

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau

**Final Report**  
**Arizona Child and Family Services Review**  
**February 2008**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Administration for Children and Families**  
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**  
**Children's Bureau**

## Introduction

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

The Arizona CFSR was conducted the week of August 6, 2007. The period under review for the case reviews was from April 1, 2006 to August 6, 2007. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal year (FY) 2004, FY 2005, and the CFSR 12-month target period ending March 31, 2006.
- Reviews of 65 cases at three sites throughout the State: 31 cases in Maricopa County, 17 cases in Pima County, and 17 cases in Pinal County.
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders, including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel and attorneys.

All 65 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the 65 cases reviewed are presented in the table on the following page.

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to Arizona's performance in achieving specified outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of the State's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the Arizona's first CFSR review in 2001, Arizona's status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Differences in findings across the sites included in the onsite review are described when noteworthy. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate. The second section of the report (Section B: Systemic Factors) provides an assessment and discussion of Arizona's performance with regard to systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

**TABLE OF CASE CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Case Characteristics</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>In-Home Cases</b>
	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>When case was opened/child entered foster care</b>		
Open prior to the period under review	31	8
Open during the period under review	9	17
Child entered foster care during the period under review	13	NA
<b>Child's age at start of period under review</b>		
Younger than age 10	20 (50%)	NA
At least 10 but younger than 13	3 (7.5%)	
At least 13 but younger than 16	8 (20%)	
16 and older	9 (22.5%)	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
African American (Non-Hispanic)	5 (12.5%)	
White (Non-Hispanic)	18 (45%)	
Hispanic (of all races)	15 (37.5%)	
American Indian or Alaska Native	2 (5%)	
<b>Primary Reason for opening case</b>		
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	20 (50%)	8 (32%)
Physical abuse	4 (10%)	7 (28%)
Sexual abuse	1 (2.5%)	0
Medical neglect	1 (2.5%)	0
Mental/physical health of parent	2 (5%)	0
Mental/physical health of child	2 (5%)	0
Substance abuse by parent	5 (12.5%)	6 (24%)
Child's behavior/Child in juvenile justice system	3 (7.5%)	3 (12%)
Domestic violence in child's home	1 (2.5%)	1(4%)
Abandonment	1 (2.5%)	0

\*Information on these characteristics for in-home services cases is not provided because all children in the family are considered in these cases

## SECTION A: OUTCOMES

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

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

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95 percent standard established for the CFSR onsite review at the end of their PIP implementation. CB recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often are time consuming to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States must work with CB to establish a specified amount of improvement or to determine specified activities for their PIP. That is, for each outcome or item that is an area needing improvement, each State (working in conjunction with CB) specifies the following: (1) how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the areas needing improvement, and (2) the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of their PIP and still not perform at the 95 percent (for outcomes) or the 90 percent (for items) levels established for the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSR is intended to assess a State's current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case-review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the bases for continued PIPs addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior PIP requirements may have been achieved. The goal is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the closing of a PIP.

In the following sections, information is provided pertaining to how the State performed on each outcome in the first round of the CFSR. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round, the key concerns observed at that time are identified as well as the strategies implemented in the PIP to address those concerns. This discussion also focuses on whether the key concerns that emerged in the first CFSR continued to be present in the second review, or whether those concerns were addressed, but other concerns emerged.

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

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

**I. SAFETY**

**Safety Outcome 1**

<b>Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	14	4	7	25	<b>78.1</b>
Partially Achieved	0	1	0	1	<b>3.1</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	3	3	0	6	<b>18.8</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	14	9	10	33	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:</b>					
	<b>National Standard (%)</b>		<b>State’s Percentage</b>		<b>Meets Standard</b>
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6 or higher		97.5		YES
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68 or higher		99.82		YES

## **STATUS OF SAFETY OUTCOME 1**

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 78.1 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance varied across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 100 percent of Pinal County cases and 82 percent of Maricopa County cases, compared to 50 percent of Pima County cases.

Arizona met the national standards for the two data indicators relevant for Safety Outcome 1. These indicators pertain to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Arizona was in substantial conformity with this outcome during its 2001 CFSR and therefore did not address the outcome in its PIP.

### **Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR**

The results of the CFSR onsite case review indicate that DCYF is not consistent with regard to responding to maltreatment allegations within the timeframes established by State policy. However, the case review findings also indicate that DCYF responded to allegations classified as high risk (priority 1) in a timely manner.

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

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### **Case Review Findings**

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 32 (49 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency's policy requirements.

Arizona policy states that initiation of an investigation is defined as an action by CPS, law enforcement or other emergency personnel to determine that the child victim is safe. Examples of an action to ensure the child's safety (as reported in the State's policy submission form) include:

- Attempts to make a face-to-face contact with the identified child victim.

- A telephone call with law enforcement or other emergency personnel who is with the child at the time of the call and who confirms the child’s safety.
- A telephone call to medical personnel (i.e., hospital staff) who confirms the child’s safety and that the child is not scheduled for discharge.
- A response by a crisis intervention team who can confirm the child’s safety.

Arizona requires that the alleged victim of child abuse or neglect, and sibling and other children in the home, should be interviewed at some time during the investigation (i.e., prior to case closure or transfer to ongoing case status). In Arizona, response time begins when the report information is received by the local office from the Hotline. It does not begin when the Hotline report is received.

Arizona has three response categories. These are as follows:

- Standard response time: The timeframe established for a CPS specialist to respond to a report that has no mitigating or aggravating circumstances.
- Mitigated response time: The timeframe for a CPS specialist to respond to a report when circumstances regarding the family or child are present that indicate the child is currently safe, allowing for a more delayed contact than typical.
- Aggravated response time: The timeframe for a CPS specialist to respond to a report when circumstances regarding the family or child are present that require faster contact than typical, such as when the ability to locate the child victim is time limited.

The timeframes established in policy are presented in the following table.

<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Mitigated</b>	<b>Aggravated</b>
High (P1)	2 hours	24 hours	NA
Moderate (P2)	48 hours	72 hours	24 hours
Low (P3)	72 hours	72 hours excluding weekends and holidays	48 hours
Potential (P4)	7 consecutive days	NA	72 hours excluding weekends and holidays.

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

<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	14	4	7	25	<b>78</b>
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	0	7	<b>22</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>	
Not applicable	14	9	10	33	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the Pinal County cases and 82 percent of the Maricopa County cases, compared to 50 percent of the Pima County cases.

Item 1 was rated as a Strength when the investigation was initiated within the timeframes required by State policy or law. It was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when the investigation was not established within the required timeframes. In three of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement, the report had been assigned as a Priority 2, indicating a moderate risk level. In three cases, the report had been assigned as a Priority 3, indicating a low risk level; and in one case the report was assigned as a Priority 4, indicating potential risk.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 78 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percent is less than the 90 percent required for an overall item rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most State-level, Pinal County, and Maricopa County stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCYF generally is effective in responding to maltreatment allegations in a timely manner, despite a high volume of reports and vacancies in investigation units. However, Pima County stakeholders suggested that the agency in that county struggles with responding to allegations in a timely manner, due primarily to turnover and vacancies in investigation positions. To address this concern, agency stakeholders in Pima County reported that supervisors often will investigate reports if there is no caseworker available, and that the agency offers incentives to investigation caseworkers to help out others who are experiencing backlogs.

A few stakeholders expressed concern about delays in receiving the reports from the Hotline. However, these stakeholders noted that this is not a common occurrence.

For the most part, stakeholders in all sites indicated positive relationships between DCYF and law enforcement with regard to coordinating responses to maltreatment allegations, although a few stakeholders in each site indicated that there was some room for improvement in this area.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, data from the State's Practice Improvement Case Review (PICR) indicate that a timely initial response by CPS, law enforcement, or other emergency personnel was confirmed in 71 percent of investigations reviewed in 2005, and 72 percent of investigations reviewed in 2006. The Statewide Assessment also reports that data from the Children's Information Library and Data Source (CHILDS), available on the State's Dashboard on April 5, 2007, indicate that the rate of timely response to investigations was 64 percent in calendar year (CY) 2004, 65 percent in CY 2005, 74 percent in CY 2006, and 80 percent in January 2007.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the PICR data indicate that in more than 80 percent of investigations, all children in the family are seen prior to investigation closure or transfer to ongoing services. All children in the family were seen in 85 percent of the investigations reviewed in CY 2005 and CY 2006. According to the Statewide Assessment, in some of the investigations in which a child was not seen prior to closure or transfer, reasonable efforts were made to see the child but the child was not located or was out of the area and not available for contact. The Statewide Assessment notes that generally, it is a sibling of the alleged victim who is not seen during the course of the investigation, rather than the alleged victim.

**Item 2. Repeat maltreatment**

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 7 (11 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine whether there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review, and if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. Information regarding the ratings is provided below.

<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	2	2	3	7	<b>100</b>
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	
Not applicable	29	15	14	58	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

Item 2 was rated as a Strength when there was no indication of two or more substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period. The small number of applicable cases (seven cases) for item 2 is a result of the very low percentage of substantiated reports in the cases included in the CFSR. During the period under review, 40 maltreatment reports (involving 32 families) were referred for an investigation, but only 7 reports were substantiated (17.5 percent). The State’s general low rate of substantiation is discussed further in the Statewide Assessment section below.

Although there was little evidence in the cases reviewed of the recurrence of substantiated maltreatment during the period under review, there were many cases in which there were multiple reports on the family during the life of the case, most of which were not substantiated. In 17 cases, there were 6 or more child maltreatment reports during the life of the case, and in 4 of these cases, there were 10 or more reports.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 100 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that there was no recurrence of maltreatment. In addition, the State met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the recurrence of maltreatment. This item also was rated as a Strength in the Arizona's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Several stakeholders expressed concern about the large number of unsubstantiated reports and questioned whether the children and families who were the subject of these reports are being adequately served. A few stakeholders suggested that much of the recurrence is due to parent's substance abuse and to parents who do not accept services.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State's low substantiation rate is a factor affecting the State's performance on repeat maltreatment. The Statewide Assessment reports that Arizona's *Child Welfare Reporting Requirements Semi-Annual Report* indicates substantiation rates declined from between 14 percent and 17 percent during Federal FY 2003 and FY 2004, to 11 percent in Federal FY 2005, and 9 percent in the 6-month period ending March 31, 2006. Preliminary data from the period of April 1 through September 30, 2006 indicate a substantiation rate of 7 percent. The percentage for this most recent period may change as appeals of proposed substantiated reports are resolved and open investigations are completed.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Arizona's substantiation rate is affected by the State's appeal process and other factors. Roughly 10 percent of proposed substantiated findings are eligible and appealed. DCYF's internal Protective Services Review Team (PSRT) reviews all cases in which a timely and eligible appeal has been initiated. The Statewide Assessment notes that the PSRT overturns between 40 and 50 percent of the "propose to substantiate" findings, for reasons such as the following: (1) the incident does not meet the statutory definition of abuse or neglect, (2) the case documentation does not sufficiently and clearly support a finding of probable cause that child abuse or neglect occurred, (3) substantial risk of harm (required in all neglect allegations) is not present or clearly documented, and/or (4) the alleged perpetrator is not the child's parent, guardian, or custodian. DCYF's proposal to substantiate is upheld in roughly 85 percent of appeals heard by an Administrative Law Judge.

The Statewide Assessment reports that DCYF reviewed data on the percentage of children who were the subject of a CPS report in the first 6 months of the year and a second report within 6 months of the first, regardless of the investigation finding (i.e., all reports were considered, including those with unsubstantiated and proposed substantiation findings). As noted in the Statewide Assessment, 9.1 percent of unique children were the subjects of repeat maltreatment reports. It also was noted in the Statewide Assessment that about 8 percent of the second reports were made within 1 week of the first report, which suggests they may be reports of new information regarding the same family situation already being assessed by DCYF.

## Safety Outcome 2

<b>Safety Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved	19	12	10	41	<b>63.1</b>
Partially Achieved	5	3	3	11	<b>16.9</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	7	2	4	13	<b>20.0</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

### STATUS OF SAFETY OUTCOME 2

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 63.1 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance on this item did not vary substantively across counties. The outcome was substantially achieved in 70 percent of Pima County cases, 61 percent of Maricopa County cases, and 59 percent of Pinal County cases. Arizona was in substantial conformity with this outcome for the 2001 CFSR. Therefore, the outcome was not addressed in the State's PIP.

### Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

The findings of the onsite CFSR case review indicated that in many cases, services were being provided to address the safety and risk concerns in the family and caseworkers were routinely assessing risk in the foster care homes. However, the findings also indicate that this was not being done on a consistent basis. A frequent observation of case reviewers was that although services were provided in most cases, in many of the cases the services provided were not sufficient to address all of the safety and risk concerns in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home.

### Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 45 (69 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded from this assessment if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home or if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For this item, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families to prevent placement of children in foster care while at the same time ensuring their safety. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below.

