliance rates (based on Federal utilities) on successive period submissions of Nevada's AFCARS and NCANDS data files. IMS runs audit reports for all functional areas on a monthly basis. These reports are distributed to supervisors. The reports serve two functions: 1) clean up the data and 2) allows the supervisors the ability of accessing staffs knowledge of UNITY. The Missing Data Window notifies staff and staff's supervisor of data that is missing on cases and sends them to the appropriate window to enter the data.

UNITY has the capacity to track to the child level all programs, case management, status, demographics, current location and permanency goals for children in foster care. Staff has the ability to search for children online, access reports through UNITY by program area, jurisdiction and location. The State generates reports for Intake Management, Eligibility, Case and Resource Management, Court Reports, Financial Management and Administrative reports. The reports are accessible from UNITY through the DCFS website. The reports utilized by management measure conformity to policy and outcome measures. The reports are accurate and can be generated at any time for any time period. Over 200 reports have been developed in order to track information in UNITY. All jurisdictions have access to these reports and if there is a new report needed staff request new reports following the business process established by IMS. Additionally, IMS provides ad hoc reporting service. IMS responds to an average of two ad hoc requests a week. Agency staff, legislators, and external entities have the ability to request data either directly or indirectly through the DCFS help desk. IMS staff prioritizes these requests. The data is utilized by Child Welfare staff statewide. They are used for planning,

supervision, conformity to federal and state policy and outcome measures. Reports are also generated for management in identifying staff that are struggling with the UNITY system. DCFS has made the system available to State staff as well as to its county-administered counterparts in Washoe and Clark counties, Differential Response unit and Attorney Generals Office. The UNITY application and its data are protected at three discrete levels of authorization: workstation, application and database management system. Customers Users are assigned security levels based on their need to input, read, update or modify information. Each user through the State has a registered log-in code which ensures easy individual access to the system commensurate with his/her approved security clearance.

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a: **Strength.**

### *Goal:*

- The State will ensure that the State's SACWIS system (UNITY) has the tracking capacity that will, at minimum, readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals for the placement of entry of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will assess the reporting capacity for system users to include program or case management areas and/or information, including, but not limited to, the status, demographics, current location and permanency goals for children in foster care.
- IMS will assess the accessibility of the system to staff and external stakeholders (who require access) in all areas of the state.
- IMS will develop a mechanism for linking the UNITY system with the Quality Improvement Case Review efforts to ensure a continuous quality assurance feedback loop, including methods for monitoring data consistency.
- IMS will assess the quality assurance mechanism for ensuring that information generated from the UNITY system is complete, accurate, and current and includes the locations of all children in care, including those in relative care, unlicensed placements, voluntary placements and unpaid placements.
- IMS will develop tracking systems for monitoring children in out-of-home care, including those served by Title IV-E agreements with other agencies.
- IMS, in collaboration with the FPO Independent Living Manager and Specialist, will integrate the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) requirements into the UNITY system for data collection and reporting purposes by September 2010.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.



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## Systemic Factor B: Case Review System

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### *Item 25: Written case plan*

#### Requirements:

Nevada Revised Statutes 432B.540, 553 and 580 require the agencies which provide child welfare services to adopt a plan for permanency in accordance with the requirements and timeframes in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA); including periodic review by the Court. Further, the plan must include; a description of the type, safety and appropriateness of the home or institution in which the child could be placed, including, without limitation, a statement that the home or institution would comply with the provisions of NRS 432B.3905, and a plan for ensuring that he or she would receive safe and proper care and a description of his/her needs, a description of the services to be provided to the child and to a parent to facilitate the return of the child to the custody of his parent or to ensure his/her permanent placement and the appropriateness of the services to be provided under the plan.

Nevada Administrative Code 432B.190 requires that each case have a written case plan which identifies barriers to the provision of a safe environment for the child, clarifies responsibilities of the involved persons to address those barriers, and defines the overall goals of the case and the step-by-step proposed actions of all persons to reach the goal within a specified time. Each case plan must be reviewed and signed by the supervisor of the caseworker and updated at least every 6 months. Each case plan must include identifying information, a statement of the goal, objectives and activities of the case, and the time to meet each goal, objective and activity. Case plans must be realistically related to the familial situation, safeguard the child, and help the parents to gain the confidence and capacity to care appropriately for their child, and be sufficiently flexible to allow changes in the situation and the use of the services based on a continuing reevaluation of how the child is being affected. Parents must be encouraged to participate in the development of a written agreement for services and engage in a set of processes for receiving resources.

0204.0 Case Planning Policy, based upon the existing statutory authority and regulations cited requires all cases opened for service to have a written case plan. This plan must be developed through a process of engaging the family, gathering information, evaluating it with the family and eliciting goals and solutions from the family. A Child and Family Team (CFT) is to be convened for decision making about desired outcomes and determining with the family and team what activities should be performed, by whom, how, and when to achieve proposed actions. Case planning is a family centered process that focuses on family strengths and resources to assist the parents in building protective capacity and increasing family functioning.

#### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that case plans were not routinely developed jointly with the child's parents, were too generic, did not address the needs of the child, were not completed in a timely manner and that parents and children were involved in case planning in only 47 percent of the cases reviewed. Although there is no specific data report has been developed to support how well the process has been implemented by each agency, or the state as a whole, the State has provided a comprehensive process requiring that each child has a written case plan, developed jointly with the child, when appropriate, and the child's parent(s) and that includes the required provisions. Training has been provided to all three child welfare agencies on assessment, case planning practices and CFT facilitation.

A review of several different UNITY reports indicate that as of June 2008 (for SFY 09), approximately 53% of children had case plans. However, this is a rough estimate, and a formal report will need to be developed to determine if this percentage is correct. In the 2009 surveys conducted, 86.7% of judges indicate that case plans are submitted within 60 days of removal. 78.7% Caseworkers and supervisors report that case plans are submitted within 60 days of removal in the majority of cases (60-100%). This item will require further examination. However, based on the standards in place, and information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

#### *Goal:*

- The State will ensure that each child has a written case plan, to be developed jointly with the child, when appropriate, and the child's parent(s), that includes the required provisions.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will ensure that each child has a written case plan, to be developed jointly with the child, when appropriate, and the child's parent(s), that includes the required provisions in 95% of cases.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item, including the engagement of parents and age-appropriate children in case plan development.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

## **Item 26: Periodic reviews**

### *Requirements:*

Nevada Revised Statute 432B.580 mandates 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. The court may also enter an order directing that the placement be reviewed by a panel of at least 3 persons appointed by the judge (NRS 432B.585). The contents of the hearing must include evaluations and assessments of progress in carrying out the case plan goals for the child in care (NAC 432B.420) and address ASFA requirements on reasonable efforts. DCFS Policy 0206, Court Hearing Notification, further ensures that foster parents and other care providers are afforded 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.

### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that Nevada statute requires semiannual review hearings to be held at least every 6 months. The CFSR found that these hearings are routinely held in accordance within statutory timeframes. Nevada's CIP Final Re-Assessment Report of 2005 indicated that there had been no major changes in performance and practice regarding the semiannual review of the status of children, no less frequently than once every six months, either by a court or by administrative review. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a: **Strength**.

### *Goal:*

- The state will ensure that periodic reviews are conducted on the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will develop a reporting mechanism that will monitor the periodic review process to ensure the timeliness and quality of reviews and that a review is conducted on the status of each child, no less frequently than once every six months, either by a court or by administrative review in 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will review the effectiveness of procedures to support (support services, preparation, encouragement to attend, and timing) the participation of birth parents, foster parents, age-appropriate children, relative caregivers, foster and pre-adoptive parents in periodic reviews.

- The State will develop a system for tracking and monitoring case review outcomes (i.e. monitoring the provision of recommended services to the family) for the purpose of creating a quality improvement feedback loop for key stakeholders in the process.
- The State will develop a system for reviewing the recommendations and results of the periodic review in order to make adjustments to the case plan or the direction of a case for the purpose of creating a quality improvement feedback loop for key stakeholders in the process.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 27: Permanency hearings**

*Requirements:*

Nevada Revised Statute 432B.590 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 home and annually thereafter, or within 30 days a finding that agency which provides child welfare services is not required to make the reasonable efforts toward reunification pursuant to NRS 432B.393.3. In compliance with ASFA, DCFS Policies 0206 Court Hearing Notification and 0514 Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) require agencies to make and finalize permanency plans by no later than 12 months after the child's removal and provide notice by certified mail to all the parties to any of the prior proceedings and parents and "any persons planning to adopt the child, relatives of the child or providers of foster care who are currently providing care to the child."

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Strength" based on the finding that Nevada statute requires permanency hearings every 12 months and the CFSR found that these hearings are routinely held in accordance with statutory timeframes. The state's Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data, submitted for the period ending September 30, 2008, indicate continued strength in this measure. On Data Element #5, less than 1.4% of cases did not have entries indicating that a Permanency Review hearing was held within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care. It should be noted that the state began reporting on children in Youth Parole custody who were in out-of-home placement during this time period, but a mechanism for conducting Permanency Review hearings of these cases had not yet been put in place. In addition, several related items were explored in the 2009 Statewide Assessment Surveys. Survey data indicates that 46.7% of judges feel that they have difficulty in finding a guardian ad litem (GAL) for a child when a petition has been filed indicating that a child is in need of protection. Caseworkers and Supervisors report that birth parents are involved in permanency cases 78.1% of the time. Further, 53.9% report that foster parents are involved; 48.6% report that pre-adoptive parents are involved; and 52.1% report that children are involved in the majority of their cases. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

### *Goal:*

- The State will ensure that each child in foster care under the supervision of the state or county child welfare agency has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date that the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will review the system currently available in the UNITY system for monitoring that each child in foster care under the supervision of the state or county child welfare agency has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date that the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter and will ensure that this system is effective in a minimum of 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will develop a reporting mechanism to review the timeliness and quality of hearings for the purpose of providing a continuous quality improvement feedback loop for key stakeholders involved in the process.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

## ***Item 28: Termination of parental rights***

### *Requirements:*

NRS 432B.590 mandates that no later than 12 months after the initial removal of the child from his/her home and annually thereafter, a hearing shall be held concerning the permanent placement of the child. At the hearing the court reviews the plan for permanent placement of the child and determines whether the reasonable efforts required have been made. If the child has been placed outside of his home for 14 months of any 20 consecutive months, the best interests of the child must be presumed to be served by the termination of parental rights and documentation of the plan to TPR is included in the permanency plan. The court is required to use its best efforts to ensure that the procedures required in TPR are completed within 6 months from that date. NRS 432B.630 requires action be taken to terminate parental rights on a newborn child who is delivered to a provider of emergency services, absent parent contact with the child welfare agency. The NRS also identifies those circumstances in which the agency is not required to make reasonable efforts for reunification and addresses the issue of compelling reasons when it would not be in the child's best interest to file for TPR. Compelling reasons must be detailed in the case plan and reports to the court. Examples of compelling reasons outlined in the DCFS 0514 Termination of Parental Rights policy.

NRS Chapter 128 details the process of TPR, specifically who files the petitions, procedures for TPR on ICWA cases, notice of hearings (publication), testimony, appointment of attorneys, specific considerations to various circumstances and restoration of parental rights in certain situations. Pursuant to NRS 128.170, a child (or the legal guardian of the child) who has not been adopted, and whose parental rights have been terminated or relinquished, may petition the Court for

restoration of parental rights. The natural parent or parents for whom restoration of parental rights is sought must be fully informed of the legal rights, obligations and consequences of restoration and must consent, in writing, to the petition.

Policy 0514 requires timely permanency planning for children in the care and custody of the child welfare agency. Planning must therefore begin the day the child enters care. The agency is required to make and finalize alternate permanency plans no later than 12 months after the child's removal. Policy states that absent compelling reasons not to file a TPR, the petition must be filed within 60 days of the courts determination that reasonable efforts are not required. Acceptable compelling reasons are outlined in the TPR policy. Referral to terminate parental rights is initiated when adoption is identified as the permanency goal for the child and legal grounds for termination exist. Upon referral for TPR, the worker will concurrently seek a Court Order to initiate efforts to recruit for, and/or identify, an adoptive family for any child(ren) not already placed in a pre-adoptive home.

**Statewide Data:**

During the last CFPSR this item was rated as an "Area Needing Improvement". Although Nevada had a statutory requirement for TPR that was more restrictive than the federal requirement, the CFPSR found that Nevada was not consistent in its efforts to achieve permanency for children in a timely manner. Focus groups with legal and court personnel indicated at the last CFPSR that barriers to timely TPR hearings identified the reluctance of some courts to seek TPR unless an adoptive home had already been identified. In addition, a January 2003 survey of Washoe County cases found the reasons for delayed TPR hearings included difficulties in coordination of legal professional and court calendars, and agency delays in completing required TPR forms. Clark County stakeholders noted that even though the agency had a TPR specialist there are still significant delays in achieving TPR. These delays were attributed to (1) a shortage of attorneys to file for TPR and (2) a lack of timeliness of agency staff in preparing paperwork needed to file TPR. Clark County stakeholders also noted that the judge often denied a TPR petition because of "lack of reasonable efforts" on the part of the agency to reunify the family. In comparison, stakeholders in Washoe County and Carson City expressed the opinion that TPR is being filed in a timely manner, although Washoe County stakeholders reported that the court frequently makes findings of compelling reasons why not to file for termination. Statewide stakeholders also noted that achieving TPR is hampered by the lack of consistent legal representation for the parties involved, noting that the District Attorney's Office is insufficiently staffed, and that frequently, parents are not appointed counsel and children do not always have a Guardian ad Litem. Clark County stakeholders noted that they are using some Court Improvement Program dollars to increase legal representation for parents.

Based on Unity data report titled, Custody 14 to 21 Months, from 02/01/07 through 11/30/08, it appears that Washoe County successfully completed TPR on both parents in 50% of all cases within 25 months. Clark County successfully completed TPR on both parents within 24 months and the DCFS Rural Region successfully completed TPR on both parents in approximately 35% of cases within 30 months or less.

**Table 28: Data from Data Profile**

	Federal FY 2006ab	12 month period Ending 03/31/2007 (06B07A)	Federal FY 2007ab	12 Month Period Ending 03/31/2008 (07BO8A)	National Median	Nevada's Percentile
C2-3 Children in care 17 plus months, adopted by the end of the year	24.3%	23.3%	21.7%	21.2%	20.5%	22.7%
C2-4: Children in care 17 plus months achieving legal freedom within 6 months	14.7%	13.3%	12.7%	11.6%	8.8%	10.9%

While the data over the last two years indicates a decrease in both these percentages, Nevada still ranked in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for both of these measures. 2009 survey results indicate that 78.6% of judges monitor child welfare agency progress on the federal rule requiring the process of terminating parental rights within the required timeframes. In addition, 71.4% of judges surveyed indicate that they set reviews in advance for the filing of termination of parental rights when a child is in foster care for 15 of 22 months, unless there is a compelling reason not to file. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

### *Goal:*

- The State will ensure that a process is in place for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

### *Objectives:*

- The State will develop a mechanism for measuring the effectiveness of the TPR process, including information on the quality of the process and the timeliness of filing for TPR for the purpose of developing a continuous quality improvement feedback loop for key stakeholders involved in the process.
- The State will monitor the impact of the courts and the legal system on the successes or challenges related to the TPR process.
- The State will monitor factors regarding TPR, such as timeliness of TPR decisions, TPR appeals, compelling reasons not to pursue TPR, changes in procedures or approach to TPR and the TPR appellate process.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

## ***Item 29: Notice of hearings and reviews to caregivers***

### *Requirements:*

NRS 432B, NAC 432B and statewide policy 0206 Court Notification mandate that proper notification of court hearings and court reviews regarding the status of a child in the custody of a child welfare agency must be provided and is necessary to ensure active involvement and participation of parents, foster parents, guardians, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers in the child's safety, permanency and well-being. While internal policies and procedures regarding court notification requirements and protocols may differ between child welfare agencies, formal written notification to the aforementioned caregivers must be supplied pursuant to NRS 432B.580 (6) (a) (b). Notice of the hearing must be given by registered or certified mail to all parties to any of the prior proceedings, and parents and any persons planning to adopt the child, relatives of the child or providers of foster care who are currently providing care to the child. If a child in protective custody is determined to be of Indian descent, the child welfare agency must notify the tribe in writing at the beginning of the proceedings. If the Indian child is eligible for membership in more than one tribe, each tribe must be notified.

### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that Nevada statute does not clearly specify who is responsible for notice of hearings. Despite the efforts of the child welfare agencies, foster parent focus group participants reported at that time that notification was not occurring on a regular basis.

As part of the PIP, the UNLV School of Social Work undertook an extensive survey of foster parents between May 2005 and January 2006, to determine their attitudes and level of satisfaction toward Nevada's child welfare system. The survey was a statewide study of open and closed foster homes. The data collection instrument was developed based upon a review of the literature and other states' surveys; additional ideas were incorporated into the instrument as a result of its pretest, and feedback from state and local child welfare agencies, including foster parent associations. The major method of data collection was through telephone interviews. Of 466 homes identified, 281 foster parents agreed to participate; responses were obtained from 226 respondents, representing an 80% response rate. The findings of this report were intended to provide state and local agencies with feedback in identifying their strengths and ways in which improvements could be made in making foster care an effective and viable option for children in need.