<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	16	9	10	35	78
Area Needing Improvement	5	3	2	10	22
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>45</b>	
Not applicable	10	5	5	20	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

There was little variation in performance on this item across sites. Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- Services were provided to the parents and child to prevent removal (15 cases).
- The child was placed voluntarily with relatives and services were provided to the relatives, parents, and children (4 cases).
- The children were appropriately removed from the home because the removal was necessary to ensure the child's safety (8 cases).
- Services were provided after the reunification of the child to prevent re-removal (8 cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. These included the following: in-home family reunification services, in-home family preservation services, parent aide services, in-home family therapy, individual therapy and counseling, psychotropic medication services, grief counseling, monitoring of substance use, substance abuse treatment services, early intervention programs, domestic violence counseling, anger management services, services in Spanish, educational services, parent support group services, parenting education services, medical services, referrals to community supports, marital counseling, financial planning and budgeting services, day care services, employment services, and transportation services.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- No services were provided and the children remained at risk in the home (one case).
- Some services were provided but they did not adequately address the safety issues in the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (five cases).
- No services were provided after reunification to ensure the child's ongoing safety and prevent re-removal (three cases).
- The child was placed in foster care without efforts to provide services and this was not necessary to ensure the child's safety (one case).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 78 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that DCYF had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percent is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has effective safety and risk assessment tools and procedures and that DCYF caseworkers are implementing both the tools and the procedures on a consistent basis. Stakeholders also praised the in-home services provided by contracted agencies, particularly family preservation program services. However, some stakeholders in Pinal County expressed concern about the quality of services available in the community to address the range of family problems

Some stakeholders expressed concern about the agency practice of placing children with relatives or family friends on a voluntary basis while providing services to the children and families. They noted that these relatives or friends usually are chosen by the parents, and it is not always clear that the placement has the resources necessary to support the children or that the children are safe.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, services through DCYF's Family Support, Preservation and Reunification (In-Home Service) Program are available statewide to children and family members referred by Child Protective Services (CPS). This program provides a wide range of services including, but not limited to: crisis intervention counseling; family assessment, goal setting and case planning in accordance with the results of the Child Safety Assessment (CSA) and the Strengths and Risks Assessment (SRA); individual, family, and marital therapy; conflict resolution and anger management skill development; communication and negotiation skill development; problem solving and stress management skill development; home management and nutrition education; job readiness training; development of linkages with community resources to serve a variety of social needs; behavioral management/modification; and facilitation of family meetings. The Program also assists families in accessing services such as substance abuse treatment, housing, child care, and many others.

The Statewide assessment reports that the PICR in 2006 rated 61 percent of 41 cases as a Strength in the area of services to prevent removal and re-entry. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the *Dependent Children in the Arizona Court System Fiscal Year 2005* report, published by the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Court, indicates that the State's Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) made a finding that the State made reasonable efforts to prevent removal of a child in 99 percent of FCRB hearings held in FY 2005.

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

\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 65 cases. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below.

<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	19	13	10	42	<b>65</b>
Area Needing Improvement	12	4	7	23	<b>35</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

Performance on this item differed slightly across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 76 percent of Pima County cases, compared to 61 percent of Maricopa County cases and 59 percent of Pinal County cases. Performance on this item also differed based on the type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 72.5 percent of the foster care cases compared to 52 percent of the in-home services cases.

Item 4 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through (1) conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children’s home or in children’s foster home and, (2) addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment. Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 23 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The case was closed and there was no follow up to ensure that the safety plan had been implemented (3 cases).
- There was a lack of adequate initial and ongoing safety and risk assessments during the period under review (5 cases).
- Services provided were insufficient to address all potential risk concerns and some of the children in the family remained at risk in the home (12 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to engage the child or family in necessary services to address risk issues (2 cases).
- The court ordered a trial home visit which was not consistent with agency recommendations, and the child had to be removed again because of safety concerns (1 case).

#### Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 65 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had appropriately addressed the risk of harm to the children. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for an overall rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the Arizona’s 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item noted that DCYF's new CSA-SRA assessment tool is effective in assessing risk of harm to children as well as identifying more immediate safety-related concerns. They noted that the assessment tool allows the caseworker to identify services that will address specific needs. However, some agency stakeholders expressed concern that the tool is too time-consuming to implement and not necessary in all situations, particularly those situations in which there are clearly no safety concerns with the family.

Stakeholders also noted that TDM meetings assist in developing safety plans and in monitoring implementation of the plans.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, when a safety assessment concludes that a child is unsafe, DCYF determines the level of intervention necessary to manage the safety threats and implements a safety plan. The safety plan identifies services and supports that will enable the child to remain at or return home safely, or indicates the need for out-of-home care.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ongoing monitoring of the safety, risk, and well-being of children in out-of-home care is conducted by CPS Specialists and contracted provider Foster Care Specialists. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Foster Care Specialists are required to supervise and monitor licensed foster homes by personally visiting the foster homes as follows:

- For experienced foster homes, a minimum of quarterly.
- For homes licensed in the past 6 months, weekly during the first month of a child's placement and at least monthly thereafter, in addition to telephone contacts.
- For foster homes providing care to a medically fragile child, a minimum of monthly.
- For foster parents who have no children in placement, prior to placement of a child to ensure continued full compliance with licensing rules if there has been no home visit within the previous 3 months.

The Statewide Assessment notes that reports of abuse or neglect by an out-of-home care provider are investigated by a CPS Specialist, including reports involving unlicensed non-relatives, unlicensed relatives, licensed family foster homes, certified adoptive homes, and DCYF-certified child care homes. These assessments are conducted by specialized investigators who are trained to consider the factors involved in the daily care of foster children, such as a child's behavioral or emotional health issues. Joint investigative assessments are frequently completed by CPS and licensing personnel. After completion of an investigation, DCYF convenes a case conference with the out-of-home provider and staff, including licensing personnel. At the case conference, the findings and recommendations are fully discussed and, if warranted, corrective action plans are developed and implemented. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, all licensing concerns also are investigated by the Office of Licensing, Certification and Regulation (OLCR). Investigations that result in licensing recommendations are addressed by licensing personnel through corrective action plans.

## II. PERMANENCY

### Permanency Outcome 1

<b>Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by site according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	8	6	3	17	<b>42.5</b>
Partially Achieved	12	4	5	21	<b>52.5</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	0	0	2	2	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:</b>					
	<b>National Standard (Scaled Score)</b>		<b>State's Composite Score</b>		<b>Meets Standard (Yes/No)</b>
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6 +		104.3		NO
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4 +		121.3		YES
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7 +		123.6		YES
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5 +		90.5		NO

### STATUS OF PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 42.5 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for the CFSR 12-month target period, the State did not meet the national standards for Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification, and Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability.

However, Arizona did meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions, and Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. Performance on the individual measures included in each composite is presented in the discussion of the items related to each measure.

Although Arizona's performance on this outcome was fairly low in all sites, there was variation across sites. The outcome was found to be substantially achieved in 60 percent of Pima County cases compared to 40 percent of Maricopa County cases and 30 percent of Pinal County cases.

### **Key Concerns from the 2001 CFSR**

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2001 CFSR. In the 2001 CFSR, item 6 (pertaining to placement stability), item 7 (pertaining to establishing permanency goals for children in a timely manner), and item 9 (pertaining to timely adoptions) were each rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Key concerns identified during the 2001 CFSR with regard to Permanency Outcome 1 were the following:

- Foster parents and adoptive parents were not adequately prepared or supported to meet the special needs of children in foster care, particularly with regard to meeting the child's medical needs and behavioral problems.
- There were frequent placements of young children, including infants, in shelter care group home settings.
- There was inadequate case planning, and the services provided did not always match the identified goals.
- Adoptions were not being achieved in a timely manner due primarily to delays in filing a petition for termination of parental rights (TPR) and scheduling TPR hearings, finding specialized adoptive homes for children with severe behavioral challenges, and completing the paperwork necessary to finalize adoptions.
- There was little evidence that concurrent planning was occurring.
- There was a lack of community services for parents to assist them in meeting their case goal requirements for reunification.
- There was a high percentage of children re-entering foster care.

Arizona implemented the following strategies in its PIP to address these concerns:

- Reviewed and revised the training and handouts pertaining to data entry regarding removal status.
- Improved aftercare planning and services for families at the time of foster care discharge and/or case closure.
- Awarded performance contracts for foster and adoptive home recruitment, study, and licensing/certification services in Maricopa County (District 1).
- Implemented the *Family-Centered Interview and Documentation Guide* and *Strengths and Risks Assessment Tool* to better manage out-of-home care.
- Revised the IV-B training plan to include staff at child care institutions and foster parents.
- Provided training on placement support policy and placement transition procedures for staff and supervisors.
- Acquired a foster and adoptive parent training curriculum that includes specific modules related to medically fragile children, sexual abuse victims, and children with behavioral and mental health needs.
- Included concurrent planning in case manager core training.
- Worked with the Court Improvement Program (CIP) to reduce the length of time for the TPR appeals process.

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

### **Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR**

The 2007 CFSR identified some concerns that were similar to those found in the 2001 CFSR. For example, in both the 2001 and 2007 CFSRs, the case reviews found the following:

- In some cases, foster parents were not adequately prepared or supported to meet the needs of children in their care.
- There was little evidence of concurrent planning. Although concurrent goals were listed in the case plan, in most cases the caseworkers were not working toward the goals simultaneously.
- Adoptions were not being achieved in a timely manner due primarily to a lack of diligent efforts to find adoptive homes for children who were not going to be adopted by relatives or foster parents.

The case reviews in the 2007 CFSR also found the following:

- There were many cases in which children were on runaway status during the period under review or had run away at some time during the period under review.
- The goal of reunification was not being changed in a timely manner even when the prognosis for reunification was poor.
- Several youth with a goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA) had not received independent living services although they met the eligible age requirement for those services.
- The agency was not consistent with regard to making concerted efforts to achieve adoptions in a timely manner.
- The lack of available services for parents was a barrier to achieving reunification in a timely manner in many cases.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented below.

### **Item 5. Foster care re-entries**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### **Case Review Findings**

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 13 (32.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for assessment if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 5</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	6	4	3	13	<b>100</b>
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	14	6	7	27	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

State performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: 19.5 percent of the children exiting foster care to reunification in the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period re-entered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. For the data set used to establish the national standards for the data composites, the median performance on this measure was 15.0 percent. For this measure, lower percentages are associated with higher levels of performance. Arizona’s performance on the measure exceeds the national median indicating that, with regard to the statewide data, foster care re-entry is a concern for Arizona.

For the case review process, item 5 was rated as a Strength in 13 cases in which the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the case review ratings of Strength in 100 percent of the applicable cases in the review sample. However, when statewide data are considered, the State had a higher percentage of re-entries into foster care during the 12-month CFSR target period than at least half of the States in the Nation. State data reported in the Statewide Assessment confirms that re-entry is an area of concern for Arizona.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that DCYF has implemented some practices to prevent foster care re-entry. They noted, for example, that DCYF has hired community liaisons who are responsible for developing a community safety net for families. They also noted that DCYF has established aftercare plans for children who are reunified and monitors cases for 3 to 6 months after reunification.

A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that many re-entries involve older children with behavioral problems that the parents cannot handle and guardianships that have disrupted. Other stakeholders attributed foster care re-entry to parental substance abuse.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, 80.5 percent of children who reunified in the 12 months ending March 31, 2005 did not re-enter out-of-home care within 12 months after reunification. This rate has remained steady since the earliest period on which these data are available.

The Statewide Assessment reports that children who entered foster care in the year ending March 31, 2006 and within 12 months of a prior exit were most likely to re-enter within 30 days of the prior exit. Within this population, 17.3 percent re-entered within 30 days of the prior exit, 12.4 percent within 31 to 60 days of the prior exit, and 14.4 percent within 61 to 90 days. Between 8 percent and 9 percent re-entered in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 6<sup>th</sup> month after the prior exit, and the percentage continues to drop to 3.5 percent in the 11<sup>th</sup> month after the prior exit. The Statewide Assessment reports that this trend is most apparent in Maricopa County, which heavily influences the statewide data.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 6. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child's current placement setting. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	12	6	5	23	<b>57.5</b>
Area Needing Improvement	8	4	5	17	<b>42.5</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	

Performance on this item did not vary substantively across counties.

Arizona's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability is presented below.

- 82.9 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days, but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is less than the national median for this measure of 83.3 percent.
- 57.9 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months, but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is less than the national median for this measure of 59.9 percent.

- 29.2 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is less than the national median for this measure of 33.9 percent.

These data indicate that Arizona performed below the national median on all three measures of placement stability included in composite 4.

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

- The child did not experience a placement change during the period under review, and either the current placement was stable or the child was discharged from foster care during the period under review (15 cases).
- The placement changes experienced were in the child's best interest and were intended either to further achievement of the child's permanency goal or to provide specialized services to the child (8 cases). For example, placement changes were made to move the child to a relative's home or from a foster home to an adoptive home.

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review, and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to further attain the child's permanency goal (11 cases).
- The child's current placement setting (at the time of the onsite CFSR) was not stable (7 cases).