**Table 29 – Foster Parent Satisfaction**

The court system and my child welfare agency inform me in plenty of time about court dates for my foster children so that I may participate.	# of foster parent and other substitute caregiver responses	%
Strongly Agree	64	31.9 %
Agree	35	17.3 %
Somewhat Agree	35	17.3 %
Somewhat Disagree	29	14.4 %
Disagree	21	10.4 %
Strongly Disagree	18	8.9 %

During the months of January through December 2007, DCFS chartered and convened a State of Nevada Child Welfare Multidisciplinary Team for the purposes of working with CCDFS to improve the protection of children and the child welfare system. Findings related to child placement issues came from interviews with 40 foster parents, relatives, non-relatives and providers. The interviews were conducted in order to identify areas in training, licensing, and case management practices where changes or improvements maybe needed to improve the process and to support/retain foster parents. Of the 40 foster parents, 72% received notification of court hearings. Respondents cited concerns such as their inability to keep other scheduled appointments as a result of untimely court notices that were usually received within one hour and/or one day prior to the hearing. 55% of the foster parents interviewed felt the pre-service training prepared them to care for children placed in their home. 82% expressed the need for additional training to better support the needs of children in their care. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

*Goal:*

- The State will ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

*Objectives:*

- The State will work with the courts and child welfare agencies to develop a mechanism for child welfare agency reporting on the timeliness and consistency of notification for hearings for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care for any review or hearing held with respect to the child and will ensure that this system is effective in 95% of applicable cases.
- The State will develop a mechanism for reporting on the involvement of foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care at reviews and hearings.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

#### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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### **Systemic Factor C: Quality Assurance System**

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#### ***Item 30: Standards ensuring quality services***

##### *Requirements:*

Nevada has developed and implemented standards in statute, regulation and policy to ensure that children in foster care are placed in appropriately licensed homes or residential facilities, and that qualified service providers are selected for delivery of necessary services to children and their families.

*Child Protection and Foster Care:* Child welfare agencies oversee and monitor the placement of children in foster homes or residential facilities pursuant to the Child Protection Statutes (NRS and NAC 432B), Foster Care Statutes (NRS and NAC 424) and statewide policies, such as the case management model, out-of-home placement, Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) policy, and case planning policy, that outline requirements for quality standards. The SAFE policy provides for child and family assessment to determine needs, and the case planning policy clarifies the case planning process and provides guidelines for service assessment and delivery, including concurrent planning to explore and ensure future service delivery in accordance with the case plan. These regulations and policies embody elements of quality service delivery, such as the consideration of cultural differences, timeliness, safety, visitation location, placement preference, scheduling of medical, dental and mental health needs. Child welfare staff and child care facilities that provide services to foster children must meet personnel requirements for appropriate licensure and training to work in various positions. Fingerprinting and a criminal background checks are mandatory in the State in order to work with children (NRS 432.100). Staff must have appropriate supervision and are monitored through regular evaluation of work performance standards. These measures are intended to ensure that quality services are provided to children in foster care by child welfare agency staff.

The expectations for a foster parent's care and treatment of a child is contained in regulations (NAC 424.495 - .610) where authority is given to the foster parent to administer appropriate discipline and supervision, but limitations are imposed to guarantee the safety and health of the child. The care and treatment of a foster child in care is monitored by the caseworker's monthly home visitation which requires time spent alone with the child. The caseworker and licensing authority work together to cross-report any activity that may impact the safety or health of child in placement. The monitoring of a single foster home or group home setting and a facility follow similar procedures and may involve other agencies or types of expertise as indicated.

*Foster Care Licensure of Homes and Residential Facilities:* DCFS has comprehensive standards concerning foster home licensure and congregate care. These standards are contained in the Nevada Revised Statutes (Chapters 424, 432A, 432B), Nevada Administrative Code (Chapters 424, 432A, 432B), and the Foster Home Licensing Manual. Foster Care statute and regulations (NRS 424, NAC 424) that directly impact foster children's health and safety relate to evaluating the potential foster parents and their family members for income and employment, reference checks, Nevada Central Registry on Child Abuse and Neglect Clearance, sworn statement pertaining to criminal convictions, and a criminal history record check, and fingerprinting. The law and regulations designate the number of children that may be placed in a foster care home or group home. Potential foster parent(s) who meet minimum requirements and pursue licensure, must have mandatory training and ongoing training on an annual basis. Specialized training is available for special needs children. In 2007 the State Legislature added requirements in NRS 424 to ensure training of group or foster home employees within 30 days of employment. The licensing agency monitors training requirements which are intended to improve the quality of care given to foster children by foster homes. The regulations also outline physical requirements for the home or facility, including, but not limited to, the following: living space, doors, windows, grounds, sleeping accommodations, heating and



cooling and electrical equipment, fire prevention equipment, and pool safety. The licensing agency monitors the home environment on a regular basis and may make unscheduled home visits at any time. Regulations also require notification by the foster care provider of changes in the home that may impact the child and child's safety or health.

The standards for placement in a facility outside of the State of Nevada are established and monitored by the Out-of-State Placement Committee. Monthly visitation and monitoring by the local child welfare agency are required and an annual rigorous on-site facility review must be conducted by DCFS.

Child Care facilities statutes and regulations (NRS 432A, NAC 432A) outline requirements for the protection of health and safety of children in facilities (educational, shelter care, and residential), and provides standards for child care including the provision of qualified service providers. The 2007 Legislative Session changed NRS 432A.024-.0245 to clarify the definition of a "child care facility" and "child care institution" to ensure appropriate licensure of all child care facilities. Child Protection statutes and regulations (NRS 432B) provide for the investigation of child abuse and neglect, assessment of safety and risk, removal and the placement of a child in foster care as needed. The 2007 Legislative Session added a new provision (NRS 432B.3905) aimed at protecting children under the age of three from being placed in residential care. The 2007 Legislature also created a new Child Welfare Specialist position within the State Legislative Counsel Bureau which has the authority to visit any child placement facility within the State to review and assess operations, case records, and conduct interviews with children and staff as needed. The purpose of the position is to protect and monitor child safety and children's civil rights in such facilities and to provide recommendations for improvement in reports to the Legislature.

*Service Providers:* Contracts made with providers for delivery of child welfare services must comply with the agreement to hire qualified personnel required in accordance with the FPO Grants Management Unit Grants Manual and Technical Guidelines. Such personnel must meet professional State licensure requirements as indicated for the type of service and discipline, and must pass a criminal background and Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry check, as well as fingerprinting required by State Statute. All contracts must meet federal and State requirements, such as provision of non-discriminatory practices. Contract performance is monitored and audited by the Grants Management Unit (GMU). Customer satisfaction surveys are also provided to the customers for feedback about services to assess and improve delivery.

#### *Statewide Data:*

The 2004 Final CSFR Report rated this item as an "Area Needing Improvement" because the CFSR found a lack of statewide standards to ensure consistency in practice to protect the safety and health of children. At that time, concerns were expressed by Clark County stakeholders that the primary shelter facility, Child Haven, in Clark County was not licensed and did not comply with licensing standards established for foster family homes and child care institutions. Additional concerns were expressed about high caseloads (50-55 cases per worker), and staff turnover that could not ensure consistency of services and practice. Case reviews further indicated that some infants and very young children were placed in Child Haven for extended periods of time. However, there have been significant changes to child welfare practice since 2004 that will ensure the provision of quality services to children in foster care. These changes are a result of the PIP and implementation of new and/or revised standards contained in policies and procedures. The PIP required changes to improve the QI supervisory review process and licensure of the CCDFS Child Haven child care facility. There were also changes that improved service provider contracting and reporting methods to ensure ongoing quality performance. In addition, service provider contracting and reporting methods were improved through the establishment of the Grants Management Unit to ensure ongoing quality performance. The GMU has consolidated all child welfare grants, domestic violence, and fee based programs into one fiscal unit that oversees contracting requirements that include standards of service. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

#### *Goal:*

- The State will ensure that standards are adequately developed and implemented to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will engage in necessary regulation development to ensure quality standards for foster care are updated according to bills passed in the 2009 legislative session.
- The State will develop a system for evaluating the implementation of the standards for foster care, including a mechanism to provide feedback to key stakeholders; to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

### **Item 31: Quality assurance system**

#### *Requirements:*

Nevada Revised Statutes 432B.180 requires DCFS to develop audit teams to evaluate and determine whether all child welfare services provided throughout the State are in compliance with federal or State statute, regulations or policies. When a child welfare agency is not in compliance with statewide standards, the Division must require corrective action that may include an agency improvement plan and/or fiscal sanctions. The quality improvement case review process is detailed in Nevada Administrative Code 432B.030 and the Quality Improvement Framework.

#### *Statewide Data:*

The 2004 CSFR rated this systemic factor as an "Area Needing Improvement" because the State did not have a formal statewide quality assurance system. Since the last Statewide Assessment and CFSR, the Family Programs Office has formalized a comprehensive Quality Improvement Case Review System that evaluates the quality of services, identifies and analyzes the strengths and needs of the service delivery system. This was accomplished as part of the PIP through 8 action items that included the establishment of a statewide QI team, purchase and training on the Solutions for Online Activity (SOAR) data collection system, development of a case review process based on the CFSR instrument and the formalization of the QI Framework. Further work was completed on testing and analyzing the process, formalizing the QI unit functions and roles. Agency performance on individual case reviews results the development of Agency Improvement Plans (AIP) that are monitored by the Decision Making Group. A separate, more detailed plan was also developed for Clark County to address specific internal issues for improving compliance. The QI case review has been a collaborative process involving the three child welfare agencies with the Family Programs Office, and the inclusion of stakeholders from other disciplines to participate. Participants have been asked to commit a full work week to the conduct the case review and attend the exit conference. The reviews have been scheduled on a rotating nine month schedule beginning with 2005, but this was recently changed to just one annual review per agency in 2008. The reviewers have used a standardized instrument modeled after the Federal CFSR instrument. The following reviews have been completed.

- Clark County was reviewed in October 2005, June 2006, March 2007, December 2007, and August 2008.
- Washoe County was reviewed in December 2005, September 2006, June 2007, and September 2008.
- The Rural Region was reviewed March 2006 (Carson City District 2), December 2006 (Elko/District 1), September 2007 (Fallon/District 3), and October 2008 (combined all four Rural Districts).

The DCFS Program Evaluation and Data Unit that was developed prior to the last CFSR, was absorbed into the IMS Unit because UNITY staff are involved in data collection and evaluation. The program evaluation function was expanded to include DCFS-FPO staff and several new QI positions were obtained during the 2007 Legislative Session to support statewide oversight responsibilities.

All three child welfare agencies continue to have QI staff dedicated to the quality improvement process. These child welfare agencies and the Nevada Partnership for Training are members of the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) chaired by the FPO QI Unit Manager. They meet on a quarterly basis to review the QI process, instrument, policy and practice, evaluate program performance and measures, and set the scheduling of regional case reviews. Clark County also has developed a Quality Council Board that involves county stakeholders in their internal review process. In addition, UNITY has better capability to compile various reports based on AFCARS and NCANDS data and on specific UNITY screens. These reports support UNITY utilization efforts and will allow caseworkers and supervisors to check for the presence and accuracy of the case level data necessary to determine compliance with the mandatory federal outcomes and state requirements. Clark County completed conversion from their Family Tracks data collection system to UNITY system by 2005. The QI system continues to work with the Nevada Partnership for Training that is comprised of the University of Nevada, both the Reno and Las Vegas campuses, and included the University of Denver during 2008 and 2009 as a partner. The university partnership develops curriculum based on policy, procedure/practice, and trains child welfare staff.

Nevada Quality Improvement Case Reviews are based on the Child and Family Services Review process and tool and are conducted by the Family Programs Office. The reviews reported from 2006 and 2007 use the federal review tool from the first round CFSR, with additional compliance items added for case documentation, documentation of Native American heritage, appropriateness of case closure and supervisory oversight. These reviews were conducted quarterly (every 9 months at each of the child welfare agencies in Nevada). This resulted in an additional review for one agency every year. The case sampling used during this time was 12-14 cases, with equal numbers for in and out-of-home cases. Each child welfare agency's sample was conducted in the same manner each year, resulting in a nearly equal number of cases reviewed in each region. In 2007, Clark County was reviewed twice, resulting in double the number of cases reviewed in this region for that year. Reviewer teams consisted of six paired teams, including one reviewer from the agency under review and one "outside" reviewer. For the 2006 and 2007 reviews, for the DCFS Rural Region, only one of the four districts was reviewed at each rural review. The reviews for 2008 followed the same protocol, but used the second round CFSR tool and increased the case sample for each review to a minimum of 24 cases during each regional review. In addition, the Rural Region was reviewed as a whole (all four districts) with approximately six cases coming from each district. Percentages reported as "QICR" results in the first 23 performance indicators are based on composite strength percentage scores from all four reviews conducted in a given year. The number of cases reported are those applicable cases for an item, statewide. Table 31 shows the number of cases examined in each review by region from 2006 through 2008. Clark County had the largest number of cases reviewed at 40.1% over three years (with four reviews occurring total), followed by Washoe County at 31.5% of cases and the Rural Region at 28.4% of cases reviewed. In addition, the number of cases reviewed each year increased by 30% between 2006 and 2007 and 34.6% between 2007 and 2008. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a: **Strength**.

**Table 31: Nevada Quality Improvement Case Review Sample Sizes 2006 – 2008**

	Clark	Washoe	DCFS-Rural	Statewide
<b>2006</b>	14	14	12	40 (24.7%)
<b>2007</b>	27	13	12	52 (32.1%)
<b>2008</b>	24	24	22	70 (43.2%)
<b>TOTALS</b>	65 (40.1%)	51 (31.5%)	46 (28.4%)	162

### *Goal:*

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

### *Objectives:*

- The State will ensure continuous improvement of the quality assurance system and the State will utilize process evaluations and stakeholder feedback for evaluating the effectiveness of individual case reviews conducted in each child welfare agency on an annual basis.
- The State will identify a process to increase involvement of stakeholders in the quality improvement process.
- The State will examine existing use of QICR reports and Agency Improvement Plans on the agency level and will develop a process with the agencies to increase the utilization of information at the caseworker, supervisor and manager/agency level for practice improvements.
- The State will work with UNITY staff to develop quantitative reports for each of the 45 performance indicators (where applicable) to more accurately report on system-wide data on a monthly basis to the child welfare agencies and key stakeholders.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

## **Systemic Factor D: Staff and Provider Training**

### ***Item 32: Initial staff training***

#### *Requirements:*

NRS 432B.195, 432B.397, and NAC 432B.090 require the state to provide a full staff development and training program which includes a minimum of 40 hours of training related to the principles and practices of child welfare services, including specific training related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The State has used Training Technical Guidelines in lieu of statewide policy to outline training procedures. New policy under review will require all new child welfare staff to complete the Nevada New Worker Common Core within the first 12 months of employment and specifies the competencies and best practices that are provided within the curriculum.

#### IV-E Training Plan for Initial Staff Training

The Family Programs Office has a contract with each of the two in-state Universities for the SFY's 2010 – 2012. Part of the 2010 contract is to develop a three year training plan with annual updates to address the needs of initial worker training in Nevada. In addition, new policies are being developed to address the training protocol for new workers. The Nevada New Worker Core Training is complete and has been in operation since January 2009. A minimum of eight sessions of the 10 week training curriculum will be offered per year (4 sessions in Las Vegas and 4 sessions in Reno). The 10-week course consists of five weeks of in-class instruction and five weeks of pre-reading assignments and on-the-job training assignments (to be done in the week's in-between in-class training). The training program is taught by trained University based instructors as part of the Nevada Partnership for Training.

#### Statewide Data:

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Strength" based on the finding that the state provided a new child welfare curriculum statewide which included shadowing and mentoring components along with classroom training. While stakeholders, at that time, felt the curriculum was positive, they felt that the mentoring component needed to be strengthened and include other training components such as concurrent planning, risk and safety assessments, and working with courts. They also were concerned that some new workers were assigned and managing caseloads before they completed the Core Training.

**Table 32: New workers completing Core Training since the 2004 CFSR**

<b>New Worker Training Data</b>	<b>Clark</b>	<b>Washoe</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>FPO</b>	<b>Statewide</b>
SFY 2006	41	6	11	1	59
SFY 2007	57*	13	16	1	87
SFY 2008	112*	10	2	2	136
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>282</b>

\*Indicates data from both the agency run Academy and State run Pilot Core Training

In 2008, a new initial training curriculum, the Nevada New Worker Core, was piloted. This curriculum was a collaborative redesign of the New York New Worker Core curriculum. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** because the initial training was not finalized at the time of the assessment.

#### Goal:

- The State will operate 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.

#### Objectives:

- Through the collaboration with the Training Management Team and use of the Nevada Partnership for Training Reports System, the State will enhance reports to ensure that all new staff receives the required Nevada New Worker Core Training within the required timeframes, or to ensure that an appropriate remediation plan is in place with the Child Welfare Agencies.
- Through the collaboration with the Training Management Team and use of the Nevada Partnership for Training Reports System, the State will ensure the ongoing review of the Nevada New Worker Core Training to ensure that the curriculum materials are current and reflect best practice where possible.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.

- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 33: On-going staff training**

*Requirements:*

State Statute requires employees to be responsible for their basic professional training needs and must complete a minimum of 30 hours continuing education every two years, which is consistent with the licensure requirements for Social Workers (NRS 432B.195, 432B.397, 432B.175, NAC 284.482, 284.498, 424.270, 432A.680 and 432B.090). The state and local child welfare agencies insure that child welfare staff receives the specialized training required to be proficient in child welfare practice. While DCFS has one general training policy, new policy is under development based on Statewide Training Technical Guidelines Manual. New policy will require each unit supervisor to develop an individual training plan with their staff which identifies the training needs of the overall unit. The training plan and identified needs are utilized by the Manager to develop an overall agency training plan which is submitted to the State on an annual basis. The State Family Programs Office (FPO) will utilize the agency training plans/needs to create the State's Annual Training Plan. Currently DCFS is in the process of implementing significant changes to the State's training system and a specific Training Plan for SFY 2010 – 2012 (corresponding with the University Training Contracts) is in the process of being developed. Currently, training needs are identified through the Training Management Team, which is made up of the Family Programs Office Training Manager and Specialist, Child Welfare Agency representatives and representatives from the University partners.

**IV-E Training Plan for Ongoing Staff Training**

The Family Programs Office has a contract with each of the two in-state Universities for the SFY's 2010 – 2012. Part of the 2010 contract is to develop a three year training plan with annual updates to address the needs of ongoing worker training in Nevada. In addition, new policies are being developed to address the training protocol for all workers. Included in the ongoing training plan for workers and supervisors will be on-line coursework through the Nevada Partnership for Training Website and in-person coursework through specialty core courses to be developed beginning in the Fall of 2009. This plan will be made available as soon as it is complete.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that the State was not providing enough ongoing training to address the skills and knowledge needed for staff to perform their duties. Further noted was a lack of specific supervisory training in child welfare practice. Finally, it was noted that there was little to no administrative support for ongoing training. Because much of the Program Improvement Plan required training in specific aspects of child welfare practice, many of the training programs and opportunities conducted from 2004 through 2007 were required by the PIP. Below is a chart showing the number of specific child welfare courses based on areas of concentration offered by DCFS and the number of participants from each agency or office who participated in these courses.