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- There were eight children in the cases who were either on runaway status during the period under review or had run away at some time during the period under review.
- There were seven cases in which reviewers noted that placement disruptions could be attributed at least in part to a lack of services provided to support foster parents in meeting the children's needs.
- There were three cases in which reviewers noted that placement disruptions could be attributed to an inappropriate match between the child's needs and the foster parents.

The number of placements experienced during the period under review was as follows:

- 21 children experienced only 1 placement.
- 9 children experienced 2 placements during the period under review.
- 7 children experienced 3-4 placements during the period under review.
- 3 children experienced 5 or more placements during the period under review.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 57.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability or that changes in placements were in the best interests of the child. This percent is less

than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that placement disruptions occur because foster parents are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of the children placed in their care and the agency does not support foster parents adequately in meeting children's needs. A few stakeholders also noted that placement changes often occur because group home staff members often are inexperienced in dealing with youth. They noted that when a youth exhibits behavior problems, a congregate care staff person often calls the police and the child is placed in detention and ends up in the juvenile justice system.

Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that many placement disruptions occur in relative caregiver homes when the relative has agreed to take the child initially, but then after several months determines that they cannot continue providing a home, either because they cannot afford it or because they cannot meet the child's needs. A few stakeholders indicated that there are not sufficient services available for relative caregivers and the children in their care.

Several external stakeholders reported that the agency contracts with private placement providers require that 95 percent of the children referred to the placement provider be placed in a home within 4 hours. Stakeholders said that private placement providers often get a referral from DCYF with a brief description of the child and, in order to meet the time requirements, the first foster parent to respond with an open bed "gets" the placement. Stakeholders noted that this practice is inconsistent with Partnering for Safety and Permanence - Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting(PS-MAPP), which emphasizes making appropriate matches. They expressed the opinion that because placement agencies often do not have sufficient information about the child or sufficient time to consider the appropriateness of a match, the initial placements based on the availability of a bed often disrupt.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires a complete individual placement needs assessment for every child who requires out-of-home care, and requires that each child be placed in the least restrictive placement available that is consistent with his or her placement needs. The Statewide Assessment notes that relatives are the placement of preference for all children. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCYF supports placement stability through the following practices:

- Ensuring that every child in out-of-home care has an individualized out-of-home care plan included in the case plan.
- Providing children and out-of-home care providers with current information about matters affecting the children and allowing them an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings.
- Reviewing each case every 6 months through the FCRB or the Department's Administrative Review procedures.
- Making monthly in-person contacts with children in out-of-home care and their caregiver(s) to assess their safety, well-being, and service needs.

The Statewide Assessment reports that if there is a placement change, the CPS Specialist and supervisor must hold a case conference with the out-of-home provider and the child (if appropriate) prior to a change of placement to inform the provider of the plan to move the child (if not requested by the provider), discuss the reason a placement change is being considered, and explore possible supportive services that could be put into place to preserve the placement. When removal is being considered, the contractor and child’s CPS Specialist shall request a Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting or TDM meeting prior to the child’s removal whenever possible.

If a foster parent disagrees with the plan to remove the child and the removal is for a reason other than to achieve the permanency plan for the child, the provider has the right to request a Foster Home Transition Conference, to be held within 72 hours of notification of the disagreement. For Native American children, placements must take place in accordance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the Tribe must be notified whenever a placement change is considered.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that placement stability was identified as an area of strength in 93 percent of cases reviewed during the 2006 PICR, with reviewers assessing placement moves during the most recent 12 months. Cases are rated strength if they have no more than one move during that period that is not related to achieving the child’s goals. Moves are usually made to meet the child’s therapeutic needs, or to place the child with a relative or an adoptive family. Some children were noted to have a history of placement instability prior to the period under review, but no moves within the past 12 months.

**Item 7. Permanency goal for child**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

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

<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	16	10	6	32	<b>80</b>
Area Needing Improvement	4	0	4	8	<b>20</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Pima County cases compared to 80 percent of Maricopa County cases, and 60 percent of Pinal County cases.

Arizona met the national standard for Permanency Composite 3: Achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. Performance on the individual measures included in this composite was as follows:

- 31.7 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (i.e., adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percent exceeds the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (29.1 percent) for this measure for the data set used to establish the national standards.
- 94.9 percent of the children exiting foster care in 2005 who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percent is less than the national median for this measure (96.8 percent) for the data set used to establish the national standards.
- 45.3 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percent is less than the national median of 47.8 percent for the data set used to establish the national standards. For this measure, lower scores indicate more positive performance.

These data suggest that Arizona's particular strength with regard to this data composite pertains to the percent of children in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of the 12-month target period who were discharged to a permanent home by the end of the 12-month target period. Arizona's performance on this measure is in the top 25 percent nationally.

Item 7 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child's permanency goal was appropriate and had been established in a timely manner. The case was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child's current permanency goal was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (two cases).
- The child's permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (six cases).

Case review findings pertaining to case goals were as follows:

- 14 children had a goal of adoption only.
- 10 children had a goal of reunification with parents or other relatives.
- 8 children had a goal of Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA) only (i.e., PPLA is a living arrangement other than adoption, reunification, living with other relatives, or guardianship that involves the child remaining in State custody until reaching the age of majority).
- 3 children had concurrent goals of reunification and PPLA.
- 2 children had concurrent goals of guardianship and reunification.
- 2 children had concurrent goals of adoption and reunification.
- 1 child had a goal of guardianship.

Case review findings pertaining to TPR were as follows:

- At the time of the on-site review, 22 of the 40 children in the foster care cases had been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.
- TPR had been filed in a timely manner in 11 of the 22 cases.
- A reason for not filing for TPR was noted in 7 (64 percent) of the 11 cases in which TPR had not been filed, despite the 15-month criterion being met. In four cases (36 percent), no reason was in the case file.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 80 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR. Key concerns were that permanency goals, particularly guardianship and adoption, were not being established in a timely manner and that the goal of reunification was remaining for too long a period of time. These concerns were noted primarily in the Pinal County cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the initial goal of reunification often remains in place for a long period of time before it is changed. They noted that although the terms "concurrent planning" and "concurrent goals" frequently appear in the case files, they are, as one stakeholder noted, "just words." As most stakeholders reported, the concurrent goal is a "back up" plan and when there are concurrent goals, DCYF usually does not work on both of them simultaneously. Stakeholders noted that often all opportunities to achieve the goal of reunification are exhausted and reunification is ruled out before efforts are made to work toward another goal.

Stakeholders also noted that the Tribes in the State generally do not support termination and adoption and prefer guardianship as the permanency goal. It was noted that although the agency in Maricopa County often will work with the Tribes on guardianship options, many of the Tribes perceive the DCYF in Pima County as not supporting that option.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, permanency planning services are provided for all families who are the subject of an ongoing services case. CPS Specialists engage parents, children, extended family, and service team members to facilitate the development and implementation of a written case plan. The Statewide Assessment reports that each child is assigned a permanency goal based on the circumstances necessitating child protection services, the child's needs for permanency and stability, and Adoption and Safe Family Act requirements. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the initial permanency goal is family reunification unless the court finds that reasonable efforts to reunify are not required due to aggravating circumstances, as defined by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Adoption or guardianship may be considered if reunification is not successful within the timeframes identified in Federal

and State law. The Statewide Assessment notes that all other permanency options must be fully considered and ruled out before implementing a permanency goal of long-term foster care (PPLA) or independent living.

The Statewide Assessment reports that concurrent planning is required in cases where the goal is reunification and there is a poor prognosis for reunification within 12 months of removal. Concurrent planning is to be initiated as early as the Removal Review Conference but no later than 90 days from case opening, and whenever significant information related to the prognosis for achieving family reunification is received. The Statewide Assessment notes that the concurrent goal can be adoption or guardianship, and may not be long-term foster care (PPLA) or independent living. According to the Statewide Assessment, in cases in which concurrent permanency planning is occurring, DCYF caseworkers are expected to pursue the concurrent goals simultaneously.

The Statewide Assessment reports that 83 percent of cases reviewed during the 2005 PICR were determined to have a permanency goal that was appropriately matched to the child’s needs. In 2006, 76 percent of cases were rated as a Strength in this area. According to the Statewide Assessment, many cases rated as needing improvement by the PICR had an appropriate goal reflected in the court minutes and that goal was being pursued by DCYF. However, CHILDS had not been updated to reflect the goal. For example, in some cases the case plan did not identify the adoption goal until after TPR was ordered. The children’s needs were being met and an appropriate goal was on record with the court, but the cases were rated area needing improvement because the permanency goal was not documented in the CHILDS case plan according to State policy.

**Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement with Relatives**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 8 was applicable for 19 (47.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below.

<b>Item 8</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	8	3	3	14	<b>74</b>
Area Needing Improvement	3	0	2	5	<b>26</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	7	5	21	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

Arizona did not meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification. Performance on the individual measures included in this composite was as follows:

- 70.1 percent of the reunifications occurred in less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care, which is about equal to the national median of 69.9 percent but less than the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of 75.2 percent.
- The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification was 6.3 months, which also is about equal to the national median of 6.5 months but greater than the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of 5.4 months. For this measure, a lower number of months represents a higher level of performance.
- 29.2 percent of children entering foster care in the last 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percent is less than the national median of 39.4 percent.

Arizona's performance on these measures was about equal to the national median for the two measures assessing timeliness of reunification for children exiting foster care. However, performance was well below the national median for the longitudinal measure pertaining to the timeliness of reunification for children entering foster care at a given time (an entry cohort measure). Performance on the fourth measure included in this composite pertains to foster care re-entry and is provided in the discussion of item 5. As noted under that item, the statewide data indicate that the rate of foster care re-entry is higher than the national median.

Item 8 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency was making concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Strength ratings were given even when the time to achieve the goal exceeded 12 months in several cases where reviewers determined that the caseworkers had made diligent efforts toward reunification.

Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in five cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. In three of these cases, reviewers noted that adequate services had not been provided to the parents to promote the reunification. In the other two cases, reviewers indicated that permanency was not timely because of court-related decisions, such as the court ruling to maintain the goal of reunification to give parents another chance even when the prognosis for reunification was poor.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 74 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to achieve the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. In the State's 2001 CFSSR, there was no comparable item. In the reviews conducted in 2001, item 8 pertained to independent living services. The change for item 8 from an assessment of independent living services to an assessment of timeliness of achieving goals of reunification, guardianship and permanent placement of relatives was not made until Federal fiscal year 2002.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the following opinions with regard to barriers to timely reunifications.

- There are a large number of parents who have substance abuse and addiction problems, but the behavioral health system is inadequate to meet the demand for services, particularly in rural areas.
- The crisis with crystal methamphetamine abuse has been a challenge in terms of finding appropriate treatments and dealing with relapse issues.
- There are extensive delays in receiving mental health assessments and services that delay the reunification process. For example, although referrals for psychological evaluations are completed in a timely manner, children and adults can wait months for a psychological evaluation to be completed. No services can be initiated by DCYF until the psychological evaluation report is received and reviewed.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, data from the PICR indicate that timely reunification is achieved or anticipated for eight of ten children (80 percent). CHILDS data confirms that eight of ten children exiting to reunification are being reunified within 12 months of removal. The Statewide Assessment reports that although Arizona has not achieved the standard for the CFSR permanency composite on Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification, timely reunification is being achieved for the large majority of children, and the length of stay for one quarter of children is as short as a week or a few days. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that length of stay for children exiting to reunification has been rising.

The Statewide Assessment reports that timeliness of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with a relative was identified as a Strength in 64 percent of cases in the quarter ending June 2004, 86 percent of cases in CY 2005, and 78 percent of cases in CY 2006. The Statewide Assessment notes that in some cases, children are in foster care for longer than 12 months due to the time required to address multiple complex issues within the family.

### **Item 9. Adoption**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

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

<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	1	5	0	6	<b>37.5</b>
Area Needing Improvement	6	0	4	10	<b>62.5</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	13	5	6	24	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

Although the number of cases is fairly small, all cases in Pima County with a goal of adoption were rated as a Strength. In comparison, only one case in both of the other two counties combined was rated as a Strength for this item.

Arizona met the national standard for the Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions. Performance on the individual measures included in this composite was as follows:

- 34.9 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percent exceeds the national median of 26.8 percent, but is less than the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of 36.6 percent.
- The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 27.2 months. This length of stay is about equal to the national 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of 27.3 months for this measure. For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.
- 30.5 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the CFSR 12-month target period were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the target period. This percent exceeds the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of 22.7 percent for this measure.
- 13.1 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the CFSR 12-month target period became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within 6 months. This percent exceeds the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for this measure of 10.9 percent.
- 44.5 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percent is less than the national median of 45.8 percent.

These data suggest that the State performed in the top 25 percent of the Nation on three measures pertaining to timeliness of adoption. However, the State performed at below median level for the measure assessing the percentage of children who are legally free for adoption who are adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases due to one or more of the following concerns:

- Delays in scheduling court hearings or court delays related to continuances or postponements (one case).
- Delays due to TPR appeals (two cases: in one case the appeal took 12 months and in the other case, the appeal process lasted 17 months).

- Delays due to the agency not filing for TPR in a timely manner (two cases: in one case the agency did not file because the court would not approve it).
- Delays in completing appropriate paperwork, such as getting the child certified for Developmental Disabilities (DD) services (two cases).
- A lack of effort to work toward adoption although that goal was stated in the case plan as a concurrent goal (one case).
- A lack of diligent efforts to find an adoptive home for the child (five cases).

Additional case review findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Six (37.5 percent) of the 16 children with a goal of adoption were in foster care for longer than 24 months without achieving permanency.
- Adoption was finalized during the period under review in four cases, and in two of those cases, the adoption was finalized within 24 months of the child's entry into foster care.
- Eleven (92 percent) of the 12 children who were not adopted during the period under review were not in an adoptive placement.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although the State meets the national standard for Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions, case reviewers determined that DCYF had made diligent efforts to achieve adoptions in a timely manner in only 37.5 percent of the cases. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR express mixed opinions. Some stakeholders said that the State is effective in achieving adoptions in a timely manner, particularly once there is a TPR. They also noted that although a case cannot be transferred to the adoption unit until there is a TPR, the adoption unit usually is involved in the case long before that happens. However, other stakeholders said that it is very rare that adoptions occur in a timely manner because almost all TPRs are appealed and the appeal process can be lengthy, even when there are no continuances.

Stakeholders' opinions on this item varied across sites. Maricopa and Pima County stakeholders indicated that delays in the adoption process can be attributed to multiple concerns including the following: (1) paperwork often has to be redone, (2) home studies are not completed in a timely manner, (3) the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) process is very lengthy (it can take 6 months to get an in-State certified birth certificate) and (4) parents can be difficult to locate for TPR. Several Pima County stakeholders reported that establishing the adoption subsidy for a family is a considerable barrier to timeliness because of the extensive documentation and the lack of education of caseworkers on the subsidy. Stakeholders in Pima County also said that there are two judges in the county who will not grant TPR if the child does not have an identified placement, particularly if the child is older and that there are many continuances in the county.

In contrast, Pinal County stakeholders reported that almost all adoptions are concluded within 24 months and that the county is very close to 18 months for some finalizations. Despite the perceptions of stakeholders, all four applicable Pinal County cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement for this item.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy directs that a goal of adoption be assigned and TPR be pursued according to ASFA requirements. At the 12-month permanency hearing, if the court determines that termination is in the child's best interest, the court may order DCYF or the child's attorney or guardian ad litem to file a motion for TPR within 10 days and set a date for an initial hearing on the motion within 30 days. The Statewide Assessment notes that "although motions for TPR are filed and heard in a timely manner within the Juvenile Court, there are delays in the resolution of appeals of TPR orders caused by the volume of appeals filed and scheduling by the Court of Appeals. In order to address this concern, a rule change was adopted and became effective January 1, 2007.

The Statewide Assessment reports that child-specific recruitment is conducted to find adoptive families for children for whom no homes were found on the CHILDS Provider (Adoption) Registry, including children with special needs. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, child-specific recruitment is to be initiated within 5 days of conducting a search or a case conference that resulted in no identified placement. All appropriate recruitment resources are to be explored and/or utilized within 3 months of the referral for child-specific recruitment.

The Statewide Assessment also reports the following data pertaining to adoption.

- 44.5 percent of children who exited to adoption in the year ending March 31, 2006 were adopted by a relative. Many others were adopted by their foster parents.
- The *Child Welfare Reporting Requirements Semi-Annual Report* indicates that of children in care with a goal of adoption on September 30, 2006, 51 percent were age 5 years or younger, 21.4 percent were age 6 to 8, 18.6 percent were age 9 to 12, and 9.1 percent were age 13 to 17; 57 percent were legally free for adoption; and 91.0 percent were placed in an adoptive home.
- The *Child Welfare Reporting Requirements Semi-Annual Report* indicates 41 percent of children who exited to adoption in a specified period were in their adoptive placement for more than 2 years at the time of adoption.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 11 (27.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to other planned permanent living arrangements. The results are presented in the table below.

Item 10	Maricopa	Pima	Pinal	Total N	Percent
Strength	0	2	2	4	36
Area Needing Improvement	5	1	1	7	64
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	15	7	7	29	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in four cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and to provide the necessary services to prepare the child for independent living. In cases in which the child was in a foster home, there were formal agreements on the part of foster parents to continue caring for the child until the child reached the age of majority.

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

- No services were provided to assist the child in making the transition from foster care to independent living (four cases).
- The child was not in a permanent placement (four cases).

One child was assigned the goal of OPPLA at the age of 10 years. For the other 10 children, the goal was not assigned until the child was age 15 or older.

### Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 36 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of other planned living arrangement was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

There was general agreement among stakeholders that the State operates a high quality Independent Living Program (ILP) that is effective in meeting the needs of children transitioning from foster care to independent living. Stakeholders reported that youth often perceive the services they receive from this program as preparing them for independent living. However, many stakeholders expressed the opinion that independent living services should be provided to youth at ages younger than 16. In addition, according to a few Maricopa County stakeholders, there is a waiting list for services and some youth in the county wait 5 or 6 months to get into

the program. A few stakeholders indicated that congregate care providers want to begin providing independent living services to help meet the need. In contrast, access to the ILP services was not a concern in Pinal County. Stakeholders in that county highly praised the ILP and noted that there were no waiting lists and caseworkers can begin referring youth at age 13 years. As one stakeholder in Pinal County noted, if the youth wants the services, the agency makes sure that they get it. Some Pinal County stakeholders noted, however, that youth are not automatically referred to the ILP but must request to be referred and then are assessed for participation.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, youth and DCYF staff work together to establish youth-centered case plans that include services and supports to assist each youth to reach his or her full potential while transitioning to adulthood; including maintaining safe, stable, long-term living arrangements and relationships with persons committed to their support and nurturance. State policy requires an individualized independent living case plan for every youth age 16 and older in out-of-home care, regardless of his or her permanency goal. Life skills assessments and services are provided to ensure that each youth acquires the skills and resources necessary to live independently at age 18 or older.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that State policy allows youth to continue to receive DCYF services and supports up to age 21 through voluntary foster care services and/or the Transitional Independent Living (aftercare) Program. Young adults served under the Transitional ILP are former foster youth, ages 18 through 20, who were in out-of-home care and in the custody of the DCYF while age 16, 17, or 18. This program provides job training, skill development, and financial and other assistance to former foster youth. During FFY 2006, approximately 100 former foster youth were served by this program. Outreach efforts continue to increase public awareness of the Transitional ILP. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, youth were asked during focus groups to discuss services and supports provided by the DCYF. The Statewide Assessment notes that youth reported they were especially satisfied with their life skills classes, assistance with college tuition, and counseling.

**Permanency Outcome 2**

<b>Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by site according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved	13	5	9	27	<b>71.1</b>
Partially Achieved	4	5	1	10	<b>26.3</b>
Not Achieved	1	0	0	1	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>38</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	0	0	2	

## **STATUS OF PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2**

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 71.1 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 90 percent of Pinal County cases, compared to 72 percent of Maricopa County cases and 50 percent of Pima County cases.

### **Key concerns from the 2001 CFSR**

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR. During the 2001 review, item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Key concerns identified in the 2001 review relevant to item 13 were the following:

- Visitation schedules were not always facilitated by the agency. In some cases, visitation was occurring only because of the efforts of foster parents and relatives.
- In some cases in which visitation was occurring, case files did not contain visitation plans. In other cases where there was a visitation plan, visitation was not occurring in accordance with the plan and there was a lack of documentation as to why visitation was not occurring.
- In one case, shelter care was used to enable the parent to visit the infant daily because family foster homes in the area might not be able to accommodate such frequent visitation.

To address these concerns in its PIP, Arizona developed a training curriculum for caseworkers that focuses on the process of engaging extended family members and significant others as resources and supports for the child and on the importance of developing visitation plans. The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the PIP implementation period.

### **Key findings from the 2007 CFSR**

In the 2007 CFSR, case reviews resulted in the following findings:

- Most of the children in the cases were placed in close proximity to their parents or other relatives (item 11).
- Most of the children in the cases were placed with siblings, if appropriate and safe (item 12).
- There were many cases in which the frequency of visitation between the child and parents and between siblings was inadequate to meet the needs of the child (item 13).
- Fathers were more likely than mothers to have had no visits with their children during the period under review (item 13).
- For the most part, the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections with extended family members (e.g., through phone contacts and visits) (item 14).
- The agency was not consistent with regard to seeking both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for the child (item 15).

- The agency was not consistent with regard to making concerted efforts to support the relationship between children and their mothers and fathers (item 16).

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

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 11 was applicable for 31 (77.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases determined to be not applicable were those in which (1) TPR had been attained prior to the period under review, (2) contact with parents was not considered to be in the child's best interest, and/or (3) parents were deceased or whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child's most current foster care setting was in close proximity to the child's parents or close relatives. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

<b>Item 11</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	14	9	7	30	<b>97</b>
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	1	3	9	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

Item 11 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed in the same community or county as the parents or that the child's placement was not in the same community or county, but was still in close proximity to the parents. The item also was rated as a Strength if the child was placed out of his or her community or county, but that the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the permanency goal. In one case, item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the child, who was a runaway, was placed in Arizona although his parents lived in California. Reviewers determined that this placement prevented interventions that might have resolved the problems between the parents and the child.

**Rating Determination**

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that DCYF had made diligent efforts to ensure that children were placed in foster care placements that were in close proximity to their parents or relatives, or that were necessary to meet special needs. This percent exceeds the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite review expressed the opinion that placing children in close proximity to their parents and relatives can be challenging because children usually are placed where there is an open bed and there is no time to search for a placement based on proximity. External stakeholders reported that child placing agencies are given only 4 hours to find a placement and keep the child out of congregate care, so the first foster parent to respond is where the child is placed. Stakeholders also noted that many foster parents do not live near where the children’s parents live, so this can make close proximity problematic.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, although DCYF recently has developed a methodology for producing data on this item, this has not yet been implemented. The plan is for DCYF to use data maintained on the CHILDS system to compare the zip code of removal with the zip code of current placement to identify the percentage of children removed and placed within the geographic area served by a single CPS field section (a cluster of CPS Units). Field sections generally serve an area smaller than the “one hour drive” definition of close placement proximity included in the CFSR on-site review instrument. At this time the Division is testing the data extraction methodology to ensure the correct address information is being pulled from CHILDS.

### Item 12. Placement with siblings

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 22 (55 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were, or had been, placed together and, if not, whether the separation was necessary to meet the needs (service or safety needs) of one or more of the children. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 12	Maricopa	Pima	Pinal	Total N	Percent
Strength	9	5	7	21	95
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	5
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	5	3	18	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed with all siblings, or if siblings were separated, the separation was due to the special needs of one of the siblings or to the fact that placement with siblings was not in the child's best interest.

Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 95 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever possible and appropriate. This exceeds the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency makes concerted efforts to place siblings together. They noted that when siblings cannot be placed together, usually because of the size of the sibling group, the agency makes concerted efforts to place them in close proximity so that they can have frequent visitation.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF is required to make efforts to place siblings together unless there is documented evidence that placement together is detrimental to one of the children. The Statewide Assessment reports that PICR results indicated that 71 percent of applicable cases reviewed in 2005 and 79 percent of cases reviewed in 2006 were rated as a Strength in the area of placement with siblings. This area is rated a strength if all the siblings are placed together or if one or more siblings is placed separately for a child's best interest. In cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement, the siblings' separation often resulted from a lack of placement resources to accommodate the sibling group. One observation of the PICR is that once siblings are separated and become attached to caregivers, CPS Specialists, the courts, and other team members sometimes hesitate to move the children to be placed together. For children who become adopted, this can result in a permanent separation of the siblings.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 13 was applicable for 32 (80 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: (1) TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child's life (or parents were deceased), or (2) visitation with a parent was considered to not be in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine (1)

whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings in foster care, and (2) whether these visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below:

<b>Item 13</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	11	5	6	22	<b>69</b>
Area Needing Improvement	4	4	2	10	<b>31</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>32</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	1	2	8	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

Performance on this item varied somewhat across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 75 percent of Pinal County cases and 73 percent of Maricopa County cases, compared to 56 percent of Pima County cases.

Item 13 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children, or when visitation did not meet the child’s needs, that the agency made concerted efforts to promote visitation. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the mother (5 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings (5 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father (5 cases).

Specific information about visitation frequency is provided in the table below. As shown in the table, children were more likely to have visits with their mothers than they were with their siblings and fathers.

<b>Visitation Frequency</b>	<b>Mother and Child</b>	<b>Father and Child</b>	<b>Siblings</b>
At least once a week	10 (33%)	5 (25%)	5 (36%)
Less than once a week, but at least twice a month	8 (27%)	1 (5%)	1 (7%)
Less than twice a month, but at least once a month	2 (7%)	1 (5%)	2 (14%)
Less than once a month	4 (13%)	4 (20%)	3 (21%)
Never (no visits during the period under review)	6 (20%)	9 (45%)	3 (21%)
<b>Total Applicable cases</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>

### **Rating Determination**

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 69 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the child and family. This percent is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that frequent visitation between parents and their children in foster care is taking place, although some concerns were noted regarding the quality of the visitation locations. While some stakeholders expressed the opinion that mothers and fathers visit with the same frequency, other stakeholders suggested that fathers may have less contact with their children and that this may be frustrating for them.