**Table 33.1: Ongoing Child Welfare Courses Offered from 2004 - 2007**

Course Areas of Concentration	No. of Trainings	Number of Participants					
		Clark	Washoe	DCFS Rural	FPO	Other*	Statewide
Case Management	4	351	218	132	10	52	763
Assessment	17	681	326	263	40	788	2098
Practice	36	1110	480	419	41	1225	3275
Documentation	9	658	230	142	14	154	1198
Permanency	6	306	130	128	8	151	723
Mental Health	16	62	60	89	19	788	1021
Conference/other	5	35	16	26	9	199	285
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>3203</b>	<b>1460</b>	<b>1199</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>3357</b>	<b>9363</b>

\*Data from 2004-2005 did not breakdown attendance by agency

Supervisor training was especially noted as a weakness in the 2004 CFSP and as a result a strong emphasis was placed on providing specific supervisor training in SFY 2006. While the DCFS Rural Region supervisors participated in monthly learning labs from January through August 2006, the agency managers and supervisors determined that ongoing training would be conducted internally and based on the needs of the individual supervisor. In SFY 2007 and 2008, Clark County instituted monthly supervisor learning labs. Washoe County contracted with Action for Child Protection in 2008 to provide supervisor training focused primarily on providing supervision regarding the interface between the Safety Assessment and the Nevada Initial Assessment as well as general supervision. Because both Clark County and Washoe County have their own training units these two agencies provided much of the ongoing staff training within their own agency and are not necessarily reflected in the data provided above. In 2007, the Nevada Legislature mandated a performance audit of the State's child welfare agencies and DCFS then contracted with the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Social Work and the Boyd School of Law to conduct such an audit. As a result of their findings, a recommendation for the improvement of the training system to be more comprehensive and available to all workers was identified as a priority. Specific recommendations for the creation of more online training to assist in this improvement area were noted.

A total of six stakeholder surveys were conducted in the spring of 2009. These surveys asked child advocates (legal representatives, CASA or Guardian ad Litem, caregivers (foster parents, adoptive parents, etc.), Judicial members, general stakeholders, tribal representatives, caseworkers and supervisors about how much each of the following topics were needed to improve agency caseworkers' abilities to work effectively with families. The topics are sorted in order of strength, highest to lowest average score.

**Table 33.2: 2009 Survey Results Regarding Courses Needed by Child Welfare Case Workers**

Training Topic Title	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD*
Safety Assessment**	51	1	5	3.82	1.28
Recognizing disabilities in children and parents and impact to the case planning process	482	1	5	3.75	1.30
Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health	485	1	5	3.61	1.37
Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse	486	1	5	3.53	1.40
Signs and Symptoms of Domestic Violence	473	1	5	3.52	1.42
Preparing documentation and testimony for court proceedings	461	1	5	3.41	1.38
Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse and Neglect	485	1	5	3.40	1.44
Case Planning	481	1	5	3.39	1.40
Understanding Federal Performance Indicators for Child Welfare	438	1	5	3.39	1.29
Foster Care	477	1	5	3.32	1.37
Risk Assessment	477	1	5	3.29	1.42
Investigation	471	1	5	3.29	1.42
Facilitating Child and Family Team Meetings	483	1	5	3.24	1.40
Adoption	470	1	5	3.19	1.37
Parental Rights and Protections	469	1	5	3.18	1.28
Intake Decision Making	474	1	5	3.05	1.45
NIA Documentation	374	1	5	3.03	1.42

\*SD is Standard Deviation

\*\*Safety Assessment was only asked on two of the six surveys, thus resulting in a smaller number of overall responses.

As on-going training still remains an area of need for Nevada, based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

**Goal:**

- The State will provide 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.

**Objectives:**

- Through collaboration with the Training Management Team and the University Partners, the State will develop a standard on-line introductory level curriculum series to meet the ongoing training needs of staff in the child welfare agencies at the rate of two – three courses per year (as funding allows).
- Through collaboration with the Training Management Team and the University Partners, the State will develop a standard (in-person) specialty core curriculum series to meet the ongoing training needs of staff in the child welfare agencies at the rate of two – three courses per year (as funding allows).
- Through the collaboration with the Training Management Team and use of the Nevada Partnership for Training Reports System, the State will enhance reports to ensure that all staff receives the required On-Line or Specialty Core Training within the required timeframes, or to ensure that an appropriate remediation plan is in place with the Child Welfare Agencies.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.



- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

#### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

### **Item 34: Foster and adoptive parent training**

#### *Requirements:*

Legislation was enacted in 2007 which required DCFS to coordinate with and assist each agency which provides child welfare services in recruiting, training and licensing providers of family foster care. This includes non-profit or community-based organizations as well as public child welfare providers. The requirements for training vary, based on the type of placement. Family foster care providers, including kinship and adoptive homes, are required at minimum to receive 8 hours of initial training and 4 hours annually thereafter. (NRS 424.020 & .017; NAC 127.485; and NAC 424.270). Current statewide policy 1301 Family Foster Care Recruitment and Training requires 20 hours prior to placement and 20 hours after placement, including CPR for any home with standing water (pool, hot tub, etc). Treatment Foster Care (NAC 424.670 & .675) requires 40 hours of initial training and 20 hours annually. Group homes require initial training on specific topics within 30 days, and 30 hours annually (NRS 424.0365; NRS 432B.175 & .195; and NAC 424.670). Child Care Facilities require 9 hours within 90 days of hire and 3 hours in child development and 3 hours in child care within 12 months of hire, followed by 15 hours annually (NRS 432A.077; NAC 432A.323 & 326).

#### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Strength" based on the finding that while statute required 8 hours pre-service training and 4 hours annual training thereafter, the agencies actually provided between 18 and 27 hours pre-service training. The use of a nationally recognized curriculum, presented in both English and Spanish, and facilitated by a trainer from the agency and co-trainer who was a current or former foster or adoptive parent was further rationale for the rating. It is important to note that the 2004 CFSR only looked at foster parent training and did not reflect any information regarding treatment or group homes or child care providers.

Since the 2004 CFSR, the agencies have been responsible for their own foster, adoptive, and kinship parent training programs. As a result of the PIP, each child welfare agency began using the Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) Pre-Service Curriculum for all initial Foster/Adoptive Parent training as of July 1, 2005. The training is facilitated by agency workers and former foster/adoptive parents and provided in both English and Spanish. PRIDE training, which is 29 hours in Washoe County and the Rural Region and 24 hours in CCDFS, is provided to all interested individuals prior to beginning the licensing process. Depending on the agency, PRIDE training may be provided monthly or quarterly. Relative caregivers must complete a minimum of 9 hours of PRIDE training prior to placement in Washoe County and the Rural Region and 12 hours in CCDFS. Participants who complete the PRIDE program are requested to complete an evaluation survey to evaluate their experience. This information is sent to the State for tracking purposes. In 2008 & the first quarter of 2009, 396 foster parents responded to a satisfaction survey regarding the PRIDE curriculum and additional foster parent training coursework. 36.9% of respondents were from CCDFS, 38.6% were from WCDSS and 24.5% were from the Rural Region. Overall, 79.3% (n=388) of participants found the training program to be clear and understandable and 87.1% (n=388) found the materials to be useful to them in their role as a caregiver.

Advanced training was recognized as a response to Item 29 in the PIP. Beginning in 2008, CCDFS has worked closely with the Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (CCFAPA) in providing advanced trainings. During 2008, CCFAPA provided seven (7) one-hour trainings. Washoe County and DCFS Rural Region works closely with the Sierra Association of Foster Families (SAFF) in the coordination of training opportunities for their areas. The ongoing training offered by this agency has resulted in expanded hours of training being made available to foster parents in Washoe County. There was also a SAFF support program in Clark County from 2006 through 2008, but not as much training are offered in this area by this agency. Total training hours offered is listed in Table 34.1.

**Table 34.1: Total Advanced Training Hours**

SFY	Clark County	Washoe County	Rural Counties	Statewide
2004	0	99	59	2162
2005	0	222	17	2244
2006	40	1,916	228	4,190
2007	438	4,710	638	7,793
2008	88	5,704	417	8,217

Table 34.2 lists Child Care Training Data since the 2004 CFSP (from the Nevada Registry). Provider types are not broken down in the following data. Participants reflected below include those who work in day care centers (majority), group homes, or foster parents.

**Table 34.2: Child Care Training Hours**

SFY	Number of Training Opportunities Offered	Number of Participants	Total Number of Hours Offered (Rounded)
2004	1,335	17,732	3,774
2005	3,194	33,511	8,820
2006	3,762	35,243	9,633
2007	3,846	41,098	9,854
2008	2,672	22,056	7,478

2008-2009 Foster Parent Training Surveys were completed by 27.2% Relative Caregivers, 10.9 % of Adoptive resource families, 48.9% of Foster Parents and 14.1% of Special needs Foster Parents. The results indicated that in 189 of 218 responses, 86.7% believed that the PRIDE Training was excellent. Overall, 95.7% or 135 of 141 responses believed the information presented in the PRIDE training has given them the tools to be an effective foster or special needs adoptive parent. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

**Goal:**

- The State will ensure that training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State-licensed or State-approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E is provided in accordance with statewide policy and federal standards.

**Objectives:**

- Through collaboration with the Child Welfare Agencies and the Nevada Partnership for Training, the State will develop an on-line web-registration\* and report tracking system to ensure that all foster and adoptive parents receive the training needed within the required timeframes. \*Participants in training who do not have computer access will be able to register for training via the phone or regular mail with the web coordinator at either state University.
- Through collaboration with the Child Welfare Agencies and the Nevada Partnership for Training, the State will develop an on-line system\* for foster and adoptive parents to indicate knowledge gained and satisfaction with training received and a system to generate reports for continuous quality improvement. \*Participants in training who do not have computer access will be able to complete evaluation tools via paper forms, which will be inputted by the web coordinator at either state University.
- The State will develop a system for measuring the longitudinal effects of foster and adoptive parent training, including a variety of methods for generating reports for continuous quality improvement (i.e. comparison of cohort samples of stakeholders and participants in each year and/or follow up with participants to determine long term effects of training over time).
- Through collaboration with the Child Welfare Agencies and UNITY, the State will develop a system to track that foster and adoptive parents are meeting the State training requirements, including identifying those who need training, and a method for documenting how training needs will be identified and addressed.
- The State will review the system for ensuring that the staff of child care facilities are meeting their requirements for training and will recommend enhancements for documenting how training needs will be identified and addressed.

- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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**Systemic Factor E: Service Array and Resource Development**

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***Item 35: Array of services***

*Requirements:*

NRS 432.011(a) (Division: Purposes; duties) states that the purposes of the Division of Child and Family Services include ensuring that a sufficient range of services is available to provide care and treatment to children and families in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their needs. Policy 1101, Service Array Assessment, summarizes the service array assessment process and required related documentation. NRS 432.017 Account to Assist Persons Formerly in Foster Care creates an account to be used to assist persons who attained the age of 18 years while children in foster care in Nevada to make the transition from foster care to economic self-sufficiency.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" due to service gaps identified during the review (especially in mental health and substance abuse services). Stakeholders also reported that gaps existed in the availability of physical and dental services related to a shortage of providers willing to accept Medicaid payments.

Since the previous CFSR, Clark County has initiated and completed their Service Array Assessment. The Clark County Service Array Assessment process involved the development of an extensive child and family data profile as well as survey assessments of over 100 community stakeholders, 600 caseworkers, as well as 90 clients. The process was completed in early 2008 and the report of findings was finalized in March 2008. CCDFS and the CAC met with stakeholders during a Summit held in September 2008 to review the findings and develop an action plan which included the action steps to address the highest priority findings of the assessment process. The "Nevada Children and Families Summit" was attended by over 120 stakeholders from Federal, state and local governments, philanthropic organizations, faith-based providers, legislators and community service providers. The assessment found gaps in the availability of family preservation and family support services. These services, which are focused on keeping families out of the child welfare system (to include family preservation services, substance abuse and mental health services) were not available at a level to meet the need.

Washoe County is in the midst of their assessment. In 2005-2006 the Rural Region contracted with a consultant group to conduct a workforce assessment which included some service array assessment components. Stakeholders from 7 rural communities participated in the survey process (Fallon, Elko, Pahrump, Lovelock/Winnemucca, Tonopah, Carson and Ely).

As part of the PIP process, during the initial phase of the Clark County Service Array Assessment, Clark County developed a “short list” of critical and immediate service needs. Once identified, the State was able to re-direct some IV-B funding to be used to contract for services to address these identified service gaps, which were most related to family preservation and support. Additionally, the Division revised their allocation formula to be more closely aligned with population distribution: 70% Clark County, 20% Washoe County and 10% Rural Region. Clark County DFS also receives some Victims of Crime Act Funding to address immediate needs of child abuse victims in Clark County.

The NRC revised their assessment process to be more closely aligned with the CFSR in early 2008 and this revised assessment process is currently under way in Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS). WCDSS has opted to assess service array as related to the three Well-Being Outcomes. Once completed, the Rural Region will begin their process, after having observed and participated in the Washoe County process. Completion of each child welfare agency’s assessment process includes the creation of an action plan to address priority findings which will be tracked by the State through quarterly progress reports completed by each child welfare agency.

The first quarterly Clark County Service Array Progress Report, completed in January 2009, identifies several potential strategies to decrease service gaps in the county and to engage stakeholders in serving Clark County’s children and families. One of the potential strategies identified, the “Neighborhood Revitalization Pilot”, proposes identifying which zip codes have the highest rates of child abuse and/or neglect removals and poverty/crime rates and mapping resources to identify service gaps and mobilize resources or using a “patch approach” to focus efforts on leveraging existing community assets to make significant changes quickly related to awareness, access and array of available services. Other potential strategies include: legislative advocacy, development of a web-based system that streamlines service provider and client information, and refinement of service provider engagement strategies. The report also includes a summary of Clark County Department of Family Services upcoming Request for Proposals for Family Preservation and Support Services and Safety Team Decision Making (STDM) which has been funded through Casey Family Programs.

As it has been identified, there are still many steps to be accomplished in the development of a strong service array statewide. Therefore, based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

*Goal:*

- The State will ensure there is an array of services are available that:
  - Assess the strengths and meets the needs of children and families,
  - Determine other service needs,
  - Address the needs of families in addition to individual children 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.

*Objectives:*

- The State will review the effectiveness and level of sufficiency of the service array, including assessment of the following key elements:
  - Placing and maintaining children in safe environments;
  - Enabling children to remain home safely when reasonable;
  - Helping children in foster care and adoptive homes achieve timely permanency;
  - Supporting adoptive families after placement and finalization;
  - Helping youth prepare for independent living.
- The state will identify strategies, through the PIP process to address the identification, collaboration, availability, accessibility and sufficiency of the service array statewide.
- The State will seek out external sources of support (i.e. Technical Assistance) to improve the State’s service array.

- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 36: Service accessibility**

*Requirements:*

NRS 432.011(a) (Division: Purposes; duties) states that the purposes of the Division of Child and Family Services include ensuring that a sufficient range of services is available to provide care and treatment to children and families in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their needs. In addition, statewide policy 1101, Service Array Assessment, summarizes the service array assessment process and required related documentation.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of an "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that not all services are readily available in all areas of the state. Services were found to be especially limited in the rural counties of the state. As outlined in Item 35, Clark County has completed and begun reporting on a comprehensive needs assessment designed to evaluate service capacity and the needs of Clark County children and families. The Clark County Department of Family Services - Service Array Assessment was a 9 month process that included over 120 stakeholders from federal, state and local government, service providers, faith based organizations, and legislators. Clark County indicated that the findings presented them with a fundamental philosophical decision to create a system that strengthens and preserves families during times of crisis or establish a means of removing or relocating children who are subject to abuse and neglect as services and programs designed to assist Clark County families were found to have inadequate capacity. The final report findings were unveiled at a community-wide meeting co-sponsored by the Clark County Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) entitled the "Nevada Children and Families Summit: Families Raising Healthy Hopeful Children" in September 2008. Stakeholders rated all of the top 10 services as having an accessibility rating of 70% or higher, these included: Case management services (94%); health care services for children (93%); dental care services (89%); transportation assistance (83%); educational services (82%); emergency or cash assistance (76%); early childhood education (75%); child advocacy programs (74%); clothing assistance (73%); and food assistance (70%). Washoe County is in the process of completing their service array assessment, and the Rural Region will begin this process in the near future. As there is still work to be done in this area and the extent of that work will not be known until the needs assessments are completed in the other two child welfare agencies. Based on the available information, the 2009 Statewide Assessment rated this item as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

*Goal:*

- The State will ensure that the services in the State's Service Array are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will refine or further develop a process to identify and assess the effectiveness of the accessibility of services for families and children across the state, including the development of statewide or agency level plans for addressing fixable barriers identified in the system.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

## **Item 37: Individualizing services**

### *Requirements:*

NRS 432.011 states that DCFS is to ensure that a sufficient range of services are available to provide care and treatment to children and families in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their needs. In addition, statewide policy 1101, Service Array Assessment summarizes the service array assessment process and required related documentation.

### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the perceived ineffectiveness of the State in meeting the unique needs of children and families due to a shortage of providers willing to accept Medicaid payments as well as inadequate availability of mental health, substance abuse and bi-lingual services. Several initiatives have been implemented either through the PIP or since the last review that promote the unique needs of children and families. Some of the collaborative relationships/initiatives described in Items 38 and 40 enhance the provision of individualized services (such as Differential Response, the RPG Partnership Grant services, etc). During the PIP, two important policies were developed by the State in conjunction with the three child welfare agencies. The Case Planning Policy and the Concurrent Planning Policy both enhance the individualization of services to children and families. In addition, the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) has been formed to assist foster and former foster youth to make the transition to adulthood. The purpose of the organization is to provide exemplary leadership and empowerment opportunities for youth who have or will experience out of home care. The YAB started meeting in January 2007.