A few stakeholders reported that for older youth, particularly youth in group homes, visitation with parents may be used as a discipline technique and denial of visitation with parents becomes a form of punishment for a youth's improper behavior.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, case plans for children in out-of-home care are to include a contact and visitation plan that is developed with involvement of family members and the child, if age appropriate; or the plan must include documentation as to why contact and visitation is detrimental to the child's health and safety. Frequency, duration, location, and structure of contact and visits are to be determined based primarily upon the child's need for safety and family contact, with safety being the paramount concern. The Statewide Assessment reports that State policy identifies factors to consider when developing the contact and visitation plan, such as the child's chronological and developmental age, the child's and family's requests for and reaction to visits, and the family's and child's work and school schedules. The Statewide Assessment reports that the Division is expected to strive for weekly contact between the child and his or her parents and siblings placed separately.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, during the PICR, the percentage of applicable cases rated as a Strength on visitation between the child and his or her mother, father, and siblings was 61 percent in the quarter ending June 2004, 54 percent in 2005, and 58 percent in 2006. Cases were most frequently rated area needing improvement due to lack of adequate contact between siblings placed separately. For example, 13 of the 25 adoption cases with siblings placed separately were rated as needing improvement due to lack of sufficient sibling contact.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that during focus groups, youth were asked about their experiences regarding visitation and contact with their mothers, fathers, and siblings. More than half of the youth reported that they were not satisfied with the frequency of contact with their father, and slightly less than half were not satisfied with the frequency of contact with their mother and siblings. The Statewide Assessment indicates that comments from youth were mixed. Many youth reported they have routine in-person and telephone contact with their parents and/or siblings, that their foster parents and CPS Specialists are making efforts to support contact (such as allowing the mother to come to the foster home), and that the CPS Specialist made efforts to locate missing parents. Some

youth stated they contact with their family was offered to them, but that they did not want contact. Other youth reported they would like more contact with their parents and that they “sneaked” to visit or call their parents after being told visits could not occur. Youth suggested that they should have more say about visitation and contact with family. According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworker turnover and inconsistent practice among CPS Specialists were noted by some youth as creating barriers to their visits with family members.

**Item 14. Preserving connections**

\_\_\_ Strength      X Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 14 was applicable for 37 (92.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child's connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment are provided in the table below.

<b>Item 14</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	15	7	9	31	<b>84</b>
Area Needing Improvement	3	2	1	6	<b>16</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>37</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	1	0	3	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

Performance on this item varied only slightly across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of Pinal County cases and 83 percent of Maricopa County cases, compared to 78 percent of Pima County cases.

Item 14 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members (e.g., through phone contact and visits) (27 cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the child’s religious or cultural heritage (4 cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the school and community (e.g., selecting placements that do not require a change of school, jobs, friends, etc.) (14 cases).

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

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to extended family (three cases).

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the child’s religious or cultural heritage (three cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections to school or community (four cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. In 84 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections with extended family, culture, religion, community and school. This is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in Arizona’s 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the issue of agency compliance with ICWA and its relevance to preserving connections for Native American children in foster care. Several of these stakeholders noted that an external evaluator has assessed the agency’s compliance with ICWA and that the report indicated that there are procedures and processes in place to ensure compliance. Other stakeholders said that compliance with ICWA varies across locations in the State and is better in some areas than in others. Still other stakeholders reported that in some locations, DCYF is more likely to meet ICWA requirements with one Tribe than it is with another Tribe.

Some stakeholders commenting on this item also addressed the issue of connections to school and friends. These stakeholders noted that most children who go into foster care have to change schools at the time of placement, but that the agency is working on accessing transportation to permit children to attend their home school after they are placed in foster care. Other stakeholders reported that sometimes moving children away from their schools and neighborhoods can be a good thing because it gives them an opportunity to start over and keeps them away from potentially negative influences.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF must seek to place a child who requires out-of-home care within the child’s own school district and with caregivers who can communicate in the child’s language, among other requirements. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the DCYF policy manual includes a full chapter on serving Native American children and their families. This policy was written in consultation with Tribal social service representatives and their attorneys and covers all phases of child welfare cases, from identification of a child as a Native American child to adoption and independent living services. The policy requires identification of any child as a Native American child within 5 days of case opening. Every parent is to be asked during initial contact whether they have Native American heritage. Available family information is collected from parents, children, and family members. The child’s Native American community and other relevant information are provided to the appropriate Tribe for confirmation of eligibility for Tribal membership. ICWA placement preferences are explored with the parent, extended family, and the child’s Tribe prior to deviating from a preferential placement. The child’s Tribe is given every opportunity to participate in case planning, case staffing, Foster Care Review Board Hearings, and court hearings.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the results of the State's PICR were that in 65 percent of cases reviewed in 2005 and 77 percent of cases reviewed in 2006, documentation indicated that the family was asked about possible Native American heritage. In other cases the record indicated that the child was not Native American, but documentation did not clearly indicate that this information was provided by the family.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that a comprehensive evaluation of Arizona's compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act was completed in 2003. Some of the many findings included the following:

- Eighty percent of Tribal workers indicated that State workers maintained regular contact with the Tribe regarding membership.
- Timeframes for initial court hearings are problematic because they do not provide sufficient time to notify Tribes and determine Tribal affiliation prior to the initial hearing (which is generally held within 5 to 7 days of removal).
- In the majority of cases, the child's Indian status, along with the name and Tribal affiliation of the mother (97 percent) and father (82 percent) were identified.
- Almost all cases (92 percent) contained documentation of the State's initial inquiry to the Tribe regarding the child's tribal membership, and most cases (85 percent) also included documentation of the Tribe's response to this initial inquiry.
- Request for transfer of jurisdiction was only initiated by a Tribe in two cases. One major issue concerning transfer of jurisdiction appears to be a matter of resources, both in terms of service provision and placement options. However, Tribes intervened in all cases. The Tribe formally intervened in half of the cases and became an interested party in the other half.
- The child's race/ethnicity and potential Tribal affiliation was immediately identified in most emergency removals (88 percent).
- Demonstration of active efforts to prevent breakup was documented in most cases (94 percent of involuntary foster care cases and 95 percent of TPR cases).
- Documentation in the files revealed that most of the children (92 percent) were placed in the least restrictive setting available and were placed within reasonable proximity of their permanency homes (83 percent).

### **Item 15. Relative placement**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### **Case Review Findings**

Item 15 was applicable for 33 (82.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because: (1) the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or (2) the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives (both maternal and paternal relatives) as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 15</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	12	5	7	24	<b>73</b>
Area Needing Improvement	4	4	1	9	<b>27</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>33</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	4	1	2	7	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

Performance on this measure varied somewhat across sites. Only 56 percent of the cases in Pima County were rated as a Strength for this item, compared to 87.5 percent of Pinal County cases and 75 percent of Maricopa County cases.

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

- The child was placed with relatives (15 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives (9 cases). In these cases, children were not placed with relatives either because a relative could not be found or because the relatives who were located were unable or unwilling to care for the children, lived too far from the parents, and/or had a criminal record or history of substantiated child maltreatment.

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (8 out of 18 applicable cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (7 out of 16 applicable cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 73 percent of cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders in Pima and Pinal Counties expressed high praise for agency efforts to seek relatives as placement resources. They noted that the agency has access to a relative locator and that caseworkers always ask children if they have friends or relatives who are important to them. They also noted that TDM meetings have greatly improved the process of finding appropriate relative placements for children.

However, stakeholders also noted that more services are needed for the relatives who are caring for the children, particularly those who do not become licensed foster parents (i.e., kinship foster caregivers).

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that DCYF identify and assess adult relatives or adults with whom the child has a significant relationship to meet the placement needs of the child in out-of-home care. These caregivers are referred to as “kinship foster caregivers.” Identification of potential kinship foster caregivers is to begin at the time of initial assessment or investigation, when the CPS Specialist inquires about relatives or significant persons who might be willing and able to care for the child. The Statewide Assessment reports that when a child in out-of-home care is not placed with an extended family member, or is placed with an extended family member who is unable or unwilling to provide a permanent placement for the child, the CPS Specialist is required to initiate searches for extended family members or other significant persons prior to key decision points during the case and no less than once every 6 months. If current contact information about certain relatives is unavailable, the CPS Specialist can access a professional search by a contracted agency.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, kinship foster care providers are encouraged to apply for foster parent licensing, which enables the kin to receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin licensed foster parents. However, kinship foster care providers are not required to be licensed foster parents for children in the care and custody of DCYF; however, should they choose to apply for licensure, kin must meet the same licensing standards as non-kin foster parents.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, data from the *Child Welfare Reporting Requirements Semi-Annual Report* indicate that 35 percent of children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2005; March 30, 2006; and September 30, 2006 were placed with a relative. Many other families are served voluntarily while the children temporarily resided with relatives, preventing removal and dependency. These children are not included in the above statistic. Kinship care was identified as a Strength in 90 percent of cases reviewed during the PICR in 2005, and 86 percent of cases reviewed in 2006. In cases rated as a Strength the child was placed with a relative, or the record contained documentation of search for both maternal and paternal relatives. In many cases rated as needing improvement there was documented effort to identify and assess relatives, but it was not clear that a thorough search was conducted to locate *all* possible maternal and paternal relatives. In some such cases there was little effort to locate and contact a missing or incarcerated parent who had not been actively involved with the family prior to the child’s removal

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 16 was applicable for 31 (77.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if (1) parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child, or (2) a relationship with the parents was considered to be not in the child’s best interests throughout the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of this assessment are provided in the table below:

<b>Item 16</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	9	3	7	19	<b>61</b>
Area Needing Improvement	6	5	1	12	<b>39</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>31</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	2	2	9	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	

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

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father (9 out of 20 applicable cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother (8 out of 30 applicable cases).

Specific findings pertaining to this item were as follows:

<b>Efforts Made During the Period Under Review</b>	<b>With Mother</b>	<b>With Father</b>
• Encouraging the parent's participation in school or after school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events.	11	6
• Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events.	6	2
• Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations.	16	6
• Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them.	6	2
• Encourage and facilitate contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child.	5	2

### **Rating Determination**

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 61 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that there have been recent efforts on the part of the agency to focus more on involving parents in activities with the child other than formal visitation, such as attending dental appointments, medical appointments, school events, sports activities, etc. Stakeholders also noted that greater efforts are needed to provide services to build better relationships between parents and children in foster care, such as family counseling. In addition, stakeholders suggested that it would be helpful if the agency would work with foster parents to help them serve as mentors to biological parents.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, youth in foster care were asked in focus groups and interviews to describe their perception of DCYF's efforts to involve their parents in important events outside of visitation. Between 60 and 70 percent of youth reported that they were not satisfied with the extent to which their parents were invited to participate in events such as sports and faith-related activities. Youth were less satisfied with efforts to include fathers than efforts to include mothers.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that birth parents were asked to describe their level of contact with the foster parents caring for their children and their involvement in important events outside of visits, and to suggest methods for DCYF to support frequent and productive contact between birth and resource parents. Birth parents generally agreed that frequent contact should occur, but reported a wide range of experiences. One parent stated he had no contact with the foster parents, knew nothing about them, and was not informed of events in his child's life such as medical treatment appointments. A parent with a child in a group home stated she had contact with the group home staff whenever she chose and was fully involved in events in her child's life. Another parent reported she went to the foster home and was able to share her preferences for her child's care. Parents stated that communication with the foster parents is especially important while the child is transitioning back home, particularly in regard to discipline techniques and rules. Parents also felt they should have more input into choices about school, church, and other preferences. Parents recommended that resource families receive more education about substance abuse and addiction, and that parents receive instruction on how to communicate their needs and wishes.

In addition, as indicated in the Statewide Assessment, resource parents also were asked to describe the type and frequency of contact they have with birth parents and to suggest ways that DCYF could further support productive contact between resource parents and birth parents. Most resource parents indicated medium or high agreement with the statements that foster parents should have frequent contact with birth parents and that parents should be invited to attend important events in their children's lives. Many commented that the level of contact and involvement should be determined on a case-by-case basis, with particular attention to the child's wishes. Several resource parents stated they have contact with birth parents at visits and through frequent phone calls and letters. One resource parent stated she continues to have weekly contact with a reunified sibling group and provides ongoing support to the father.

### III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

#### Well Being Outcome 1

<b>Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the site according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved	12	7	8	27	<b>41.5</b>
Partially Achieved	10	4	9	23	<b>35.4</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	9	6	0	15	<b>23.1</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	0	0	0	0	

#### STATUS OF WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 41.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome did not vary across sites.

#### Key concerns from the 2001 CFSR

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome during its 2001 CFSR. For the 2001 CFSR, items 17, 18, and 20 were rated as Areas Needing Improvement; item 19 was rated as a Strength in that review although only 82 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength for the item.

Key concerns identified in the 2001 review were the following:

- There were inadequate assessments and services for children who were victims of sexual abuse.
- There was a lack of assessment of the needs of non-custodial fathers.
- There was a lack of sufficient mental health services and when the child and family were referred for services, services often were delayed or denied by the Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA).
- There was a lack of involvement of parents in case planning.
- There was a lack of involvement of age-appropriate children in case planning.
- In some cases, there were delays in revising case plans or case plans were not updated when the case goal changed.

- In some cases, there were delays of up to several months before cases were closed following termination of family preservation services and visits by the DCYF caseworkers was sporadic when family preservation services were being provided by a contracted agency.
- There was lack of caseworker visits with fathers, even when the fathers were involved in the child’s life.

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

- Increased the number of referrals of cases for Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) meetings.
- Provided supervision and training to improve the quality of case managers’ contacts with parents and children.
- Prepared and disseminated a *Family-Centered Interview and Documentation Guide* that includes questions case managers can ask of parents, children, and others to engage them in a comprehensive family-centered assessment.
- Provided training on the *Family-Centered Strengths and Risks Assessment Interview and Documentation Guide*.
- Expanded the use of mediation services in permanency planning in Maricopa and Yavapai Counties.

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

**Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR**

The case reviews in the 2007 CFSR resulted in the following findings:

- The agency was not consistent with regard to assessing and meeting the services needs of mothers, fathers, children and foster parents. Fathers were less likely than others to have needs assessed and met.
- The agency was not consistent with regard to involving mothers, fathers, and age-appropriate children in developing the case plan, with fathers being less likely to be involved than mothers or children.
- For the most part, the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children was not consistent across cases.
- There was a lack of caseworker visits with mothers and fathers, but particularly with fathers.

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

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 17 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had (1) adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents; and (2) provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of children’s (but not parents’) needs pertaining to educational, physical health, and mental health needs. These are addressed in later items. The case review results were the following:

<b>Item 17</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	13	8	9	30	<b>46</b>
Area Needing Improvement	18	9	8	35	<b>54</b>
Not applicable	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

There were no substantive differences in performance on this item across sites or across type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services).

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

Specific case review findings for item 17 are shown in the table below. The data in the table suggest that the agency was considerably less effective in assessing and meeting service needs for fathers than it was for children, foster parents, and mothers.

<b>Item 17: Table of Needs Assessment and Services</b>	<b>Results</b>		<b>No. of Applicable Cases</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
Mother's needs assessed and met?	15 (27%)	40 (73%)	55
Father's needs assessed and met?	25 (58%)	18 (42%)	43
Foster parent's needs assessed and met?	7 (25%)	21 (75%)	28
Child's needs assessed and met?	18 (28%)	47 (72%)	65

### **Rating Determination**

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 46 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the State had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children and parents. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR. A key concern was that fathers' needs were not assessed and/or met in 58 percent of the applicable cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the issue of absent fathers and the difficulty of finding fathers to assess and meet their needs. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that DCYF is conducting diligent searches for absent parents (usually fathers), but a few stakeholders noted that this varies across caseworkers and not all caseworkers are consistent in this effort.

Stakeholders suggested that the TDM meetings, when they are fully implemented, will provide a more comprehensive look at everyone's needs and help the agency determine how best to meet those needs.

Pinal County stakeholders expressed the opinion that all youth who need independent living services receive the services (except those who are on runaway status), although more emphasis is needed on getting services to children at younger ages, such as 13 or 14 years, instead of 16, 17, and 18 years. A few Maricopa County stakeholders indicated that there is a long wait for independent living services in that county.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the percentage of cases rated as a Strength during the PICR on needs and services of children, parents, and foster parents was 68 percent in 2005 and 67 percent in 2006. In 2006, 75 percent of out-of-home cases were rated as a Strength compared to 58 percent of in-home cases. Some in-home cases were rated as needing improvement because there was no comprehensive assessment of all risk domains in the SRA following a report for investigation received during the period under review, or more comprehensive reassessment of safety and risk was needed after completion of in-home services and prior to case closure. Assessments in out-of-home care cases often included a full array of formal assessments, including Child Safety Assessment, Strengths and Risks Assessment, substance abuse assessment, and psychological evaluation. Out-of-home cases were sometimes rated as needing improvement due to lack of sufficient and continual efforts to locate and maintain contact with a missing or incarcerated parent.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 18 was applicable for 59 (91 percent) of the 65 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were not involved with the child in any way **and** the child was too young or had cognitive delays or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (if age-appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process, and if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child's best interest. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child had actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. This assessment produced the following findings:

<b>Item 18</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	12	7	12	31	<b>52</b>
Area Needing Improvement	15	9	4	28	<b>48</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	4	1	1	6	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

There was some variation in performance on this item across the sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 75 percent of Pinal County cases, compared to 44 percent of Maricopa County and Pima County cases. There was no substantive difference in performance on this item as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services).

Item 18 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process. Key findings with regard to this item are presented in the table below. The data indicate that for the cases reviewed, fathers were less likely to be involved in case planning than either mothers or age-appropriate children. In addition, children were slightly less likely to be involved in case planning than were mothers.

<b>Item 18: Table of Involvement in Case Planning</b>	<b>Evaluation Results</b>		<b>No. of Applicable Cases</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
Mother involved in case planning?	14 (25%)	41 (75%)	55
Father involved in case planning?	22 (56%)	17 (44%)	39
Child (if age-appropriate) involved in case planning?	11 (31%)	24 (69%)	35

### **Rating Determination**

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 52 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Arizona's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that parents and children are involved in case planning and that this is facilitated by TDM meetings, Family Team Meetings, CFT meetings, and Family Group Decision Making. However, several of

these stakeholders also noted that the agency is not consistent in involving non-custodial parents. Additional stakeholder comments regarding involvement of parents in the case planning process are provided in the Systemic Factors section under item 25.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF policy requires that the case plan be developed with input from family and service team members, and be based on a comprehensive assessment of the needs of parents, children, and out-of-home care providers. Parents and children age 12 or older are encouraged to attend case plan staffings, CFT meetings, court hearings, and FCRB reviews to provide ongoing input into their case plans.

The Statewide Assessment notes that different Districts in the State have developed various methods to encourage parent and child involvement in case plan development while meeting State case planning requirements. Examples include Family Group Decision Making meetings (available Statewide) and the Permanency Mediation project (in Yavapai County). District 1 has fully implemented Team Decision Making for all child removals and potential child removals, and is expanding this activity to occur prior to placement changes and reunifications. Parents and youth are actively encouraged and supported to attend and participate in these meetings.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the PICR rated 52 percent of the cases reviewed for this item as a Strength in 2005 and 56 percent in 2006. The data indicate that the participants most likely to be involved in case planning were mothers in the in-home services cases (79 percent), and youth in out-of-home cases (73 percent). Participants who were least likely to be involved in case planning were children in the in-home services cases (56 percent) and mothers in the out-of-home cases (52 percent).

The Statewide Assessment also notes that youth were asked during focus groups to discuss their involvement in case planning. Most youth reported that they are able to attend court hearings and case plan staffings when they choose, but fewer reported that they are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about the decisions affecting them. Some youth reported that they were involved in case plan development, invited to court hearings, received a copy of the case plan, and felt included. Other youth said they had not seen their case plan and did not have sufficient information about their family, case decisions, or their own future. Some youth reported they felt they could speak and be heard at court, during CFT meetings, and at FCRB reviews. Other youth reported that the CPS Specialist spoke for them or the team did not want to hear what the youth had to say.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, birth parents also were asked to discuss their involvement in case planning. The majority of parents report they are invited to court (80 percent) and FCRB (90 percent) hearings most or all of the time, and that they attend these hearings. Only 50 percent of parents reported that they are given the opportunity to speak in court, while 90 percent reported they have an opportunity to speak in FCRB hearings. Two-thirds of the biological parents reported that they are invited to attend CFT meetings, that they attend these meetings, and that they have an opportunity to speak. Some parents reported they were fully involved in decisions, were provided a copy of the case plan, and were given opportunities to discuss the plan at CFT and TDM meetings. Other parents stated that the plan was written without their input and presented to them, but some of these parents indicated they were in agreement with those services and did not ask to change the plan. Parents recommended that case plan staffings should be held in

safe and comfortable settings, not at court; that parents should have more input into plans so that they are individualized and do not include unnecessary services; that case plans need to be updated more frequently; and that clear timeframes should be provided so parents do not become discouraged.

**Item 19. Worker visits with child**

\_\_\_ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 19 was applicable for all 65 foster care cases. In conducting the assessment of this item, reviewers were to determine whether the frequency of visits between the caseworkers and children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's safety and well-being and whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. The results of the assessment are presented in the table below:

<b>Item 19</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	18	10	15	43	<b>66</b>
Area Needing Improvement	13	7	2	22	<b>34</b>
Not applicable	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of Pinal County cases compared to 59 percent of Pima County cases and 58 percent of Maricopa County cases. Performance also differed across type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 75 percent of the foster care cases compared to 52 percent of the in-home services cases.

Item 19 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's safety and well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child and the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (13 cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits with children was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur, they were substantive (1 case).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (8 cases).

Specific information on the frequency of visitation is presented in the table below.

<b>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits with Child During the Period Under Review</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)</b>	<b>In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)</b>
Visits occurred on at least a weekly basis	3 (7.5%)	8 (32%)
Visits occurred less than weekly, but at least twice a month	7 (17.5%)	3 (12%)
Visits occurred less than twice a month, but at least once a month	22 (55%)	6 (24%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (17.5%)	5 (20%)
There were no visits during the period under review	1 (2.5%)	3 (12%)
<b>Total cases</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>

An additional finding was that in 44 percent of the 25 in-home services cases, reviewers indicated that the quality of the visits were not sufficient to meet the child’s needs. In comparison, quality of visits was a concern in only 25 percent of the foster care cases.

**Rating Determination**

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 66 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and/or quality. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength, although it is very close. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that children in foster care and in the in-home cases generally are visited on at least a monthly basis. However, other stakeholders noted that monthly contacts do not happen consistently. They noted that some youth in foster care report that they rarely see their caseworkers and some foster parents report that the child’s caseworker does not visit for months. Stakeholders suggested that both frequency and quality vary with the caseworker.

Some agency stakeholders suggested that key barriers to consistent visitation are caseload size and geography, particular for visits to children in foster care. Several stakeholders suggested that caseworker contacts with children are likely to be more frequent and more consistent in the in-home services case than in the foster care cases because “these are the children we worry about.”

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, in-person caseworker contacts generally are held monthly with children in out-of-home care and those served in-home. At least one visit in every 3-month period is to be conducted by the CPS Specialist with the child and the caregiver in the caregiver’s home. CPS Specialists are to consult with the out-of-home caregiver, the child (if verbal), and other service team members as appropriate to determine if the child and/or caregiver requires more frequent face-to-face contact and/or telephone contact between face-to-face contacts.

State policy does allow rare and limited exceptions to monthly face-to-face contact by the assigned case manager, with supervisory approval and based on an assessment of the needs of the child, parent, and/or out-of-home care provider. The State policy manual includes a Decision Making Guide for determining if an exception substituting face-to-face contact by another professional for face-to-face contact by the CPS Specialist is appropriate.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, at times, circumstances prevent the assigned CPS Specialist from seeing a child or parent. The PICR instrument identifies justifications for lack of contact in a given month. The following apply to child contacts and similar justifications are identified in relation to parent contacts:

- The child was on runaway status throughout the month or during the last week of the month.
- The child was out-of-state (on vacation or a visit) throughout the month.
- The assigned CPS Specialist (CPSS) was on medical or other leave for at least 2 weeks during the month and another case manager made in-person contact in his/her absence.
- The CPSS made at least one attempt to have in-person contact with the child during the month but the child was not available for a scheduled appointment or actively avoided contact with the CPS Specialist;
- The CPSS attempted to arrange in-person contact with the child during the month but the out-of-home care provider or the child requested the CPSS schedule the contact the following month due to illness or other conflict.
- The child is placed in another State and a caseworker from the receiving State visits with the child in the placement on a schedule that is consistent with the child's needs and no less frequently than required by the ICPC.

In addition to the frequency of contact, State policy provides guidance on contact content. State policy directs that the CPS Specialist shall assess the following during contacts with children and care caregivers:

- The child's safety;
- The child's and the caregiver's adjustments to each other;
- The ability of the placement to meet the child's needs;
- The safety of the physical home environment;
- The developmental progress of the child;
- The child's educational, physical health, and emotional and behavioral health status and needs;
- The appropriateness and adequacy of services and supports provided the child; and
- The appropriateness and adequacy of services and supports provided the caregiver to maintain the caregiver's ability to care for the child.