Several other groups are available that help Nevada to individualize services for families. For Foster and Adoptive families there are two groups, these are the Sierra Association of Foster Families (SAFF) and the Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (CCFAPA). SAFF is a non-profit organization in Washoe County comprised of caregivers whose purpose is to ensure licensed foster/adoptive families have the information, tools and support they need to provide safe, quality care to abused, neglected and otherwise dependent children for Washoe County and 15 rural counties. CCFAPA has over 200 members who actively participate in Clark County activities and receive consultation and financial support from the National Foster Parent Association.

For placements, there are several groups that individualize services, examples of these include the Out-of-State Placement Workgroup and the Indian Child Welfare Steering Committee. The Out-of-State Placement Workgroup was formed to provide oversight to the out-of-state onsite facility reviews and to review and approve policy and procedures. Members include Children's Mental Health, DCFS-FPO, DCFS Rural Region, WCDSS, CCDFS, Juvenile Justice, and legal and fiscal representatives. The Indian Child Welfare Steering Committee provides tribal consultation on the Indian Child Welfare Act and child welfare concerns regarding Indian children. There are four federally recognized tribes (Northern and Southern Paiute, Washoe, Shoshone) and 23 tribal entities and organizations in Nevada, including Urban Indians. The members include a wide representative of tribes, federal and state child welfare agencies. In addition, Clark County also has an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) specialist dedicated to assisting with the provision of ICWA related services and a partnership with the Moapa Tribe that ensures that there is a sound process in place for working collaboratively.

There are several entities that work with the agencies to assist in meeting direct service needs. For example, for bilingual services there is an Interpreter's Office for translation services that Clark County uses to enable workers to communicate effectively with the children and families that they serve; and a Language Line used by the DCFS Rural Region to provide translation services for the children and families in the rural counties throughout the state. Other examples include Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) in place with agencies to ensure that the needs of families and children are met in a timely manner. One such MOU is with Bridge Counseling, who provides outpatient substance abuse and mental health services and who is funded to provide immediate response to referrals from this agency.

Despite progress that has been made in these services areas, the 2009 Statewide Assessment rated this item as an **Area Needing Improvement**.

#### *Goal:*

- The State will ensure that the services in the State's Service Array are individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

#### *Objectives:*

- In collaboration with the Child Welfare Agencies and service array providers, the State will develop an ongoing process for assessing and addressing the needs of children and families within the system and providing a continuous quality improvement process for ensuring that the identified needs of these individuals are met.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

#### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

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## **Systemic Factor F: Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

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### **Item 38: State engagement in consultation with stakeholders**

#### *Requirements:*

NRS 432.0305 and NRS 432B require the Division to observe and study the changing nature and extent of the need for child welfare services and to cooperate with the Federal government in adopting and completing state plans which will assist DCFS to provide services for children and families. This is accomplished through the coordination and collaboration with other public and private agencies and entities in developing the five-year Child and Family Services Plan and ongoing annual updates required by Title IV-B. The Division collaborates with a variety of entities in this process.

#### *Statewide Data:*

During the 2004 CFSR, this item was rated as a “strength” because it was shown to be in substantial conformity. DCFS continues to actively engage and collaborate with external stakeholders through partnering and participation in workgroups, focus groups, meetings, public presentations, and surveys for purposes related to achieving State Plan goals and objectives. External stakeholders provide information about program functioning, policy and practice, protocol development, share resources and information that are used in program development and planning. These activities are part of the monitoring process established by the Family Programs Office to monitor specific child welfare programs. Each program area identifies activities and stakeholders as part of its plan and provides reports and data about how the objectives are achieved relative to the overarching State Plan and federal child welfare outcome indicators.

Nevada has chosen to use the results of the recently completed 2009 Nevada Statewide Assessment and stakeholder surveys as the foundation for the development of the Nevada Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for SFY 2010-2014. Nevada’s second Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) will be conducted August 31 – September 4, 2009 and the results from that report will be incorporated into this plan at a later date.

Nevada’s first Statewide Assessment was completed in December of 2003. This provided a baseline for child welfare services at that time. This was followed by the Nevada Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) completed in February 2004. The final report for the first CFSR was received in June 2004. In addition, Nevada has reviewed reports from each Annual Service Progress Review (APSR) from 2005 through 2009 in developing this document. A compilation of this information was used to interpret the progress made by Nevada child welfare programs over the past five years. These, in consultation with the child welfare agencies, external stakeholders and surveys of program participants provides us with the information needed to write this plan.

**Process:** Through a collaborative process individuals or groups participated in answering core questions related to 45 individual performance indicator items. Completing the Nevada Statewide Assessment and the Child and Family Services Plan was accomplished through several steps, beginning in May 2008 and concluding in June 2009. These steps included the following:

1. The identification of internal (to the agencies) and external stakeholders;
2. Presentation of the cycle of reviews, including the statewide assessment process, child and family services plan, child and family services review and internal Nevada-specific quality improvement case reviews to key members of committees and groups;
3. The identification and analysis of existing sources of data or reports that would provide information on the child welfare system in Nevada from January 2004 through April 2009;
4. An analysis of law, regulation and state and county child welfare policy and a comparison to practice;
5. Engagement of stakeholders through written reports, focus groups and surveys;
6. Providing an ongoing dialogue for analysis of each of the 45 performance indicator items to major stakeholders, including review of data sources, analysis of data summaries and feedback on the overall process.

From late January through April 2009, Family Programs Office representatives from DCFS met approximately every week with the child welfare agency designated leads to discuss the overall performance indicator items. In April 2009, focus groups were held with each of the three agencies directors and managers to discuss the performance indicator ratings



and the preliminary results of the caseworker and supervisor surveys. Ratings from the Statewide Assessment process reported in the remainder of this document are based on a collaborative effort. Each item was rated as either a “strength” or an “area needing improvement” based on several factors. Each item gave consideration to the amount of progress made since the last Statewide Assessment in 2003 and review results from the 2004 Nevada Child and Family Service Review and factored in new information. This information came from the AFCARS and NCANDS results reported in Section II of the 2009 Nevada Statewide Assessment; results from ongoing Nevada regional Quality Improvement Case Reviews (QICR) of the 23 performance indicator items under Safety, Permanency and Well-Being; review of federal and state statute and regulation; review of statewide policy; and a review of existing data reports and new survey responses.

Therefore, a rating of strength indicates that Nevada feels that we are primarily in compliance with the given performance indicator, however, this does not necessarily mean that the indicator has reached a level of 95%, which is the level of compliance that Nevada set for its own internal case review process during 2007 and 2008, and the level set for the upcoming five years. The Nevada QICR process only reviews the first 23 performance indicators, and does not measure the final 22 systemic factors. A rating of “strength” does not mean that there is not work to be done; just that Nevada feels that it is meeting minimum qualifications for that indicator. A rating of “area needing improvement” indicates that while substantial progress may have been made over the last five years, that there are still things that need to be done before we felt comfortable giving an item a rating of “strength.” In addition, there may be cases where one or more of the child welfare agencies is meeting a given performance indicator, but one or more of the other agencies are not. In this scenario, an item may be rated as an “area needing improvement” for the state, even though one or more of the agencies are in compliance. With systemic factors, there are many “strengths” statewide, but there is still much work needing to be done.

**Surveys:** Several surveys were developed to access specific populations in the child welfare system for the Statewide Assessment. These tools included a variety of questions that represented most of the 45 performance indicator items, and more specifically, areas where no existing data reports could be located. Seven separate surveys with similar questions and themes were developed to access the largest range of respondents. The tables below show the surveys and the number of respondents who participated from February 2009 – April 2009. Each of the surveys was available for respondent feedback for a minimum of four weeks. In total, 805 respondents participated in the Nevada Statewide Assessment Surveys. Individual results of surveys are reported in the 2009 Nevada Statewide Assessment document and some of this information is included in this plan.

*Child Welfare Agency Caseworker and Supervisor Survey*

The Child Welfare Agency Caseworker and Supervisor Survey included 75 questions specific to workers and supervisors and was only available electronically. The questions asked that supervisors rate the approximate percentage of their worker’s cases that each question applied to, a rating of the barriers to the implementation of the requested information, and provided open-ended response questions. The worker portion of the survey followed the same format and questions; except that the workers were asked specifically about their own caseloads. This survey was delivered to employees of each child welfare agency through emails sent by the Agency Directors to their staff. Agency specific response rates are reported in *Table 38.1*. Overall, there was an agency level response rate of 64.5%. Supervisors had the highest response rate, at 96.2% statewide. Caseworkers, statewide, had an overall response rate of 59.2%

**Table 38.1: Response Rates for Child Welfare Agency Survey of Caseworkers and Supervisors**

Agency	N	% of Total	Expected	Response Rate
Clark County Department of Family Services	217	61.3%	366	<b>59%</b>
Washoe County Department of Social Services	89	25.1%	114	<b>78%</b>
Division of Child and Family Services – Rural Region	48	13.6%	68	<b>71%</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>64.5%</b>

The majority of workers or supervisors that responded came from permanency (28%) and investigative units (21%). Hotline, independent living, voluntary services and ICPC workers were the smallest groups to respond (from 2% to 4% each). The remaining areas of concentration (ranging from 5% to 11% each) included adoptions, assessment, intake and in-home services. Overall, there was a broad response of workers across child welfare disciplines.

### Caregiver & Youth Surveys

The Caregiver Survey was made available to a broad range of foster parents, adoptive parents, relative caregivers, residential care facilities, and other youth care providers. This survey included 44 questions with question formats including rating scales for performance, rating scales to determine barriers to practice, and open-ended response questions. A total of 185 caregivers responded to the survey statewide, which is approximately a 10% response rate based on the final number of 1861 mailed surveys and/or email links sent.

The Youth Survey included focused on youth age 15 and older and included 55 questions focusing on the youth's living arrangements, school, community connections, health, independent living plans and interaction with their worker and agency. The question formats included multiple choice, rating scales, and open-ended formats. This survey included skip question protocols, as not every question would be applicable to every youth (thus shortening the overall length of the survey). A total of 42 youth responded to the survey, with an average age of 15.8 years (range 15 to 19). This is approximately a 6% response rate, based on the number of 15-18 year olds in care in 2008.

These surveys are estimated to have reached approximately 1800 families or facilities with and without youth over the age of 15.

**Table 38.2: Response Rates for Caregiver and Youth Surveys by Respondent & Region**

Agency	Clark	Washoe	Rural Region	Unknown*	Total Surveys
Youth	27	10	0	5	<b>42 (18%)</b>
Foster Parents	59	22	22	5	<b>108 (47%)</b>
Adoptive Parents	45	9	10	0	<b>64 (28%)</b>
Care Facilities	6	0	2	0	<b>8 (4%)</b>
Relative Caregivers	3	0	2	0	<b>5 (3%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>140 (62%)</b>	<b>41 (18%)</b>	<b>36 (16%)</b>	<b>10 (4%)</b>	<b>227</b>

\*Unknown means that the respondent refused to answer this question, but did answer the remainder of the survey.

### Nevada Judicial & Child Advocate Surveys

The Nevada Judicial Survey was sent to Nevada Judges through a collaborative process with the Nevada Court Improvement Project (CIP). This survey included 57 questions in multiple-choice, rating scale and open-ended formats. This survey was available in both paper and online format. The survey was mailed and emailed to 40 judges across Nevada through the Court Improvement Project. A total of 16 judges responded to the survey statewide (40% response rate).

The Nevada Child Advocate Survey was sent to child and parent attorneys, Guardian ad Litem and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) across the state. This survey had 52 questions in multiple-choice, rating scale and open-ended formats. This survey was only available online and was disseminated through a list of child attorneys by DCFS-FPO staff and to all Court Appointed Special Advocates and Guardian Ad Litem through the CASA organization in Carson City. A total of 69 child advocates responded to the survey statewide. A response rate for this item cannot be calculated due to the anonymous method of delivery and we do not know how many potential respondents that this survey eventually reached.

**Table 38.3: Response Rates for Judges and Child Advocates by Respondent & Region**

Agency	Clark	Washoe	Rural Region	Unknown*	Total Surveys
Judges	5	1	7	3	<b>16 (19%)</b>
Attorneys	3	5	0	0	<b>8 (10%)</b>
Guardian ad Litem	1	0	8	0	<b>9 (11%)</b>
CASA's	24	0	20	0	<b>44 (52%)</b>
Other**	4	1	3	0	<b>8 (10%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37 (44%)</b>	<b>7 (9%)</b>	<b>38 (45%)</b>	<b>3 (4%)</b>	<b>85</b>

\* Unknown means that the respondent refused to indicate what geographical area they served, but did answer the remainder of the survey.

\*\*Other includes District Attorneys, Legal Administrators, and Juvenile Justice Representatives

### Nevada Tribal Survey

The Nevada Tribal Survey was presented to the ICWA Steering Committee and was sent to the Nevada Tribal Listserv through the State of Nevada Indian Commission. This survey consisted of 49 questions in multiple-choice, rating scale and open-ended formats. This survey was only available online. A total of 12 tribal members responded to the survey statewide, with eight of the respondents coming from the Rural Region (which is where most of the tribal communities are located). Nevada has 27 tribal communities statewide. Respondents represented the Western Shoshone Tribe; the Ely Shoshone Tribe, the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe, the Battle Mountain Band Council, the Washoe Tribe, the Moapa Band of Paiutes, the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Three of the respondents also worked directly for Social Services for one or more of the Nevada Indian colonies. 58.3% of respondents had five or more years experience in child welfare, with 72% of these having the experience directly in Nevada.

### General Stakeholder Survey

The General Stakeholder Survey was sent via email to a list of all Nevada School District Superintendents; all Family Resource Centers (including those who offer Differential Response services); all IV-B subgrantees who provide services to families in Nevada, and additional medical, psychological/behavioral, substance abuse and other agencies or service providers throughout the State. A total of 81 individuals responded to this survey, with 70% of respondents coming from the Rural Region. In addition, 47 individuals who work for the child welfare agencies, but are not caseworkers or supervisors, provided responses on the caseworker and supervisor survey. Their responses will be tallied with this group, as many of the questions are the same. Overall, 66.3% of the respondents indicated that they were in contact at least monthly (11.3% quarterly) with the child welfare agency, indicating that they work collaboratively in the child welfare process on a regular basis.

**Table 38.4: Response Rates for Stakeholder Survey by Respondent & Region**

Stakeholder	Clark	Washoe	Rural Region	Unknown	Total Surveys
Mental Health	5	8	17	0	<b>30 (23.4%)</b>
Health Care Provider	2	2	5	0	<b>9 (7%)</b>
Domestic Violence Program	0	0	1	0	<b>1 (&lt;1%)</b>
Substance Abuse Program	1	0	3	0	<b>4 (3.1%)</b>
Parenting Program	1	4	8	0	<b>13 (10.1%)</b>
Educational Partner	2	4	24	0	<b>30 (23.4%)</b>
Early Intervention Services	0	0	7	0	<b>7 (5.4%)</b>
Other**	24	3	5	2	<b>34 (26.5%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35 (27.3%)</b>	<b>21(16.4%)</b>	<b>70 (54.6%)</b>	<b>2 (1%)</b>	<b>128</b>

\* Unknown means that the respondent refused to indicate what geographical area they served, but did answer the remainder of the survey.

\*\*Other includes Administration – unspecified, Law Enforcement, and Community Program – unspecified & other agency positions

**Stakeholder Presentations & Focus Groups:** Stakeholders, including internal stakeholders – state staff and administration, and external stakeholders – members of the child welfare agencies and individuals and groups that contribute to the child welfare system in Nevada were identified to participate in group presentations and child welfare agency management focus groups. These stakeholders were invited to participate in the process through a variety of mediums, including the before mentioned surveys, focus groups, existing stakeholder meetings, review of drafts of individual performance indicator final reports, etc. During May 2008 – March 2009 a variety of existing stakeholder groups were presented with information on the Statewide Assessment, Child and Family Services Review, Child and Family Services Plan, Annual Progress Service Review and the state’s internal QICR process. *Table 38.5* shows the groups participated in presentations and provided feedback directly through their regular meeting formats:

**Table 38.5: Stakeholder Presentations and Focus Groups**

Stakeholders
Administrative Team to Review the Death of Children
CIP - Court Improvement Project
CJA - Children's Justice Act Task Force
Clark County Department of Family Services
Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
CRP - Citizens Review Panels
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
SAPTA (Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act)
Sierra Association of Foster Families
Washoe County Department of Social Services
Youth Advisory Board

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

*Goal:*

- In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State will engage 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 ensure that the major concerns of these representatives are included in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.

*Objectives:*

- The State will provide ongoing review opportunities for key stakeholders to provide input (including the incorporation of their feedback) on the child welfare system and the components within this plan through a variety of methods (as described in Section III of this document).
- The State will report on stakeholder activity, including how actively engaged external partners have been, how their input has been used and how information has been shared with the stakeholders throughout the year between annual reviews.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSP ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

### **Item 39: Agency annual reports pursuant to CFSP**

#### *Requirements:*

The state is in compliance with the requirements to submit a Five Year Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) as well as the activities, accomplishments and future initiatives which are submitted annually in the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) in accordance with the title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2 and Section 477 of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, CAPTA, and Federal regulations at 45 CFR Part 1357. Nevada has remained in compliance each year with these requirements and has received approval on all plans and reports since the requirement was established in 2005. The initial CFSP was implemented in 2005 and was then revised on February 28, 2007 to include ten new action steps and 73 benchmarks targeted at improving child welfare practice and systemic issues within the state. These action steps and benchmarks were incorporated into the PIP with a 90 day completion date remaining under the PIP period. The PIP items that required more than 90 days to formally complete were embedded into the CFSP and then reported in the APSR.

#### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSP in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Strength” based on the information gathered during CFSP interviews which indicated the State is responsive to input from the community in developing the goals and objectives of the CFSP. Nevada was found to be in substantial conformity due to the 2004 CFSP determining that DCFS engaged many stakeholders in the process of developing the CFSP and in preparing the annual reports of progress. In addition, this CFSP found multiple examples of State efforts to coordinate services with other Federal or Federally-funded programs. The 2003, the Statewide Assessment indicated DCFS and Nevada Tribes held a series of Tribal Symposiums beginning in 1999, which have included the Tribal Chairmen, tribal social work supervisors, Intertribal Council, Indian Commission, Urban Indian Association, and Nevada ICWA Association.