The majority of children in out-of-home care and those served in-home receive monthly in-person contact from the assigned CPSS. Within the past year the State has achieved significant improvement in the frequency of in-person contact with children and parents. Current performance data includes the following:

- The State's *Child Welfare Reporting Requirements Semi-Annual Report* indicates that the percentage of children in foster care on the last day of the month that received a documented in-person contact during the month has maintained been between 61 percent and 68 percent since the period ending September 2003. Sixty-five percent of children in care on the last day of March 2006 and September 2006 had a documented in-person contact.
- The percentage of cases rated strength during the PICR on CPSS contact with the child has remained relatively stable statewide. This percentage was 56 percent in the quarter ending June 2004, 60 percent in 2005, and 58 percent in 2006. These data are the result of an assessment of both the frequency and quality of in-person and other contacts. Out-of-home cases were more likely to be rated as a Strength on CPSS contact with children than were in-home services cases.
- Data retrieved from the Division's Business Intelligence Dashboard on April 21, 2007 show performance on the following measure: Of all children who were in out-of-home care during the month and whose most recent placement was *not* out-of-State, in-home, parent/guardian, or runaway, what percentage had a documented in-person contact during the month? Statewide, performance improved from 70.25 percent in February 2006 to 80.27 percent in January 2007.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that youth were asked during focus groups to share their thoughts about contacts with their CPSS. About 90 percent of the youth indicated medium to high agreement with the statement that they have had monthly contact with their CPSS over the past 12 months, while 10 percent of youth expressed low agreement with this statement. As in other areas, the comments of youth were mixed, suggesting inconsistency in the quality of service provided by CPSS. Many youth reported that they have frequent contact with their CPSS, that calls were returned promptly, and that the CPSS provided advice about school and college, obtained requested resources, and was a good listener. Some youth were highly complimentary of their CPSS. Other youth reported that they did not have sufficient contact with their CPS Specialists, telephone calls were not returned promptly, and the CPSS did not follow through on tasks in a timely manner. Some youth reported that their CPSS did not have answers to the youth's questions or made decisions without consulting the youth. Youth reported that CPSS are helpful when they keep youth informed about appointments, help to get things the youth need (clothes, documents, and college scholarships), and set up visits. Youth reported that CPSS could be more helpful by being more like a parent (setting rules, checking on school, etc.), setting up more visits, listening more, and providing more information about the youth's family and decisions that affect the youth.

**Item 20. Worker visits with parents**

\_\_\_ Strength  Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 20 was applicable for 54 (83 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of the children. All cases that were not applicable were foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker's face-to-face contact with the children's mothers

and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and/or ensure the children's safety and well being. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

<b>Item 20</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	9	6	8	23	<b>43</b>
Area Needing Improvement	17	8	6	31	<b>57</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>54</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	5	3	3	11	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

Although performance on this item was very low in all sites, there was some variation. The item was rated as a Strength in 57 percent of Pinal County cases, compared to 43 percent of Pima County cases and only 35 percent of Maricopa County cases. Performance did not vary by type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 45 percent of the foster care cases and 40 percent of the in-home services cases.

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

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency or quality (11 cases).
- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency, although when they did occur they were of sufficient quality (3 cases).
- Visits with the mother were of sufficient frequency, but not quality (6 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency or quality (22 cases).
- Visits with the father were of sufficient frequency but not quality (1 case)
- There were no visits with father (16 cases).
- There were no visits with mother (5 cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided below. These data indicate that caseworkers are more likely to visit with mothers at least once a month (66 percent of applicable cases) than they were to visit fathers at least once a month (38 percent of applicable cases).

<b>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits with Parents</b>	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Father</b>
Visits occurred at least weekly	9 (17%)	3 (7%)
Visits occurred less than weekly, but at least twice a month	11 (21%)	5 (12%)
Visits occurred less than twice a month, but at least once a month	15 (28%)	8 (19%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	13 (25%)	11 (26%)
There were no visits during the period under review	5 (9%)	16 (37%)
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>43</b>

### **Rating Determination**

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 43 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there is more caseworker contact with parents in the in-home cases than in the foster care cases. Several stakeholders reported that parents of children in foster care often do not want to meet with the caseworkers and are not willing to work with the agency. Some agency stakeholders also voiced concern that although visits are occurring, they are not routinely documented in the case file. Agency stakeholders also said that in-home services cases often may not involve visits to fathers.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy directs the CPSS to have face-to-face contact with all parents at least once a month when the case plan goal is family reunification or remain with family. Contacts must include any alleged parents, parents residing outside of the child’s home, and incarcerated parents. The Statewide Assessment notes that exceptions to monthly face-to-face contact may be made on a case-by-case basis, depending on the unique circumstances of the family. For example, monthly in-person contact is not expected with parents who reside out-of-State or those who are incarcerated in another county. Whenever an exception to monthly in-person contact is granted, the CPSS is to have telephone or written correspondence with the parent a minimum of once every 3 months.

The Statewide Assessment reports that if the child’s permanency goal is not family reunification or remain with family, the CPSS consults with the CPS Supervisor to develop a plan for contact with parents whose rights have not been terminated and whose whereabouts are known. The CPSS is to have telephone or written correspondence with these parents a minimum of once every 3 months. The Statewide Assessment also reports that agency policy requires that an extensive search for absent parents occur prior to key decision points in the case and at least every 6 months. Key decision points include filing of a dependency petition prior to case plan staffings, prior to pre-adoptive placement, and others. Efforts to locate the absent parent may include mailing a certified letter or

making a visit to the last known address, or placing a telephone call to the last known telephone number. If these efforts are unsuccessful and identifying information on the parent is known, the CPSS is to use the Arizona Parent Locator Service, through the Division of Child Support Enforcement, to conduct a search for the parent.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, data retrieved from the Division’s Business Intelligence Dashboard on April 23, 2007 shows a trend toward improvement in the percentage of parents receiving in-person contact. This data shows performance on the following measure: Of all children in out-of-home care during the month who had a goal of family reunification, what percentage had at least one parent with whom in-person contact was documented during the month? Statewide, performance on this measure improved from 50.7 percent in February 2006, to 61.8 percent in January 2007.

The Statewide Assessment reports that birth parents were asked about the quality of contacts and support from the CPSS. In a very small sample of parents completing a survey, more than half indicated they do not see the CPSS monthly. Birth parents reported CPSSs are most helpful when they listen to the parents rather than dictate to them; are respectful, professional and encouraging, not belittling; share all information; return phone calls; keep parents informed about appointments and contact information for service providers and others; and provide services such as child care, housing assistance, food vouchers, and timely referrals to mental health services. Birth parents suggested that some CPSSs need more training on special needs children and on addiction. Some parents also wanted more services to address family system issues, rather than individual counseling.

## Well-Being Outcome 2

<b>Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	17	8	9	34	<b>77.3</b>
Partially Achieved	1	0	1	2	<b>4.5</b>
Not Achieved	3	2	3	8	<b>18.2</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>44</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	10	7	4	21	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

### STATUS OF WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. Reviewers determined that 77.3 percent of the cases reviewed substantially achieved this outcome. This is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. There were no substantive differences in performance on this outcome across sites. However, there was considerable variation in

performance by type of case. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 90 percent of the applicable foster care cases, compared to 46 percent of the applicable in-home services cases.

**Key Concerns of the 2001 CFSR**

Arizona was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in the 2001 CFSR. Key concerns identified during the 2001 CFSR were:

- For children in foster care, there were frequent changes in school settings due to disruptions in placements.
- There was a lack of consistency with regard to educational assessments and addressing educational needs in the service plan.
- There was a lack of consistency with regard to the agency caseworker advocating to ensure that the child’s educational needs were met.
- For many of the in-home cases, the children’s identified educational needs were not addressed by the agency.

To address these concerns, the State developed the following strategies in their PIP:

- Reduced the number of school changes due to placement changes.
- Revised State policy and procedures for educational services for children in out-of-home care.

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

**Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR**

The 2007 CFSR case reviews found a lack of consistent assessment of educational needs and a lack of follow up services to meet needs when they were identified in an assessment.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 21 was applicable for 54 (83 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if any of the following applied: (1) children were not of school age; or (2) children in in-home cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs. The results of this assessment are provided below.

<b>Item 21</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	17	8	9	34	77
Area Needing Improvement	4	2	4	10	23
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>54</b>	
Not applicable	10	7	4	21	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

Item 21 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three foster care cases and seven in-home services cases when case reviewers determined the following:

- There was a lack of assessment of educational needs even when there was clear evidence that the child was experiencing school-related problems (five cases, one of which was a foster care case).
- Educational needs were identified and noted in the case record, but no services were provided to address those needs and educational issues were not included in the case plan (five cases, two of which were foster care cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 77 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percent is less than the 95 percent required for this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95 percent standard is set for this item because it is the only item assessed for the outcome.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there have been recent improvements in the relationship between the school systems and DCYF, mostly as a result of the Casey Family Services initiative. They also noted that the agency is working with the schools to address the transportation issue and to provide transportation services to children in foster care in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act (this refers to the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act). Stakeholders also expressed the opinion that the agency makes concerted efforts to ensure that youth who turn 18 while in foster care have opportunities for post high school education.

There were differences in perspectives regarding this issue across counties. Several Maricopa county stakeholders, for example, expressed concern about the lack of caseworker involvement and interest in the child’s educational issues. Some stakeholders in this county also expressed concern that the agency leaves it up to the school to assess and manage educational needs and expects the foster parents to advocate for the child with the schools without support from the agency. Pima County stakeholders, however, noted that there have been recent positive changes in the county, including an education committee, an educational liaison funded through Casey Family Program money who works on educational goals, and an education-related checklist used by judges in reviewing cases.

However, stakeholders in this county also reported that special education testing and services are difficult to get and that there are extensive delays in the testing process.

Pinal County stakeholders expressed the opinion that DCYF makes concerted efforts to coordinate with the school system. However, stakeholders in this county reported that the school district does not follow through with the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process and that the agency is not attempting to address that problem.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that the Division collaborate with out-of-home care providers and schools to ensure that children are provided services to help achieve their educational potential. Every child in out-of-home care is to have an individualized Out-of-Home-Care plan that: (1) specifies the child's educational status; (2) identifies services provided to the child or out-of-home caregiver to address the child's educational needs; and (3) indicates whether the child is attending the home school district. The Statewide Assessment reports that CPSS coordinate with parents, school officials, teachers, out-of-home care providers, and others to monitor each child's educational needs and plan, and modify services as necessary. The Statewide Assessment also reports that CPSS frequently advocate for services through sister agencies such as the Department of Education and the Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, 84 percent of cases were rated as a Strength for this item during the PICR held in the quarter ending June 2004, 91 percent were rated as a Strength in CY 2005, and 91percent in 2006. Cases are rated as a Strength if the child is succeeding academically and either is receiving services to meet his or her educational needs, or the Division has adequately advocated for services to meet the child's educational needs. Case reviews found that out-of-home caregivers generally take a lead role in communication with the school and in the day-to-day monitoring of the child's school performance. According to the Statewide Assessment, this item was rarely found to be applicable in in-home cases reviewed during the PICR.

**Well-Being Outcome 3**

<b>Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement</b>					
	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	19	10	10	39	<b>62.9</b>
Partially Achieved	3	5	3	11	<b>17.7</b>
Not Achieved or Addressed	6	2	4	12	<b>19.4</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>62</b>	
Not Applicable	3	0	0	3	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

### **STATUS OF WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3**

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 62.9 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome did not vary substantively across sites or based on the type of case.

#### **Key Concerns from the 2001 CFSR**

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its. In the 2001 CFSR, item 22, pertaining to the physical health of the child, and item 23 pertaining to the mental health of the child, were both rated as an Area Needing Improvement. The key concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR were the following:

- There were cases in which foster parents were not provided with the medical and/or dental history of the children in their care.
- There were cases that lacked adequate, up-to-date medical information in case records.
- There were cases in which the agency had not completed the initial medical assessment as required by State policy.
- In some cases in the non-urban counties, children were not receiving necessary medical, dental and mental health services.
- For the in-home services cases, there was little follow-up or monitoring of children's physical or mental health service needs.
- In cases involving allegations of sexual abuse, physical examinations were not performed on the children to substantiate abuse issues and mental health treatment was lacking.

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

- Improved the availability of transportation services for children to access health care providers in rural areas.
- Increased case manager and caregiver access to medical and dental history information by using an electronic transfer of information system.
- Provided training to supervisors and case managers regarding the process of referring children for mental health assessments and ensuring that mental health assessments are received.
- Developed a standardized response procedure to be used when there is an allegation of sexual abuse between children in an out-of-home care placement.
- Improved mental health service planning and provision for children with higher or more complex needs.
- Increased access to child specific title XIX mental health services by revising title XIX/behavioral health policy and procedures and training some supervisors and case managers and notifying all staff in writing of the changes.
- Increased access to mental health services to support placement stability by developing a 24 hour urgent response policy that requires the CPS case manager to make a referral to the Regional Behavioral Health Association when a child is removed from a placement or a placement disrupts.

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

### Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

The results of the case reviews during the 2007 CFSR indicate a lack of consistency on the part of DCYF with regard to meeting children’s physical and mental health needs.