Since the last CFSP, many changes have occurred to ensure that stakeholders are involved in the annual reporting of the CFSP. The DCFS website has been expanded to facilitate the dissemination of CFSP plans, reports and draft documents for feedback from external stakeholders. This change contributes to the transparency of program administration and allows for public examination and input. Another effective change has been the establishment of a Grants Management Unit to maximize funding for service delivery. This is accomplished through a more effective service needs assessment process and data collection. The GMU has replaced the single Title IV-B Coordinator position and has consolidated all child welfare grants, domestic violence, and fee based programs into one fiscal unit that oversees and monitors programs and completes fiscal reports. The GMU has established an online web-based reporting system managed by the University of Nevada, Reno. Information about programs and services, public comments and surveys are available to the public.

DCFS continues to collaborate with and include stakeholders from the community as well as other agencies at every level of the child welfare service delivery continuum, ranging from planning for allocation of funding to case level decision making to changes in policy, practice and reporting requirements. This collaboration and consultation with other agencies and entities expands partnerships and the sharing of available resources. It also allows for the provision of constructive feedback to the agency about programs, policies, procedures and practice that may be incorporated into the State Plan. DCFS representation includes, but is not limited to, educational/research institutions and agencies related to drug and alcohol, health, mental health, education, domestic violence, and juvenile courts, representing various counties. Examples of statewide consultation and coordination with stakeholders in implementing the provisions of the CFSP include (but are not limited to) the following committees or organizations:

- Administrative Team to Review the Death of Children
- CIP - Court Improvement Project
- CJA - Children's Justice Act Task Force
- Clark County Department of Family Services

- Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
- CRP - Citizens Review Panels
- 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
- SAPTA (Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act)
- Sierra Association of Foster Families
- Washoe County Department of Social Services
- Youth Advisory Board

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

*Goal:*

- The State will ensure that the Annual Progress and Services Report will include feedback from the ongoing consultation with the key stakeholders on services delivered pursuant to the CFSP.

*Objectives:*

- The State will provide ongoing review opportunities for key stakeholders to provide input (including the incorporation of their feedback) on the child welfare system and the components within this plan through a variety of methods (as described in Section III of this document).
- The State will report on stakeholder activity, including how actively engaged external partners have been, how their input has been used and how information has been shared with the stakeholders throughout the year between annual reviews.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 40: Coordination of CFSP services with other federal programs**

*Requirements:*

The state is in compliance with the requirements to submit the CFSP, as well as the activities, accomplishments and future initiatives which are submitted annually in the APSR in accordance with the title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2 and Section 477 of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, CAPTA, and Federal regulations at 45 CFR Part 1357. Nevada has remained in compliance each year with these requirements and has received approval on all plans and reports since the requirement was established in 2005. The initial CFSP was implemented in 2005 and was then revised on February 28,

2007 to include ten new action steps and 73 benchmarks targeted at improving child welfare practice and systemic issues within the state. These action steps and benchmarks were incorporated into the PIP with a 90 day completion date remaining under the PIP period. The PIP items that required more than 90 days to formally complete were embedded into the CFSP and then reported in the APSR.

### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSP in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Strength” based on the finding that there were numerous collaborative relationships identified at both the State and the local Child Welfare Agency level. Collaborative relationships that were cited during the previous CFSP included: Collaboration with regional mental health consortiums, independent living advisory councils, Medicaid’s Behavioral Health Reform Workgroups, regional respite care initiatives, as well as the Washoe and Clark County Citizen Advisory Groups. Since the last CFSP, there have been several new collaborative initiatives such as Differential Response, the Regional Partnership Grant, an Out-of-State Placement Workgroup, the Children’s Behavioral Health Consortium, and the Youth Advisory Boards. Additionally, there are several ongoing collaborations such as: the Child Death Review Group, the Citizen’s Review Panel (North and South), the Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force, and the Court Improvement Project (CIP). These new collaborative initiatives are described in detail in the 2009 Nevada Statewide Assessment.

During the 2006-07 legislative session, children’s mental health services came under sharp criticism for ineffectively serving Nevada’s foster care children diagnosed with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED). The criticism centered on the fact that children in the child welfare agencies’ custody moved to access services rather than having services come to them. These “contracted” residential services were referred to as “higher levels of care” as reimbursement to providers was based on the level of care provided. A white paper called “Transforming Children’s Mental Health Treatment Services in Nevada” outlined the barriers and action steps to improving children’ mental health services. A behavioral health redesign was implemented in January 2006 which re-structured how residential providers were reimbursed by eliminating “levels of care” and creating a daily rate with add-on rehabilitative mental health services; to allow services to be “wrapped” around a youth in hopes of increasing placement stability and decreasing moves. The re-design also created the ability for licensed clinical social workers and marriage and family therapists to be eligible to become Medicaid providers. The re-design did increase the number of outpatient providers and a provided for a small increase in residential providers occurred. It was hoped that the re-design would decrease the number of children sent to out of state residential treatment centers; however, the impact has yet to be seen. The federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) determined that the daily rate identified during the re-design was not allowable. Therefore on November 1, 2008 the reimbursement structure for residential providers was changed again. The determination of CMS that a daily rate was not allowable under Medicaid has resulted in cost shifting to the state. The state DCFS, in collaboration with the county child welfare agencies and the Nevada Youth Care Providers (the association representing treatment home providers) and with the support of the executive and legislative branch funds have been identified for a “specialized daily rate” for residential treatment homes in addition to a room and board rate.

In November 2007, Clark County DFS in partnership with Positively Kids and Area Health Education Center (AHEC) secured grant funding to provide medical wraparound case management services to children with open DFS cases who have higher medical needs. This project targets medically fragile/needs children from birth to five years of age who are at risk for removal from their home, placement in congregate care/emergency shelter care or placement disruption. The project provides a comprehensive program of intensive medical case management; training for caregivers, DFS staff and social service providers and in-home skilled care or respite services for caregivers of children with special medical needs. The project’s primary goal is to maintain these children in their home or in a stable, alternate placement. This program has partner agreements in place and services are associated with specific outcomes that are monitored regularly.

Despite the work that has been done in this area, it was felt by the key members of the statewide assessment team that 2009 Statewide Assessment be rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** for this item.

### *Goal:*

- The State will ensure that the services identified under the CFSP are coordinated with the services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same populations.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will provide ongoing review opportunities for key stakeholders to provide input (including the incorporation of their feedback) on the child welfare system and the components within this plan through a variety of methods (as described in Section III of this document).
- The State will report on stakeholder activity, including how actively engaged external partners have been, how their input has been used and how information has been shared with the stakeholders throughout the year between annual reviews.
- The State will develop collaborative work groups to address the individual objectives in listed in the performance indicators throughout this document (as required) to ensure that the appropriate stakeholders and other key federal programs are involved in the development of regulation, policy, training and proposed changes in practice.
- The State will report on the coordination of key Federal programs, including Title IV-D (child support and Federal Parent Locator Service) and IV-B programs, the Court Improvement Project, Medicaid, child abuse prevention and early intervention programs, mental health programs, substance abuse programs, tribal programs and juvenile justice programs.
- The State will report on partnerships with public or private entities or contractors who perform Title IV-E or IV-B functions, including whether services provided under the agreements are in compliance with State plan requirements and what corrective action is in place for programs that are not in compliance.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

## **Systemic Factor G: Foster and Adoptive Home Licensing, Approval and Recruitment**

### ***Item 41: Standards for foster homes and institutions***

#### *Requirements:*

**Child Care Institutions:** When Nevada's Child Care licensing standards were compared to National Standards (Stepping Stones, Caring for Our Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition) in 2004, only 5 of the 209 standards were fully being met. The Bureau of Services for Child Care created workgroups and amended proposed regulations to ensure Nevada's children were in a safe and nurturing environment when placed in out-of-home care. Child care institutions (educational, shelter care and residential) fall under NAC 432A regulations. The regulations incorporate definitions, training requirements, general requirements, social workers, maintaining records and ratios.

Licensing Surveyors complete quarterly, semi-annual and annual inspections (surveys) of facilities, such as facility files, indoor and outdoor deficiencies based on NRS 432A regulations. The regulations are based on fire, health, facility space,



advertising, immunization of records, staff qualifications and training records, menu, food preparation, nutrition, fire drill records, staff/child ratios, safety factors including toys and outdoor equipment, transportation and discipline. Once deficiencies are noted, licensing surveyors will work with providers to come into compliance with the NRS 432A regulations.

**Foster and Adoptive Homes:** Nevada statutes in Chapter 424 – Foster Homes for Children provide a framework for the licensing, license renewal, inspections, investigations of foster homes and background investigations for foster care providers. Under NRS 424, the child welfare agencies have the responsibility for licensing foster homes. Child Welfare Agencies include DCFS Rural Region, Washoe County Department of Social Services, and Clark County Department of Family Services. This responsibility also includes monitoring and providing technical assistance to family foster and group foster homes. The purpose of licensing is to reduce the risk of harm to children in care. The licensing process determines whether the applicant can provide suitable care for children. To ensure that an acceptable level of care is maintained, licenses are renewed annually per NRS 424 with a minimum of one visit made to each licensed home. FBI checks are conducted on all applicants and household residents 18 years of age and older.

Family foster homes fall under NAC 424 regulations. The regulations incorporate definitions, general provisions, licensing and organizational requirements, requirements for qualifications and training of personnel and adult residents, requirements for initial training and ongoing annual training, specifications for facilities, ground and furnishings, and operation of foster homes, including requirements for care, treatment and discipline of foster children. NAC 424 regulations pertaining to licensing also specify standards for accessibility, facility space, immunization records, health and sanitation, menus, food preparation, nutrition, fire safety and fire drill records, staff/child ratios, safety factors including pools and outdoor equipment, and transportation of children.

*Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of “Strength” based on the finding that the State had established standards for foster family homes and child care institutions. In order meet more National Standards the Bureau of Services for Child Care created workgroups and amended proposed 432A regulations to ensure Nevada’s children were in a safe and nurturing environment when placed in out-of-home care. The proposed regulatory process is still in the progress working toward bringing the State of Nevada standards closer to National Standards. Stakeholders commenting on this item were in general agreement that DCFS and the local counties have implemented appropriate standards for foster family homes and child care institutions. Stakeholders reported that re-licensing occurs annually and is done in a timely manner. The following table illustrates the upward trend in the total number of licensed foster homes in the previous three years, which is a 27 percent increase from the 2006 figures.

**Table 41.1: Increase in Total Foster Care Licenses**

<b>Increase in Total Foster Care Licenses</b>	April 2006	April 2007	April 2008
Total number of licensed foster homes (2008 APSR)	1412	1601	1794

The following table indicates that the average number of days required to license foster and group homes has declined steadily, while the number of waivers has steadily increased.

**Table 41.2: Average Number of Days Required to License Foster and Group Homes**

Year	Number of Facilities	Average days to license	Waivers
2006	521	91	116
2007	575	83	163
2008	539	73	207
Total	1155	247	486

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

*Goal:*

- The State will ensure that implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will engage in necessary regulation development to ensure quality standards for foster care and child care institutions, including the finalization of regulations related to NAC424 regarding treatment homes and 432A regarding child care institutions.
- In collaboration with the Child Welfare Agencies, the State will provide a mechanism for determining how effective foster family homes, child care institutions and facilities are at meeting required standards, including reporting on meeting corrective action for those homes or institutions that are not in compliance.
- The State will report on the length of time it takes to license foster and adoptive homes and facilities, including the number of waivers granted.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

### ***Item 42: Standards applied equally***

#### *Requirements:*

DCFS is responsible for the receipt and distribution of all federal IV-E or IV-B funds in the State of Nevada. It is a statutory duty of DCFS to administer any money granted by the Federal government under title IV-E or IV-B. NRS 432A regulates and licenses all Child Care Institutions before they can receive IV-E funds. Child Care Institutions follow 432A child care regulations which protect the health and safety of the children. 432A regulations require every employee to receive criminal background checks and a Child Abuse and Neglect check (CANS). Institutions also have to follow the ratio between caregiver and children in order to ensure supervision is adequately being met. Institution staff is required to take 15 hours of annual training plus 90 day initial training.

DCFS also licenses and regulates all foster homes according to NRS 424 and NAC 424 requirements. All family foster homes must meet the same licensure requirements. No distinction is made between relative and non-relative applicants. DCFS monitors compliance with foster care licensing regulations and requirements and verifies compliance by family foster homes on an annual basis. Compliance is verified by a process of annual visits as part of the license renewal process, and the prompt investigation of any complaints or concerns relating to the operation of family foster homes. Complaints that involve the health or safety of a child are investigated immediately. All other complaints must be investigated within 10 working days. Family foster homes that do not comply with initial licensing requirements and maintain compliance as verified by annual inspections and license renewals will not receive IV-E or IV-B funds.

#### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Strength" based on the finding that licensing standards are applied consistently to foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds. Quarterly, semi-

annual and annual inspection reports indicate that institutions are continuing to become licensed and comply with 432A regulations. The State licenses 8 institutions and all of them fall under the Bureau's licensing entity per a statute that was passed during the 2007 legislative session. Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that licensure requirements are the same for relatives and non-relatives. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

*Goal:*

- The State will ensure that the standards applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving Title IV-E or IV-B funds are applied equally.

*Objectives:*

- The State will engage in necessary regulation development to ensure quality standards for foster care and child care institutions.
- In collaboration with the Child Welfare Agencies, the State will provide a process for ensuring the effectiveness of applying standards to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving Title IV-E or IV-B funds, including IV-E review findings and agency level compliance with State standards.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

**Item 43: Requirements for criminal background checks**

*Requirements:*

NRS 424.031 states that the licensing authority shall obtain background and personal history for each applicant applying for a foster care license and all prospective employees of that applicant and residents of the foster home who are age 18 years of age or older in order to determine whether the person investigated has been arrested for or convicted of any crime. NRS 424.039 states that the licensing authority is authorized to conduct preliminary Federal Bureau of Investigations name-based background checks or adult residents of foster homes in which a child will be placed in an emergency situation. The person investigated is to supply fingerprints for further investigation. NAC 424.680 deals with criminal history verification for anyone employed as staff or a director of a group treatment home or anyone applying to be a foster parent. Nevada law requires child welfare agencies to insure that criminal history investigations are conducted pursuant to requirements under NAC 424 and NAC 127 and will notify and request separate waivers as warranted due to information obtained through updated criminal background investigations or substantiated allegations of abuse or neglect pursuant to NRS 432 B. In addition, the state has approved policy 0515.0 Child Abuse and Neglect (CANS) and NCID Requirements for Prospective Foster and Adoptive Parents in response to the Adam Walsh Act of 2006 and sets forth procedures for conducting and responding to CANS checks; conducting and establishing statewide standards for authorizing placement of children with caregivers who have undergone an NCID and CANS check. No applicant is issued a license until the criminal background checks have been completed although children may be placed in relative homes prior to the results of the FBI background check being received by the agency. The state also adheres to policy requirements set forth in 1002.0 Waivers – Foster Care & Adoption policy which defines the DCFS waiver authority and

the waiver process for applicants/licensees to the foster care and adoption programs.

### *Statewide Data:*

In 2004, the CFSR rated this item as a “Strength” because Nevada completes criminal records checks in foster and adoptive homes before placing children in the home. According to the 2003 Statewide Assessment, DCFS regulations included requirements for local law enforcement criminal background checks, annual child abuse and neglect checks, home safety inspections, home studies, reference checks, and complaint investigations. Fingerprints are forwarded to State’s Central Registry for Statewide and FBI background checks and 432B.391 allows name check for emergency relative placements. Stakeholders commenting on this item for the onsite CFSR in 2004 reported that criminal background checks are routine for all members of foster families and for anyone 18 years of age or older who is staying with the family or moving in. However, Clark County stakeholders in 2004 noted that because it may take 6 months to get the FBI check back, licenses often are granted prior to receiving the FBI information (but only after local clearance has been done).

Since the last CFSR, the state has continued to comply with state and federal requirements as required. In addition to the policy development in response to Adam Walsh, a bill (AB 76) was submitted and was approved in the 2009 legislative session. The legislative submission and policy development were completed within the last six months in order to meet the requirements of the federal law. Included in the policy is a procedural guideline for the local child welfare agencies regarding specific timeframes for completing checks requested by other states and procedures to follow when other states are not responding to Nevada requests. The state has developed an email address for state’s to contact Nevada to request an Adam Walsh check and the applicable forms are easily accessible on the Division’s website. Within Nevada, there is a 24 hour response time to provide the results to the requested state. Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

### *Goal:*

- The State will comply with Federal requirements, including Adam Walsh, for criminal background clearances related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements.
- The State will ensure that a case planning process is in place that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements of children.

### *Objectives:*

- The State will engage in necessary regulation development to ensure compliance with Adam Walsh requirements, including making necessary regulation adjustments required by AB89 from the 2009 Nevada Legislative Session.
- The State will monitor whether criminal background checks have been conducted for all approved/licensed foster and adoptive families and staff of child care facilities and provide a process to ensure corrective action for those not in compliance.
- The State will monitor and report on the timeliness of completion of the background checks in relation to when a child is placed in a home.
- The State will report on the number of negative background checks, including exemptions and appeals and those situations where a child has already been placed in a home, or if the home has already been licensed.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State’s overall functioning on this item.

- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

#### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

#### **Item 44: Diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes**

##### *Requirements:*

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 (P.L 103-382) was amended in 1997 by the Removal of Barriers to Interethnic Adoption (P.L 104-188) which requires diligent recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes. This act established a new Title IV-E state plan requirement that prohibits states or private agencies that receive federal funds from delaying placement on the basis of race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster or adoptive parent. NRS 127.010 – NRS 127.1895 governs the adoption of children. NRS 424.010-424.220 governs the licensing of foster homes. Statewide Policy 1301 directs child welfare services to develop strategic recruitment efforts in compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act. Also, in 2005 policy 1004 Structured Analysis Family Evaluation became effective and provided all child welfare agencies throughout the state with a standardized Licensing/Adoptive Home Study. In 2007, SB 399 was enacted, which required DCFS to coordinate with and assist each agency which provides child welfare services in recruiting, training and licensing providers of family foster care as defined in NRS 424.017.

##### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Area Needing Improvement" based on the finding that there was a need to recruit more Hispanic and Spanish speaking families, more therapeutic homes, and more foster and adoptive families for older youth. Since this time, statewide efforts to recruit foster families has resulted in 645 initial foster care licenses being issued in SFY 2008 (as of June 15, 2008). Nevada illustrates an upward trend of total number of foster care licenses statewide, increasing 12% from April 2007 to April 2008. In Clark County there has been an increase in foster parents by 9.97% as of June 15, 2008. In addition, Washoe County has continuously assessed the demographic data of their Resource Families and Children. The data indicates a general stability within the foster family community and a continued close correlation to the ethnic and cultural diversity of foster children. There continues to be a steady, though slow, increase in the percentage of foster parents of Hispanic descent with an increase of approximately 1% in the last fiscal year.

Data gathered from UNITY suggests a diverse population of children entering care from 1/1/08-12/31/08. The 2003 Statewide Assessment indicated that in Clark County 7% of children entering care were Hispanic, and 23% of children entering care were African American. Currently, in Clark County Unity data suggest from 1/1/08-12/31/08 an increase in Hispanic children entering care at 24% and an increase in African American children entering care at 34%. Washoe County's recruitment plan data is consistent with Unity data in that from 1/1/08-12/31/08 approximately 24% of children entering care in Washoe County were Hispanic. In the Rural Region Unity data suggest that from 1/1/08-12/31/08, 74% of children entering care were Caucasian and 12% were Hispanic. Statewide Unity data from 1/1/08-12/31/08 suggest that 2% of children entering care were American Indian, 2% were Asian and 1% were Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (NHPI).

Table 44.1 shows the ethnicity of children statewide who are coming into care. Based on the information below, there are a disproportionate number of African American children in care, as compared to the actual population of children in Nevada.

**Table 44.1: Statewide race/ethnicity distribution of children entering foster care**

<b>Race</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2006 Actual Population Children age 0-18</b>
African American	1771	2150	2472	2531	2475	54,896
American Indian/Native American	20%	21%	22%	22%	23%	8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	141	148	177	184	209	9,102
	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
	243	302	356	332	303	41,916
	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	13%
Caucasian	5139	5899	6336	6465	5859	320,873
	59%	58%	56%	55%	54%	49%
Hispanic (All Races)	1389	1683	2011	2170	2085	230,009
	16%	17%	18%	19%	19%	35%
<b>Statewide Total:</b>	<b>8,683</b>	<b>10,182</b>	<b>11,352</b>	<b>11,682</b>	<b>10,931</b>	<b>656,796</b>

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** as there is a need to recruit more African American, Hispanic and Spanish speaking families, more therapeutic homes, and more foster and adoptive families for older youth.

**Goal:**

- The State will ensure that the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed in the State is occurring.

**Objectives:**

- The State will develop a quality improvement process as part of the overall Quality Improvement Framework to monitor child welfare agency adherence to statute, regulation and statewide policy related to the recruitment and training of foster and adoptive families, including a process to ensure ongoing agency progress toward correcting identified areas of needed improvement.
- The State will provide an annual review opportunity for foster and adoptive families to provide input on the child welfare system and foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention through the use of caregiver surveys, presentations, and/or focus groups.
- The State will report on foster and adoptive parent participation in the survey process, how their input has been used and how information has been shared with other stakeholders throughout the year between annual reviews.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.
- The State will ensure that quantitative reports (if applicable) utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

### *Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

### **Item 45: State use of cross-jurisdictional resources for permanent placements**

#### *Requirements:*

The State follows the federal requirements in accordance with P.L. 109-239, P.L. 109-248, 42 U.S.C. 670-679(b), the statutory requirements captured in NRS 127.330, NRS 432B.435, NRS 424.033 and the regulatory requirements in NAC 127.235. In addition to federal and state laws, the State's Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) Central Office also has a Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) policy which serves as the primary means of evaluating and assessing the appropriateness of potential family foster care and licensed relative and adoptive families. ICPC Central Office has also developed and implemented an internal policy related to the processing of referrals in and out-of-state, including timelines, responsibilities and operating procedures to further ensure that children are placed in safe and suitable homes in a timely manner.

#### *Statewide Data:*

During the CFSR in 2004, this item was given an overall rating of "Strength" indicating there were processes in place for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. However, the 2003 statewide assessment noted some complex ICPC issues that were barriers to placements and time consuming, and there are problems that arise when other States are unwilling or unprepared to provide services for children adopted from Nevada. In the spring of 2008, an assessment was conducted by Joanne Brown, JD, MSW, an independent consultant contracted by the Court Improvement Program, to identify any legal barriers that prevent timely judicial decisions regarding interstate placements. Overall, Judges across the state expressed frustration with the ICPC and what they regard as the limited accountability it provides for out of state placements. Attorneys likewise were frustrated with inadequate provisions for continued contact with their clients, the absence of an appeal process for placement denials and the unexplained delays in the completion of home studies. Below is a summary of the assessment's findings: Many of the comments made by the courts and lawyers largely reflect a historical way of activities within the ICPC system and their concerns about systemic weakness which has been a key area of focus for the ICPC Central Office. Although the majority of restructuring has been completed, the courts may only recently be observing some of the impact the new system is having on families and hopefully overtime, solve some of the barriers to the ICPC process. The following are key findings from the assessment, some of which ICPC Central Office has already accomplished:

- There should be a national, standard home study or home assessment form.

Currently, WCDSS and DCFS Rural Region are utilizing and plan to continue using the SAFE home study. In June 2009, CCDFS will implement the PS-MAPP that includes a home study within the curriculum. WCDSS and the Rural Region will continue to utilize the SAFE home study. The statewide SAFE policy will be revised to allow the child welfare agencies some flexibility in the type of tool used, while still establishing some basic criteria on what components are required in order to assess a home for potential placement. Redundancies

- The timeliness of other state's home study results is not dependable.

Although Nevada does not have the authority over other states, the Central Office ICPC Unit has a 24 hour internal processing time and most referrals (if states will allow) are sent electronically which greatly reduces time spent in the mail, providing the receiving state additional time to complete the home study. To assist in communication with local child welfare agencies, an email box was developed for ICPC inquiries, status checks and/or requests. This allows a quicker turn around time for caseworkers who are in need of new referrals, home study completions, approvals, denials, status updates, forwarding communication to the other states as well as placement dates for case planning purposes and/or court proceedings. The ICPC Central Office should be provided with adequate staff support and clear delineation of duties.

The 2009 legislative session did not have any requests to enhance programs with staff in any area within the Division due to budgetary restraints. Private adoptions should not be given priority in the processing of ICPC application by the ICPC Central Office. In June 2008 all private adoptions were reassigned to the Adoption Specialist rather than the ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator. This has allowed the ICPC staff one less placement type to process, freeing up their time to process all other placement types.

**Timely Home Studies Reporting & Data**

The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 requires a state to complete and report on foster and adoptive homes studies requested by another state within 60 days. An exception to the 60-day requirement is provided (but only until 9/30/2008) if the State’s failure to complete the home study within 60 days is due to circumstances beyond the State’s control. This exception gives the State 15 more days to complete and report on the home study.

In FY 2007 and FY 2008, Nevada did not have a way of tracking home studies, their due dates, when a State needed an extension or why the extension was requested. In August 2008 ICPC forms 100A and 100B were automated within Nevada’s SACWIS system, UNITY. From that automation Nevada was able to add functionality to UNITY in order to track 30 and 60 day home studies and when overdue on March 2009. Table 45.1 below shows the number and percent of home studies that met the time requirements from January 2009 – June 2009. This information is now able to be reported monthly.

**Table 45.1: Incoming number and percent of home studies that have met time requirements**

<b>ICPC</b>	<b>01/09</b>	<b>02/09</b>	<b>03/09</b>	<b>04/09</b>	<b>05/09</b>	<b>06/09</b>
CCDFS	45	45	69	40	39	53
WCDSS	3	21	12	4	5	9
DCFS RURAL	44	38	53	33	49	65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the information gathered in the 2009 Statewide Assessment this item was rated as a **Strength**.

*Goal:*

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

*Objectives:*

- The State will provide an annual review opportunity for ICPC related foster and adoptive families to provide input on the child welfare system and ICPC foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention through the use of caregiver surveys.
- The State will report on ICPC foster and adoptive parent participation in the survey process, how their input has been used and how information has been shared with other stakeholders throughout the year between annual reviews.
- The State will provide an annual review opportunity for other state’s ICPC Office’s and Nevada’s Child Welfare Agencies to provide input about the effectiveness of the Nevada ICPC system in meeting ICPC Compact Requirements.
- The State will complete the electronic process for the data collection, monitoring and reporting out on effectiveness of achieving timely home studies and other ICPC Compact Requirements.
- The State will ensure that statewide policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that policies are developed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of requirements under this item based on the policy development and review schedule.
- The State will develop and/or review existing quantitative reports to ensure that applicable quantitative data from the UNITY system is available for review by DMG on this performance indicator item by April 2011 and quarterly thereafter.



- The State will ensure that quantitative reports, including the Home Study report referenced above, utilizing the UNITY (SACWIS) system are reviewed annually and revised as needed or will ensure that reports are developed to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.
- The State will ensure that qualitative reports (if applicable) utilizing stakeholder feedback are developed and reviewed annually to demonstrate the State's overall functioning on this item.

*Measures of Progress:*

- This item will be measured annually as outlined in the quantitative and qualitative reports section of the Quality Improvement Framework described in Section III above. As applicable, reports will be made on a quarterly and annual basis to the DMG. The rating methodology will be designed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Committee and will be reviewed and approved by March 2011. For future APSR reports, the 2009 Statewide Assessment ratings and 2009 CFSR ratings will be used as baselines for determining progress made on this indicator.

## Section VI. Legislative Activities

During the 2009 Legislative Session there were several bills introduced that impact child welfare in Nevada. The following table is a list of the Bills that passed the session that effect child welfare and will be addressed during the coming biennium. Some of these will require regulation and policy development and/or revision. A plan is currently under development to address these bills. Progress toward completing the new requirements will be reported out in the APSR annually.

**Table V.1 Legislative Bills enacted in 2009**

<u>AB76</u>	Revises provisions governing the placement of children who are in the custody of an agency which provides child welfare services.
<u>AB89</u>	Revises provisions governing the regulation of licensed child care facilities.
<u>AB103</u>	Clarifies the role of the Child Welfare Specialist in the Audit Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.
<u>AB227</u>	Revises provisions relating to the provision of foster care.
<u>AB337</u>	Creates the Office of Statewide Coordinator for Children Who Are Endangered by Drug Exposure in the Office of the Attorney General and makes various other changes concerning children who are endangered by drug exposure.
<u>AB364</u>	Makes various changes concerning the protection of children.
<u>AB500</u>	Revises provisions relating to domestic relations.
<u>SB3</u>	Creates the Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice.
<u>SB342</u>	Expands the relatives who receive preference when a child is placed in the custody of a person other than the parent of the child by a court, an agency which provides child welfare services or other person.
<u>SB343</u>	Makes various changes concerning the application for and provision of certain treatment or services to a person involved in the child welfare system.
<u>SB344</u>	Authorizes the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services to create an interagency committee to evaluate the child welfare system.
<u>SCR4</u>	Urges certain agencies which provide child welfare services to develop a standardized practice model and to address certain issues related to child and family services.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan

### CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES STATE PLAN FFY 2010-2014

*Desired Outcome: The incidence of child abuse and neglect will be reduced and the outcomes for safety, permanency and well-being of children in Nevada will be improved.*

The State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services actively supports the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, and Children's Bureau, child welfare outcomes. The national goals of safety, permanency, and child well being are the foundation for the development of systemic and outcome measures aimed at improving the lives of children who are exposed to child abuse and neglect. The child welfare outcomes required from states pursuant to section 479(a) of the Social Security Act as amended by section 203(a) of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, include the quantitative data provided by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), and the qualitative information from the Child and Family Service Review (CSFR).

The purposes of safety outcome measures are to assess the effectiveness of an agency's child welfare system in protecting children from abuse or neglect in their own homes and in foster care. This reflects those actions taken by public agencies and their partners to create safety for children who have experienced or are "at-risk" of experiencing abuse, neglect or emotional maltreatment from the action or inaction of their parents or caretakers. An indication that the child protection system may be achieving the objective of child safety is through the quantitative measure of the reduction of the rate or incidence of recurrence of maltreatment. How the incidence rate is reduced is indicative of the qualitative performance measures that are the mechanisms an agency employs to respond to child abuse and neglect.

The State of Nevada supports the child welfare outcome goals through NCANDS and AFCARS data collection by the Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY), a State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), and through program performance measures outlined by the CSFR. The following includes the background of the child protection system and organization in Nevada, safety outcomes and indicators, the child protection goals and objectives, and related program activities that form the basis for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) State Plan for FFY 2004 – 2009.

*Desired Outcome: The State will identify the number of children involved with child welfare related court cases statewide that currently have legal representation and will assess progress being made to increase the number of children who are afforded legal representation in court related cases. After an assessment is complete, the state, through the Court Improvement Project, will develop strategies to address the need for increased legal representation for these target children.*

Currently, the DCFS Rural Region indicates that most children in the child welfare system in this area are appointed legal representation at the initial court hearing with either an attorney or both an attorney and CASA /GAL. Washoe County Department of Social Services reports that they have submitted a joint proposal with the Family Division of the Second Judicial District Court (Family Court) to continue funding of an existing four-year agreement. This agreement is with Washoe Legal Services to provide legal representation to approximately 424, children in the child welfare system. This agreement will end on June 31, 2010. The renewed contract will be for a three year term and will provide for Washoe Legal Services to continue to provide such services to approximately 50% of the children in custody. The new contract was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on October 27, 2009. Additionally, there are approximately 125 active volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) who serve children in WCDSS custody as guardian ad litem. While the CASA cannot provide legal advice to the child, they serve as an advocate for the well-being needs of the child as well as a supportive role. Clark County Department of Family Services estimates that approximately one third of their children in court related cases get representation from CASA volunteers and another one third are represented by CAP attorneys. This estimate may be low however, as the data entry in windows in UNITY are being updated to ensure a more accurate count.

## **BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATION**

The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services is the agency responsible for planning, coordinating and monitoring child protective services provided throughout the state; coordinating its activities with and assisting the efforts of law enforcement agencies, the courts, and public and private organizations which provide social services for the prevention, identification and treatment of abuse or neglect of children; and involving communities in the improvement of protective services. The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services is responsible for adopting regulations that establish reasonable and uniform standards for protective services provided in the state.

Provision of child protective services in Nevada is a combination of State and County administered agencies. Child Protective Services is part of the child welfare service system (Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 432B.044). Counties in which the "population is 100,000 or more shall provide child welfare services for the children in that county and pay the cost of all those services (NRS 432B.325)." Clark County in Southern Nevada and Washoe County in Northern Nevada are the two counties that meet this standard. The Division administers the child welfare program for the remaining fifteen (15) rural counties. The agencies that provide protective services are: State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS), and Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS).

### **Nevada Citizen Review Panel**

CRP was established in 1999 and is maintained by the CAPTA grant. The CRP is a subcommittee of the Children's Justice Act Task Force. There are three Citizen Review panels in Nevada that include the Statewide CRP (which oversees all of the citizen review panels), the Northern Nevada Citizens Advisory Committee/CRP, and the Southern Nevada Citizens Advisory Committee/CRP. The panel participates in quality improvement targeted case reviews, review of policy and practice, and makes recommendations for improving the child protection system. The Statewide CRP, in collaboration with the northern and southern CRP's, produces an annual report that is submitted with the annual progress and services report.

### **CAPTA STATE PLAN GOALS**

The identified goals and objectives focus on timeliness of investigation, risk assessment and reduction in repeat child maltreatment in addition to safety management, including the provision of services to families to protect children in the home and prevent the need for removal. All goals are directed at improving the safety, permanency and well-being of children.

#### **Selected areas for improvement from Section 106 (a) of CAPTA in 2008 were:**

- 1) Sec. 106(a)(1) Improving the intake, assessment, screening and investigation;
- 2) Sec. 106 (a) (3) Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families;
- 3) Sec. 106 (a) (4) Enhancing the general child protection system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols;
- 4) Sec. 106 (a)(7) Improving the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and families, and the supervisors of such individuals, through the child protection system, including improvements in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers;

#### **Activities for CAPTA State Grant Funds for FFY2009**

The following are necessary in order to carry out the objectives of this grant.

*Personnel:* Through the use of CAPTA State Grant funds, DCFS employs a full-time Social Services Programs Specialist. This position is necessary in order to carry out the objectives of the grant. The funds requested include salary, fringe benefits and travel.

Under the direction of the DCFS' designated Deputy Administrator, the Social Services Program Specialist coordinates with DCFS' rural district offices, WCDSS and CCDFS to help insure that policy and practice in child protection are consistent throughout Nevada. The Specialist will participate in planning, coordinating and evaluating child protective services provided throughout the state.

The Specialist also participates in the following activities: 1) review of federal/state legislation, development of federal/state regulations, and agency policies; 2) provision of statewide technical assistance and/or consultation through contract or sub-grant; 3) coordination of training pursuant to CAPTA requirements; 4) serve as the State Liaison Officer with the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; 5) prepare grant applications and progress reports for the CAPTA Basic State Grant program and other related CAPTA funding; 6) develop, coordinate and monitor CAPTA Projects; 7) serve on agency or other committees that promote the goals of child protective services; and 8) monitor the collection of child abuse data for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

*Operating Expenses:* Communications equipment purchased for the purposes of promoting staff and child safety will be periodically reviewed for continued maintenance and possible upgrade through the use of grant funds. Grant funds will support staff telecommunications related to child protection activities including teleconferencing, video-conferencing, cell phones, and land lines.

Grant funds will be used to purchase equipment, such as digital recorders, printers, computers, laptop computer, and necessary hardware, software upgrades, file cabinets and other office equipment and work materials such as journals, subscriptions, books and videos. Grant funds will be used to cover a portion of the rent for office space required to manage this grant.

Additional activities:

Maintenance of Citizen Review Panel and Statewide Child Protective Services Work Groups: Grant funds will be used to support travel and per diem for panel representatives and for child welfare services representatives to participate in child protective services workgroups. Funds may also be used for a consultant/facilitator, including travel and per diem and materials, provision of technical assistance and coordination for the panel.

CAPTA funds will also be used to support the plan to build capacity within the state by developing experts in the safety practice model. One expert will develop additional experts in using a pyramid model of change. The goal is to develop internal child welfare agency consultants with the Nevada Initial Assessment and Safety Assessment to lessen the need for outside and additional resources/support.

Funds will also be directed towards recruitment and retention of workers and training of supervisors.

## **Description of services and training to be provided under the CAPTA State Grant as per section 106(b)(2)(C) CAPTA**

### **Services:**

The CAPTA Basic State Grant provides indirect services to individuals and families through provision of referrals from child abuse and neglect reports received by child protection agencies to contracted Title IV-B community-based service providers. These referrals are aimed at intervening and preventing the re-occurrence of child abuse and neglect by referring families to a family assessment and services system process. The family assessment and services system provides an opportunity for families to receive services, or other appropriate referrals to local community based service providers.

### **CAPTA Training:**

CAPTA funds will support training for child welfare staff and related disciplines when appropriate to improve outcomes for the safety, permanency and well bring of children. Trainings include; but are not limited to, Safety Assessment Training for Supervisors; CPS Investigation, a social- child safety intervention; handling cases of child maltreatment that include domestic violence; substance abuse and children with disabilities; case planning; court processes; case management; Tri University new worker CORE training and Specialty Investigative Core Training, currently under development.

"Safety for Supervisors" Training will be provided to increase supervisory understanding and improve the use of and oversight over the Nevada Initial Assessment and safety assessment tools and it improve safety planning decisions and

removal decisions. In addition, NIA / safety supervisory roundtable workshops will be provided during which supervisors will have the opportunity for unit by unit consultation and case specific discussions on the use of various assessment tools and decision making rational on actual cases.

The CAPTA State Grant funds will be used to improve the child welfare curriculum and provide educators and trainers to develop and/or present training throughout the State of Nevada through contract /sub-grant. Funds will also provide support for presenters, travel, per diem and materials. Funds will be used to provide training materials and equipment, such as videos, books, and other materials to assist with training.

Grant funds will support training through the provision of equipment and materials, such as television/VCR, videos, books or other resource materials.

**Substantive Changes:** There are no substantive changes in state law that effect eligibility. The legislature meets bi-annually, and will meet again in 2011.

### **Criminal Background Checks**

AB76 was introduced and enacted in the 2009 legislative session. The intent of this bill was to ensure the state is in compliance with the Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006 which requires all child welfare agencies to conduct checks of the fingerprint-based National Crime Information Databases (NCID) and a child abuse and neglect screening (CANS) in every state of residence in the preceding five years for every prospective foster/adoptive parent. This additional information will assist child welfare agency staff to assess caregiver capacity to maintain children safely in their homes. AB 76 will improve the child welfare agencies ability to further ensure that vulnerable children are not put into situations of abuse or neglect. This bill will ensure that:

- The State of Nevada is in compliance with the requirements set forth in the Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006.
- the Division of Child and Family Services and all child welfare agencies within the state will conduct a national fingerprint-based criminal background check (NCID) and a child abuse and neglect screening (CANS Check) in every state a prospective foster/adoptive parent has resided in the preceding 5 years.
- Checks will be made regardless of whether Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments or adoption assistance payments are to be made on behalf of the child.
- Additional safeguards will be in place for children that are cared for through the child welfare system to ensure they are placed with caregivers who have undergone an NCID and CANS check in each state they have resided in the proceeding five years which will provide additional information to the child welfare agencies on prospective foster and adoptive parents when child welfare agencies need to make a decision as to whether the prospective foster and adoptive parents have the capacity to keep them safe.
- Allow the state to charge fees for completing the CANS checks to off set some of the costs the state is currently incurring due to other states' fees. Some savings may result from placement of agency custody children with relatives not requiring licensure or receiving foster care reimbursement payments.

In addition, see Nevada Administrative Code below:

### **NAC 432B.430 Placement of child in unlicensed home of relative: General requirements. (NRS 432B.190)**

1. Before an agency which provides child welfare services places a child who is in the custody of the agency in the home of a relative of the child who is not licensed pursuant to NRS 424.030 and who resides in this state, the requirements set forth in this section and NAC 432B.435 must be satisfied.
2. Each member of a household described in subsection 1 who is 18 years of age or older must submit to the agency which provides child welfare services or its approved designee a complete set of his fingerprints and written permission authorizing the agency or its approved designee to forward those fingerprints to the central repository for Nevada records of criminal history for submission to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for its report. The agency or its approved designee may exchange with the central repository or the Federal Bureau of

Investigation any information respecting the fingerprints submitted. When a report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation is received by the central repository, it shall immediately forward a copy of the report to the agency or its approved designee.

3. A local law enforcement agency must have provided to the agency which provides child welfare services a satisfactory report concerning each member of such a household who is 18 years of age or older.
4. The agency which provides child welfare services must have received a satisfactory clearance through the statewide central registry established pursuant to NRS 432.100 on each member of such a household who is 18 years of age or older.
5. The home must satisfy the requirements set forth in:
  - (a) NAC 424.400 for safety equipment, including, without limitation, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers;  
and
  - (b) NAC 424.420, as applicable, relating to pools and spas.

(Added to NAC by Div. of Child & Family Services by R045-02, effective 7-23-2002)

## **APPENDIX B: Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program (CFCIP) & Education Training Voucher Program (ETV)**

### **Goals and Eligibility**

The goal of Nevada's Independent Living Program for Youth (IL) is to provide youth making the transition into adulthood with the skills and resources necessary to be independent and productive members of society. The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services is responsible for the oversight of IL Programs in Nevada. The oversight responsibility is assigned to the statewide IL Specialist. Nevada is a state-supervised and county-administered program in the two major metropolitan counties, Clark and Washoe. Nevada continues to supervise and administer all child welfare programs in the remaining 15 rural counties, which are managed by the DCFS - Rural Region. Nevada plans to continue the implementation of its IL Program by allocating both federal and state funds to the two county-administered programs, the State administered DCFS - Rural Region, and tribal entities. The State will continue to retain a portion of the federal funds to develop statewide systems and materials to support county and rural implementation efforts, to monitor program development and implementation, to provide technical assistance, and to continue to assess program impact. Nevada and its IL partners will cooperate with the national evaluations of the effects of IL programs in achieving the purposes of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

Nevada's IL Program is a set of services available to all foster youth between the ages of 15 until the age of 21. The DCFS considers all eligible foster youth to include those youth who are in the care and custody of the DCFS, WCDSS, or CCDFS. IL services may continue with the child after permanency has been achieved, depending on the needs of the child. Nevada will also extend IL services to eligible youth who have relocated to Nevada from another state.

Federal IL funding is provided to all county and state programs to provide IL services, expand existing services, and to establish new services to eligible children. Federal funds are combined with existing state funds to provide IL services to eligible foster youth and former foster youth transitioning to independence. State funds through the Funds to Assist Former Foster Youth Program (FAFFY) are funds dedicated to Nevada foster youth who are transitioning from care and for Nevada youth who have aged out of the Nevada foster care system.

### **Scope of Services**

Funds for the IL Program are distributed from the state to the counties and to the DCFS - Rural Region to support IL program development and activities. In Clark County, Chafee funds are distributed through the Department of Family Services (CCDFS) to Future Stars of America, a non-profit organization. Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessments and life skills classes are provided by Child Focus and the Step-Up Program who partners within the private non-profit and profit sector to compliment their array of IL services. In addition, state resources from the Assistance to Former Foster Youth Fund are combined with Chafee funds for youth who have left placement. CCDFS sub-contracts with Child Focus, a private non-profit agency for the purpose of providing the funds and services associated with the Assistance to Former Foster Youth funds.

In Washoe County, all Chafee and state funds are routed through Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) to the Children's Cabinet, a private, non-profit organization, to provide IL services to eligible youth who are in custody and to those youth who have left placement. The Rural Region routes both federal and state funds through JOIN (Job Opportunities in Nevada), a WIA (Workforce Investment Act) provider and four Family Resource Centers (FRC) for all IL program activities for youth in care, and to those youth who have left placement. The Rural Region routes additional Chafee funds for stipends to youth in care through IV-B Family Resource Centers.

DCFS has partnered with the Tribal Stepping Stones Shelter in Fallon, Nevada to receive Chafee and FAFFY funds for Native American Youth. The Stepping Stones Shelter is on the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Reservation in Fallon, Nevada. Nevada distributes IL funds, both federal and state funds, to tribal youth through the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribal Stepping Stones Shelter enabling the tribes to develop programming specific to tribal youths needs. Stepping Stones was designated to be the Chafee recipient by the Nevada tribal entities after lengthy consultation and deliberation.

For Fiscal Year 2008, Nevada's IL sub-grantees and service providers were provided with additional technical assistance from the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) in order to develop online reporting and performance indicators. It is anticipated that additional assistance in this area will provide the State and its sub-grantees specific outcome data for continued program development and enhancement with the goal of providing quality services to improve the quality of life for our youth. DCFS released a Request for Proposal for Fiscal Year 2008. The request mapped the requirements for Chafee and the Fund to Assist Former Foster Youth (previously known as AB94 and now recognized as FAFFY or



Transition from Foster Care) and required each region and the tribal representative (Stepping Stones) to identify its local plan for providing services. Each year, Chafee and FAFY monies are calculated and distributed to each region based upon the total number of youth in care, the number of 17 year olds in care, and the total number of youth receiving IL Services. It is anticipated that Clark County will receive 66% of the funds; Washoe County will receive 19%; the Rural Region will receive 13%; and Stepping Stones 2%.

DCFS has contracted with Digital Matrix Software Solutions (DMSS) through the University of Nevada, Reno to facilitate online reporting for statewide grantees and sub-grantees of Chafee, FAFY and ETV. The system is tailored to meet each grantee's data needs while at the same time meeting the goals of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). The regions and their respective sub-grantees have participated in focus groups to develop reporting elements including data elements required by federal and state regulation. This statewide system provides real time data analysis, regionally and statewide, allowing us to study and evaluate services while assessing outcomes for our youth. This system is in place until our DCFS Information Management System (IMS) office completes the development of the National Youth in Transition Database as a component of our UNITY (SACWIS) system in the summer of 2010.

Statewide public and private partnerships are developed to provide IL services throughout the state. Each region develops a service array unique to their community. Representatives from IL partners from all regions, including tribal representation and IL youth, contributed to the development of the statewide CFSP process. An IL oversight committee meets quarterly in Clark County to review IL programs within the region. The primary focus of the committee has been addressing the needs of foster youth transitioning from care, and the needs of former foster youth. The committee is chaired by the Director of the CCDFS and is comprised of representatives from public and private stakeholders, including the court, youth, former foster youth, and foster parents.

Room and Board: DCFS certifies that no more than 30 percent of their allotment of Federal funds will be expended for room and board for youth who left foster care because they attained 18 years of age but have not yet attained 21 years of age. All regions utilize Chafee and FAFY monies to assist youth, ages 15-21, with transitional living needs. At age 16, depending on youth maturity and needs, youth statewide can live in an apartment under an IL Contract. Clark County will continue to partner with the Center for IL and St Jude's Ranch for Children which allows youth to select the type of support and assistance needed in achieving their independence. St. Jude's provides a more structured supportive environment while the Center for IL is an environment requiring more personal responsibility.

Medicaid Coverage: Nevada Revised Statute 422 requires the Medicaid State Plan to include and serve foster youth who have aged out of the foster care system. This legislation established a new category of Medicaid eligibility allowing children in the state or county foster care who after reaching the age of 18 may continue to receive Medicaid assistance until the age of 21. The Aging-Out of Foster Care Medicaid Program has been in effect since 2005. Eligibility rules were simplified to include the following: one page application for Medicaid assistance; provide verification of aging out in any U.S. state or territory; be a citizen or qualified alien; provide verification showing age; meet Nevada resident requirements; and, fully cooperate with the annual case eligibility re-determination.

Trust Funds: Nevada does not have a trust fund program for IL Youth.

### **IL Program Objectives:**

1. DCFS will identify legislative activities impacting Youth Leaving Foster Care by June 2010 and September 2011 corresponding to each Legislative Cycle.
  - (a) While there were no legislative actions or activities impacting youth leaving foster care for this review period, Nevada is currently reviewing HR 6893, Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 to determine its impacts and will implement the requirements.
2. DCFS will work with Casey Family Programs to develop an IL Program Evaluation and Strategic Plan by December 2010.
  - (a) The Casey Family Programs will assist the State in identifying service gaps and developing a strategic plan to address and overcome presenting challenges that limit comprehensive, consistent IL program services throughout the State. The Casey Family Programs has been consulted to assist in the IL Program assessment and evaluation of its overall service program delivery system. The IL Program is striving to improve IL services to youth in out-of-home care by evaluating the quality and efficacy of its current IL programming and opportunities extended to youth and reviewing ways to enhance fuller access

and participation, identifying gaps in the service array, and building greater collateral involvement with community stakeholders throughout the state. From this initial evaluation, a group of stakeholders representing foster youth and parents, IL program workers, education, labor, health and welfare, community partners, the tribes, and other state programs such as juvenile justice, and housing will convene to assess where the independent living plan is and where we would like to go. Casey will facilitate a series of meetings that will lead to the development of a strategic plan for the IL Program statewide that will focused on improving the quality of aftercare services provided to youth out of care. The first step to begin this evaluative process is scheduled for later in 2009.

3. DCFS will continue to elicit assistance from the NRCYD in order to support activities/practices to assist youth in developing the skills necessary for successful transition to adulthood.
  - (a) In addition, there will be an emphasis on how to create and sustain statewide and local advisory boards to assist youth with advocacy, self-advocacy, leadership development, and program improvement efforts. Officers on the Statewide Youth Advisory Board will receive training in public speaking and technical assistance in tracking and monitoring state and federal legislation related to foster care youth and other social welfare policies impacting them. These youth will also receive training on how to give effective testimony before legislative committees.
4. DCFS recognizes the need for continuous training and technical assistance as follows:
  - (a) Continue to utilize training and technical assistance from the National Resource Centers for development and implementation of IL programs statewide and Casey Family Programs;
  - (b) Collaborate with foster care training, recruitment, and licensing to develop an IL training module for foster parents;
  - (c) Include IL foster youth (current and former) to assist in the training of foster parents;
  - (d) Provide statewide training to existing foster parents and care providers regarding IL services and resources;
  - (e) Develop training for staff and supervisors regarding the identification of significant connections for youth and how to perform diligent search;
  - (f) Train staff and supervisors to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the full array of housing options that best meet the individualized needs of youth.
  - (g) Collaborate to enhance the coordination between IDEA and IL planning; and
  - (h) Continue to provide statewide training to all workers, supervisors, IL partners and stakeholders regarding IL, and access to services.
  - (i) In addition, In July 2009, the NRCYD will conduct Ansell-Casey Plus Life Skills Assessment training to Clark County's child welfare staff and its community service providers. This will enhance and expand the number of qualified individuals and partners in administering the assessment tool with youth that are aging out of care and receiving or accessing independent living services. This training will also be made available to other child welfare agencies and their Independent living service providers.
5. DCFS will build collaboratives with other federal agencies serving at-risk and neediest youth through the *Shared Youth Vision Initiative* by December 2012.
  - (a) Collaborative Development will occur with the following:
    - i. Transitional Living Programs
    - ii. Workforce Investment/Employment Training
    - iii. Department of Education
    - iv. Department of Labor
    - v. Department of Housing and Urban Development
6. DCFS will ensure full Implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database by September 2010.

- (a) Meetings have begun between DCFS Family Programs Office and DCFS IMS to develop the plan for how NYTD will be implemented.
- (b) DCFS Program Specialist is attending national NYTD conferences in 2009 to gain insight into the requirements of the NYTD System.
- (c) A Development Plan will be completed by October 2009.
- (d) NYTD Database will be piloted by May 2010.
- (e) NYTD Database will be "live" by October 2010.

## **EDUCATION TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM (ETV)**

In 2005, DCFS received a total of \$192, 673 in ETV funding, serving a total of 63 youth in Nevada during the time period from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006. In 2007, DCFS received a total of \$413, 362 in ETV funding to be distributed to youth by September 30, 2008. In 2008, DCFS received a total of \$441,297 in ETV funding.

DCFS supervises the ETV program and distributes ETV funds to eligible youth through a sub-grant to a community non-profit organization. During this past year, the DCFS has worked with its new community partner, The Children's Cabinet, to improve the provision of ETV services to our youth. The Children's Cabinet has designated one staff person to administer the funding allowing youth statewide to have one point of contact. A toll-free number is provided and the application along with program rules is provided on the Children's Cabinet website. Brochures have been distributed statewide to all IL providers and child welfare agencies.

Information on the Educational Training Vouchers can also be found on the DCFS website and link to the IL Program.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

Planning for and assisting and preparing youth to achieve educational success for future self sufficiency remains a consistent goal of the Independent Living Program.

### *1. Assist youth to make the transition to self-sufficiency.*

Eligible foster youth's educational goals are developed with youth and their Social Worker/IL Advisor in the youth's "Transitional Plan" for IL. Information of the ETV program is provided at the development of youth transition planning and during the youth's exit interview.

Currently established collaborations with community-based IL contractors have expanded to include outreach and educational goal planning for foster and former foster youth. Improved tracking and reporting requirements, as well as specific outcome-based procedures have been developed. The DCFS contractors, community partners, state and county social workers are coordinating and collaborating to provide that services are delivered to the highest number of eligible foster youth and to ensure that youth are encouraged to follow through with postsecondary school application requirements and funding requests. With an increased focus on postsecondary education from all IL contractors, which includes assistance in planning educational or vocational training, applying for financial aid and additional support, more youth will remain motivated to reach their educational and vocational goals.

### *2. Assist youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment*

Statewide, the Chafee funds support IL programs, which provide individualized life skills trainings and workshops for foster youth to prepare them for self-sufficiency in the community. IL Advisors assist youth to determine job interests, necessary education or vocational training, job workshops, budgets, practicing informed decision making and other skills necessary for employment. The ETV Program fund removes barriers for foster youth to attend vocational school or trainings to further their employment opportunities.

### *3. Assist youth prepare for and enter postsecondary training and educational institutions.*

Educational achievement determined by the number of youth who leave foster care with a GED or high school diploma has dropped in recent years in Nevada. Approximately 59% of exiting youth receive a GED or high school diploma, as many youth are unable to pass the required state basic skills proficiency tests. Additional tutoring in basic skills such as

English or math is necessary for many foster youth, as these youths often become discouraged and do not make the additional effort to obtain their GED or high school diploma after exiting from foster care.

Following state funding initiatives for former foster youth, a database is under development to track characteristics of the foster youth transitioning out of care. This will allow more effective transition planning and increased interventions for all exiting youth and provide a more complete support system for the youth upon exit. Identifying youth, before exiting care, with educational deficiencies and providing services such as tutoring, postsecondary education workshops, GED preparation and testing will better prepare youth to enter and complete postsecondary education and/or training programs.

To qualify for the ETV program, foster youth must be planning to graduate from an accredited high school, must have graduated from an accredited high school, or must have a GED or certification of high school completion for students who completed the mandatory hours required for high school instruction, but did not pass the high school proficiency exams.

The youth's postsecondary school or vocational/training program must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be accredited or pre-accredited and is authorized to operate in that state.
2. Admits only students with a high school diploma or equivalent and/or students beyond the age of compulsory school attendance.
3. May be a public or nonprofit school or training program that awards a Bachelor's Degree.
4. May be a public or nonprofit school or training program that offers not less than a two-year program and that provides credit toward a degree, or provides training towards gainful employment.
5. May be a vocational program that provides training for gainful employment and has been in existence for at least two years.

Although youth are encouraged to participate in full-time educational programs, the ETV program does not exclude youth who attend less than full-time, as this would limit the number of youth who would benefit from this program. The program provides personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and to encourage and promote interactions with dedicated adults.

IL Services are provided by contracted community partners and focus upon services for foster youth in care, the transitioning youth, and the youth who has aged-out of care. Specialized case management is developed for the youth and allows tracking and outreach. Each program coordinates information and referral for the youth. In addition, state and/or county social workers are available to youth and refer former foster youth to services. The ETV Program builds upon services available with existing programs and youth and their IL Advisors/Social Workers may contact the State IL Specialist by telephone, mail, or electronic mail for continued ongoing information and support. ETV provides financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster youth between 18 and 21 years of age.

ETV funds may be applied for in conjunction with other funding sources, including the State Fund for Former Foster Youth. The amount of a voucher shall be disregarded for the purposes of determining the recipient's eligibility for, or the amount of, any other federal or federally-supported assistance. Current programs created especially for the former foster youth provide referrals, goods, and services for this population. The ETV Program is an added component of these services. The total amount of educational assistance to a youth under the ETV Program and under other Federal and Federally supported programs shall not exceed the total cost of attendance or \$5000 per year, as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965. DCFS shall take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other federal and federally supported programs. ETV Funds can be used for, but not limited to:

- Tuition and Fees
- Tutoring and Required Tests
- Transportation
- Books and Supplies
- Uniforms, Tools of the Trade
- Computer, Printer, Supplies
- Childcare
- Utilities and Deposits
- Meal Plan, Glasses, Adaptive Software, etc.

Vouchers are available for education and training, including postsecondary education to youth who have aged out of foster care. The youth's state or county ILP Social Worker/IL Advisor shall inform youth of the ETV program and how to apply. The State IL Specialist will inform community service providers and other state agencies, which maybe serving former foster youth of the resources available for the youth. In addition, queries by social service agencies, the foster and adoption community, high schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities concerning the ETV program shall be supplied with information and/or referrals. Youth may also access applications by contacting contracted aftercare service providers, by on-line applications, or contacting the State IL Specialist.

Outreach in development includes coordination with the admission and financial aid staff of Nevada's community colleges and universities and vocational/technical schools. All foster youth exiting care are informed of resources and services available and are encouraged to develop a support network within their community. Foster youth participating in the ETV program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday shall remain eligible, until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

In 2007-2008, the ETV program was provided ongoing technical assistance through the University of Nevada, Reno to streamline the program objectives and outcomes. In addition to this input, the Scope of Work for this program was expanded in order to promote coordination between the sub-grantee responsible for administering ETV funding, and other IL services providers. These efforts resulted in comprehensive service coordination for the youths utilizing the ETV program.

#### *Nevada Matching Funds*

Nevada provides additional funding to eligible youth who have aged-out of the State foster care system. Funds may be used in conjunction to ETV funds to provide additional financial supports for the foster youth while a student. A portion of the state fund for the Assistance to Former Foster Youth Program (20%) is the match for the ETV program grant.

**ATTACHMENTS**

## ATTACHMENT A: CFSP Checklist

- Name of the **State agency that will administer the title IV-B programs** under the plan and a description of the organization, its function, and the organizational unit responsible for the plan.
- Vision Statement:** The State's philosophy in providing child and family services and developing or improving a coordinated service delivery system.
- Specify the Goals:** Goals must be expressed in terms of improved outcomes for the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families, and in terms of a more comprehensive, coordinated, and effective child and family service delivery system.
- Objectives:** Objectives should focus on outcomes for children, youth and/or families or on elements of service delivery that are linked to outcomes in important ways, and include interim and long-term benchmarks. Objectives should be realistic, specific, quantifiable and measurable.
- Measures of progress:** Methods to be used in measuring the results, accomplishments, and annual progress toward meeting the goals and objectives, especially the outcomes for children, youth and families. The data and information must be capable of determining whether or not the interim benchmarks and multi-year timetable for accomplishing CFSP goal and objectives are being met.
- Consultation & Coordination:** Discuss the approach to include, and the involvement of, a broad range of stakeholders.
- Child & Family Services Continuum:** Describe the publicly funded child and family services continuum. Explain how State services will be linked to, coordinated with, or integrated into other services in the child and family services continuum. **This section is located in the APSR under the Service Array Section 5.**
- Service Description:** Describe the services offered under each category in title IV-B, subpart 2. States must indicate the specific percentages of title IV-B, subpart 2 funds that will be expended on each program area. Provide rationale if the percentage is under 20 % for any of the four service areas (family preservation, family support, time-limited reunification, and adoption promotion and support). **This section is located in the APSR under Service Array Section 5.**
- Decision making process:** Explain how agencies and organizations were selected for funding to provide family support services and how these agencies are community-based. **This section is located in the APSR under Decision Making Process.**
- Coordination with Tribes:** Provide a description, developed in consultation with Indian Tribes in the State, of the specific measures the State uses to comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Also describe arrangements for provision of child welfare services and protections in Section 422(b)(8) of the Act to Indian children under both State and Tribal jurisdiction. States must include Tribes in their collaboration/coordination activities.
- Health Care Services Plan:** Describe how the State will ensure a coordinated strategy to identify and respond to the health care needs of children in foster care placements, including mental health and dental health needs. Submit a copy of the Health Care Services Plan with the CFSP.
- Disaster plans:** Review and update State disaster plans for programs assisted under title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, or title IV-E in the event of a disaster. Submit a copy of the Disaster Plan.
- N/A Child welfare waiver demonstration activities (for applicable States only):** Describe the State's coordination efforts to integrate the activities under the CFSP with the goals and objectives of the child welfare waiver demonstration.

- Monthly Caseworker Visits:** Describe the action steps, including changes subsequent to the submittal of the APSR for FY 09, the State plans to take to ensure that, by October 1, 2011, 90% of children in foster care are visited by their workers on a monthly basis, and that the majority of the visits occur in the residence of the child.
- Adoption incentive payments:** Specify the services the State expects to provide to children and families with adoption incentive funds, if the State anticipates such an award, and its plans for ensuring timely expenditure of the funds.
- Training:** Include a staff development and training plan in support of the State's stated goals and objectives under IV-B subparts 1 and 2. The Training Plan must be combined with the training plan under title IV-E. (See PI for required elements of IVE training plans)
- Evaluation and Technical Assistance:** Describe any evaluation, research and/or technical assistance activities underway or planned with which the State agency is involved or participating and which are related to the goals and objectives in the plan.
- Quality Assurance System:** Include a description of the QA system to regularly assess the quality of services under the CFSP and assure that there will be steps taken to address identified problems.
- Assurances and Certifications:** Submit the assurances and certifications necessary for plan approval for each program. (Attachment C)

#### **CAPTA**

- States must develop a five-year strategic plan with goals and objectives for a continuum of care to improve their child protective system and consolidate it with their CFSP in order to be eligible to receive a grant under section 106 of CAPTA. The CFSP must incorporate the following information:
- Address program areas selected for improvement from the 14 areas of CAPTA.
- Outline the activities the State intends to carry out using CAPTA State Grant Funds.
- Describe the services and training to be provided under the CAPTA grant.
- Complete and sign assurances form (Attachment C).
- Provide notification of substantive changes in State law, if any, that could affect the State's eligibility for the CAPTA State grant.
- Explain any changes to the State's provisions and procedures for criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents, and other adults residing in the household.
- Submit a request for FY 2010 funds in the CFS-101, Part I and an estimate of expenditures in CFS-101, Part II (Attachment D.)

#### **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) & ETV**

- A description of the Chafee and ETV services to be provided during the five-year CFSP period.
- Identify the State agency or agencies that will administer, supervise or oversee the programs and provide a statement that indicates that the State agency will cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of CFCIP.
- Description of Program Design and Delivery:** Address how the State will design, conduct and/or strengthen programs to achieve the purposes of section 477(a)(1-7) of the Act.



- Serving Youth Across the State:** Ensure that all political subdivisions in the State are appropriately served by the program.
- Serving Youth of Various Ages and States of Achieving Independence:** Describe how youth of various ages and at various states of achieving independence are to be served. Describe how the State is serving specific age groups. Identify any State statutory or administrative barriers which need to be eliminated or amended to allow the State to serve a broader range of eligible youth.
- Room and Board:** States are required to certify that no more than 30 percent of their allotment of Federal funds will be expended for room and board for youth who left foster care because they attained 18 years of age but have not yet attained 21 years of age. The State must have developed a reasonable definition of “room and board” and provide the definition in the CFSP. Also include a description of the approach(es) being used to make room and board available to youth ages 18 through 20.
- Medicaid Coverage:** Describe how the State has used, or is coordinating efforts to use, the option to expand Medicaid to provide services to youth ages 18 to 20 years old who have aged out of foster care. If the State does not choose to provide Medicaid to all young people under the age of 21 who were in foster care under the State’s responsibility on their eighteenth birthday, the State should describe what “reasonable categories” of children it has chosen to provide Medicaid services to, if any.
- Trust Funds:** Describe the design of the State’s trust fund program for youth, if applicable.
- A description of the Chafee and ETV services to be provided during the five-year CFSP period.
- Education and Training Vouchers program:** Describe the State’s methods of operating the voucher program efficiently and provide assurance that the State will comply with the specified conditions.
- Consultation and Collaboration with Tribes:** Describe how the State consulted and coordinated with a wide range of stakeholders, including youth, other Federal and State programs for youth, and Tribes. Specifically describe how the State consulted and coordinated with each Indian tribe in the State to ensure that benefits and services under Chafee will be available to Indian children on the same basis as to other children. Address each specific area identified in the PI about which States are to consult and coordinate.
- Determining Eligibility for Benefits and Services:** Address how the State will use objective criteria to determine eligibility benefits and services, and for ensuring fair and equitable treatment of benefit recipients.
- Training:** Provide information on specific training planned for FY 2010 – 2014 in support of the goals and objectives of the State’s CFCIP. This information may be incorporated into the training plan section of the CFSP, and noted as CFCIP training.
- Preparation to Implement National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD):** Describe the steps the State has taken and plans to take in preparation for NYTD implementation.

### Statistical and Supporting Information

- Juvenile Justice Transfers:** Provide the number of children under the care of the State child protection system who are transferred into the custody of the State juvenile justice system. **This information is provided in the APSR.**
- Intercountry Adoptions:** Report the number of children who were adopted from other countries and who entered into State custody in FY 2008.
- Education and Training Vouchers:** Provide the number of youth who received ETV awards in FY 2008 and year-to-date for FY 2009. Break out numbers of recipients receiving ongoing vouchers and those receiving new vouchers. **This is provided in the APSR.**

- Timely Home Studies Reporting & Data:** Provide FY 2007 and FY 2008 data regarding the State's compliance with home study timelines set forth in The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006.

**Financial Information**

- Submit CFS-101 Parts I, II, and III for FY 2010 (title IV-B, subparts 1 & 2, CFCIP, ETV, and CAPTA). (Submit a .pdf via e-mail)
- If needed, submit revised CFS-101 Parts I and II for FFY 2009 (to relinquish funds or request reallocated funds).
- Payment Limitation: Title IV-B, Subpart 1:** For comparison purposes, submit the amount of title IV-B, subpart 1 funds that the State expended for child care, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments in FY 2005.
- Payment Limitation: Title IV-B, Subpart 1:** For comparison purposes, submit the amount of non-Federal funds the state expended for foster care maintenance payments and applied as match for the title IV-B, subpart 1 program in FY 2005.
- Payment Limitation: Title IV-B, Subpart 2:** Provide State and local expenditure amounts for title IV-B, Subpart 2 for FY 2007 for comparison with the State's 1992 base year amount, as required to meet non-supplantation requirements.

## ATTACHMENT B: Glossary of Acronyms

AAICPC	Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
AB	Assembly Bill
AFCARS	Adoption Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
AI	Adoption Incentive
AIP	Agency Improvement Plan
APHSA	American Public Human Services Association
APPLA	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
APSR	Annual Progress & Service Report
ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Act
ASPR	Annual Services Progress Report
ATC	Adolescent Treatment Center
BADA	Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse
CADRE	Citizen's Alliance for Disability Rights and Education
CANS	Child Abuse and Neglect
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
CBCAP	Community Based Child Abuse Prevention
CCDFS	Clark County Department of Family Services
CCFAPA	Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
CFCIP	Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
CFSP	Child and Family Service Plan
CFSR	Child and Family Services Review
CFT	Child and Family Team
CHINS	Child in Need of Supervision
CIP	Court Improvement Project
CJA – TALCIT	Children's Justice Act Technical Assistance to Local Communities and Indian Tribes
CJA	Children's Justice Act
CMHBG	Community Mental Health Block Grant
CMHS	Community Mental Health Services
CPS	Child Protective Services
CRB	Children's Resources Bureau
CRP	Citizen Review Panel
CRT	Community Resource Teams
CSY	Collaboratively Served Youth
CTF	Children's Trust Fund
CWAF	Child Welfare Action Form
CWS	Child Welfare System
CYF	Children Youth and Families Interim Legislative Committee
DAWN	Data Warehouse of Nevada
DCFS	Division of Child and Family Services
DCFS-RURAL	Division of Child and Family Services Rural Region
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DHR	Department of Human Resources
DMG	Decision Making Group
DOE	Department of Education
DRS	Differential Response System
DWTC	Desert Willow Treatment Center
EBP	Evidence Based Programs
EIP	Evidence Informed Programs
ETV	Educational Training Voucher
F2F	Family to Family Connection
FASS	Family Assessment and Services System
FCAAN	Foster Care and Adoption Association of Nevada
FLH	Family Learning Homes

FPO	Family Programs Office
FRC	Family Resource Center
FVPSA	Family Violence Prevention and Services Act
GMU	Grants Management Unit
HCFAP	Health Care Finance and Policy
HSSS	Human Services Support Specialist
ICAMA	Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance
ICJ	Interstate Compact for Juveniles
ICPC	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act
IFS	Intensive Family Services
ILP	Independent Living Plan
IMS	Information Management System
IV-B/2	Title IV-B, Subpart 2
IV-E	Title IV-E
JJ Commission	Juvenile Justice Commission
JJWSG	Juvenile Justice Work Study Group
KIN	Kinship in Nevada Project
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
MEPA/IEPA	Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Act
MH	Mental Health
MHBG	Mental Health Block Grant
MHDS	Mental Health and Developmental Services
MHPAC	Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council
NAC	Nevada Administrative Code
NACo	The National Association of Counties
NCANDS	National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System
NCANS	Nevada Child Abuse and Neglect System
NCC	Neighborhood Care Center
NCCMT	Neighborhood Care Center Management Team
NCFAS	North Carolina Family Assessment Survey
NCWRCOI	National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement
NEATS	Nevada Employee Action and Timekeeping System
NEBS	Nevada Executive Budget
NITC	Nevada Inter-Tribal Council
NNCAS	Northern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services
NPT	Nevada Partnership for Training
NRC	National Resource Center
NRS	Nevada Revised Statutes
NVCC	Nevada Children's Center
NWD	Nevada Welfare Division
NYTC	Nevada Youth Training Center
NYTD	National Youth in Transition Database
ODES	Online Data Entry System
OJJDP	Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
PART	Policy Approval and Review Team
PEP	Parents Encouraging Parents
PINS	Person in Need of Supervision
PIP	Program Improvement Plan
PRIDE	Parent Resources for Information Development and Education
QA	Quality Assurance
QI	Quality Improvement
QICR	Quality Improvement Case Review
QSR	Quality Supervisory Review
SACWIS	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System
SAFE	Structured Analysis Family Evaluation

SAFF	Sierra Association of Foster Families
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration
SAPTA	Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
SB	Senate Bill
SED	Severe Emotional Disturbance
SGB	Statewide Governing Board
SIG	State Infrastructure Grant
SMT	System Management Team
SNCAS	Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services
SOAR	Systems Online Activity Reporting
SOC	System of Care Principles
SWA	Statewide Assessment
TALCIT	Technical Assistance to Local Communities and Indian Tribes
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
TPR	Termination of Parental Rights
UNITY	Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth
UNLV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
UNR	University of Nevada, Reno
VOCA	Victims of Crime Act
WCDSS	Washoe County Department of Social Services
WIN	Wrap-Around In Nevada

**ATTACHMENT C: Assurances and Certification**

**ATTACHMENT D: Financial Information**