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

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 52 (80 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether (1) children's physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and (2) the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 22	Maricopa	Pima	Pinal	Total N	Percent
Strength	17	11	11	39	75
Area Needing Improvement	7	2	4	13	25
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>52</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	7	4	2	13	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

Performance on this item varied slightly across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of Pima County cases, 73 percent of Pinal County cases, and 71 percent of Maricopa County cases. Performance did not vary as a function of type of case.

Item 22 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children's health needs (medical and dental) were routinely assessed and services provided as needed. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- There was no indication in the case record of any medical assessments or services (two cases).
- Dental care services were not provided (four cases).
- There were no ongoing assessments of physical or dental health during the period under review (four cases).
- Medical needs were assessed and identified, but no services were provided (three cases).

Seven of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for this item were foster care cases and six were in-home services cases.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was adequately addressing the health needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases. This percent does not meet the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR praised DCYF's physical health care services for children through the Comprehensive Medical and Dental Health Program (CMDP). They noted that most services provided through this system are readily available and easily accessed. However, stakeholders reported that the service is available only to foster care children. Children in the in-home cases are not eligible for services from CMDP.

Several stakeholders indicated that the physical health care services for children who are not in foster care are not always easy to access, particularly in rural areas. Pinal County stakeholders, for example, reported that one section of the county is without any health care services.

Several stakeholders noted that the agency tends to leave the task of meeting physical health (including dental) needs to the foster parents. They are expected to make the doctor's appointments, attend them with the child, and advocate for the child to ensure that physical health needs are met. A few stakeholders suggested that whether or not a child's physical health needs are met depends to a large extent on whether the foster parent "stays on top of" the situation. Some stakeholders reported that it can be difficult to get relative caregivers to take the child to the doctor routinely and to ensure that all routine medical visits are made.

A few stakeholders expressed concern about the practice of attending physicians giving children and youth birth control and psychotropic medications without the knowledge or approval of the caseworker. Other stakeholders expressed concern about the lack of monitoring of children who are prescribed psychotropic medications.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, meeting the health care needs of foster children is a responsibility shared among parents, case managers, out-of-home care providers, and medical providers. The majority of children in Arizona's foster care system receive health care coverage through the CMDP. CMDP provides full coverage of medical and dental care to each child placed in out-of-home care by the Division, the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, or the Arizona Office of the Courts/Juvenile Probation Offices. CMDP serves eligible foster children placed in Arizona, as well as those placed out of State.

The Statewide Assessment reports that division policy requires all known information pertaining to a child's medical history be documented and provided to out-of-home care providers through a medical summary report generated in CHILDS. Data regarding medical treatment, certain diagnoses, immunizations and all other EPSDT services provided through CMDP is entered into each

child’s case record through an electronic interface, and is thus included in the medical summary report. The CPSS provides copies of medical records directly to the out-of-home caregivers or through a form summarizing significant medical, educational, and developmental history and status information.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, PICR data indicate that 84 percent of cases were rated as a Strength in this area in 2005 and 78 percent in 2006. The Statewide Assessment notes that these data may underestimate the actual percentage of children receiving the required services because complete documentation is not always available in the case record. In cases rated as needing improvement, preventive dental care was the service most likely to be missing or behind schedule.

**Item 23. Mental health of the child**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 23 was applicable for 50 (77 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs, or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether (1) mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and (2) appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below:

<b>Item 23</b>	<b>Maricopa</b>	<b>Pima</b>	<b>Pinal</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	17	10	9	36	<b>72</b>
Area Needing Improvement	4	5	5	14	<b>28</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>50</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	10	2	3	15	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65</b>	

There was some variation in performance on this item across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 81percent of applicable Maricopa County cases, compared to 67 percent of applicable Pima County cases and 64 percent of applicable Pinal County Cases. There was little variation in performance as a function of type of case.

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

Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were not assessed nor addressed (seven cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but not met (seven cases).

### **Ratings Determination**

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 72 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percent is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Arizona's 2001 CFSR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed concern about the lack of mental health services in some areas of the State and the delays in mental health assessments and services throughout the State. Many stakeholders said that it can take 60-90 days to schedule a psychological evaluation, and that even when assessments are done, there are either no services or delays in accessing services.

Stakeholders noted that there is an urgent behavioral health response in place, and that these are occurring and assessments are being produced. However, stakeholders reported that it is difficult to access the services that are recommended in the assessment, often taking months to get the services in place. Several stakeholders reported that psychotropic medications are being "pushed" in lieu of services.

Stakeholders did not comment on the status of mental health services for children in the in-home services cases. However they noted that the urgent response services available to foster care children are not available to children in the in-home services cases.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, meeting the behavioral health needs of foster children is a responsibility of DCYF and the Department of Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS). DBHS contracts with five RBHAs statewide for the delivery of behavioral health services for title XIX eligible clients.

State policy requires that all children entering foster care be referred to the local RBHA for a behavioral health assessment, known as the Urgent Response, to assess their placement needs within 24 hours of removal. Urgent Response includes face-to-face evaluation of the child and enrollment in behavioral health services, and is designed to be followed by a more in-depth behavioral health core assessment to be completed within 45 days. Additionally, the Urgent Response marks the beginning of the development of the CFT.

Arizona's PICR data indicate that, in both 2005 and 2006, 78 percent of cases were rated as a Strength in this area.

## SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the CFSR Final Report provides information regarding the State’s substantial conformity with the seven Systemic Factors examined during the CFSR. Information on the items included in each systemic factor comes from the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders conducted during the onsite CFSR. A score for substantial conformity is established for each systemic factor. Scores of 3 and 4 represent substantial conformity. Scores of either 1 or 2 mean that a State is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor. Information is provided regarding the State’s performance on each systemic factor for the State’s first CFSR. If the systemic factor was part of the State’s PIP, the key concerns addressed in the PIP and the strategies for assessing those concerns are noted, as well as any changes in ratings that occurred as a result of the State’s second CFSR.

### I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

<b>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</b>				
	<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>Substantial Conformity</b>	
Rating	1	2	3	4X

### STATUS OF STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The State also was in substantial conformity with this item during its first CFSR. Findings for the item assessed for this factor are presented below.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as a Strength because information on the status, demographic characteristics, location and goal for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediate preceding 12 month) in foster care is readily identified and retrievable from the State’s child welfare automated system. Although the CFSR does not evaluate whether the State’s automated system meets the Federal Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) functional requirements, the Statewide Assessment notes that in December 2006 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found the State’s automated system to be in compliance with all SACWIS requirements.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF caseworkers are required to use the CHILDS SACWIS to document the status, demographic characteristics, placement location, and goals for every child in foster care. CHILDS supports intake, investigation, case management, adoption, and eligibility staff, as well as provider management, payment, and personnel functions. The CHILDS system is available to DCYF staff in all local offices, with more than 2,000 registered users.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that various service providers and agencies have access to CHILDS for the purpose of entering or retrieving information commensurate with their needs. This includes the Office of the Attorney General, the Administrative Office of the Courts (particularly the Foster Care Review Board and the juvenile justice agency), and Tribal social service agencies with title IV-E agreements. The Statewide Assessment reports that CHILDS employs separate districts, units, and placement codes to differentiate between families served by the Division and those served by other State agency or Tribal entities.

Also indicated in the Statewide Assessment, CHILDS provides access to on-line help, on-line policy, numerous electronic forms, and an alert system to remind staff of upcoming case events. CHILDS also includes mechanisms to monitor and maintain data accuracy.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

All stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed the opinion that CHILDS has the capacity to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for all children in foster care. They noted that DCYF and other agencies responsible for entering data into the system have improved the accuracy, timeliness and efficiency of data entry over the past few years, and that within the agency, data quality is now part of a caseworkers' performance review. A few stakeholders said that DCYF has an agreement with the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, and the Administrative Office of the Courts (for title IV-E eligible youth under their placement and care responsibility) that permits them access to CHILDS to enter information on their children into the screens.

There also was consensus among stakeholders that CHILDS has the capacity to generate multiple reports and that these reports are useful for management purposes and promote continuous quality improvement at the case worker level. They indicated that for any child who has been entered into the system, case managers and supervisors can log into the system and get case specific information.

The following are additional positive features of CHILDS noted by stakeholders:

- CHILDS can be accessed by other agencies, including provider agencies, the courts, and the Attorney Generals office, and staff at those agencies can enter information into the system as appropriate.
- Staff have 24/7 access to the system.
- The agency recently implemented a “dashboard” component of the system that quickly provides supervisors with key administrative data reports that are updated weekly.
- There are alerts for missing data.

- There is remote access using a secure card so that caseworkers can access the system from home.
- The system can follow families who have relocated anywhere in the State.
- The system provides the history of a family over time so that cases involving the same family can be linked.
- The system provides information on whether a family is receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

A few stakeholders noted that although there are many aspects of the system designed to enhance data quality, there are still some concerns that not all caseworkers are entering data in a timely manner. They noted, however, that the data that are not entered in a timely manner pertain primarily to such things as documentation of contact and content of visits, and not to key information such as the child’s status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals.

**II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM**

<b>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</b>				
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>Substantial Conformity</b>	
	<b>1</b>	<b>2X</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

**STATUS OF CASE REVIEW SYSTEM**

Arizona is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Arizona was in substantial conformity with this factor during its 2001 CFSR and therefore did not address the factor in its PIP. Specific findings for each item included in this systemic factor and the reasons for item ratings are presented below.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has policy requiring that case plans be developed jointly with parents and youth, CFSR case review data indicate that for the cases reviewed, 56 percent of fathers, 31 percent of children, and 25 percent of mothers were not involved in case planning. This supports the perception of several stakeholders that the agency often

engages mothers in the case planning process, but is less effective in engaging fathers and youth. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State has policy and procedures to ensure that all children have a case plan that is developed jointly with the family and includes all required Federal components. The Statewide Assessment also notes that in the Practice Improvement Case Review process (the agency's quality assurance review), cases are rated as needing improvement on involvement of children and parents in case planning if there is no written case plan for the family. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, case reviewers rarely observe a case in which there is no written case plan recorded in CHILDS or contained in the in-home services case file.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following practices and procedures as promoting involvement of parents and youth in case planning.

- TDM meetings, which are held before or just after removal.
- CFT meetings, which are held at regular intervals for children receiving title XIX behavioral health services.
- Court hearings held within 1 week of removal and at least every 6 months thereafter.
- Family Group Decision Making meetings, as requested by the CPS Specialist.
- Foster Care Review Board hearings every 6 months for children in out-of-home care.
- Various mediation practices and case conferences.
- Contractual requirements for in-home service providers that families are to be involved in the case planning process.

The Statewide Assessment reports that timely development and reassessment of case plans and inclusion of all necessary components are supported by quality assurance and supervisory tools. It was noted that the CHILDS alert system provides case managers with an early reminder of the due dates for case plan reassessments and that supervisory case review forms, which include prompts to review the timeliness and content of case plans, are required quarterly on ongoing cases.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF staff and stakeholders identified a need to improve the format and content of written case plans so that they may be more easily understood by parents and youth.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

All stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed the opinion that case plans are developed in all cases and that, in the vast majority of cases, the case plans are developed in a timely manner. Several stakeholders suggested that the timeliness of case plans is supported by a "tickler" in CHILDS that alerts caseworkers if case plans are not entered in the appropriate time frame. However, some Maricopa and Pima County stakeholders suggested that although initial plans usually are completed in a timely manner, the 6-month updates are happening in a timely manner only about 50 percent of the time.

Stakeholders expressed differing opinions, regarding the level of involvement of parents in the case planning process. Several stakeholders noted that family engagement is the agency's new model of casework and that, because of this model, the agency has become effective in engaging parents, particularly over the past year. Agency stakeholders reported that the agency worked with the National Resource Center on Family-Centered Practice to establish the family engagement model and developed a supervisory guidebook to help supervisors promote family-centered practice. These stakeholders said that engagement of parents is promoted through CFT meetings, TDM meetings, Family Group Conferencing, and the new case-planning tool that went into effect in June 2007. Stakeholders reported that TDM meetings are occurring routinely in Maricopa County, but implementation of the TDM meetings is just beginning in Pima County. They expressed the opinion that the agency makes concerted efforts to ensure that the scheduling of TDM meetings takes into account the parents' schedules.

Many stakeholders expressed the opinion that although the agency is effective in engaging mothers, more efforts are needed to engage fathers and youth. These stakeholders suggested that concerted efforts are not always made to engage resistant fathers or to search for absent fathers. However, stakeholders acknowledged that in the past year, there have been increased efforts to find fathers and absent parents in general through family finders and a contract with outreach and the Federal family locator.

Several stakeholders also suggested that a key barrier to involvement of parents in case planning is the high turnover rate for caseworkers. They noted that it takes some experience in the field to be able to effectively engage parents and many caseworkers are relatively new to their positions. Some stakeholders said that parents are more likely to see the parent aides than the caseworkers and that the parent aides communicate what the family says to the caseworker.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength because the State has regulatory requirements and processes in place to conduct periodic reviews for each child by the courts and the administrative review board and these reviews are held in a timely manner. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, periodic review requirements are met through juvenile court hearings and FCRB hearings. The Statewide Assessment reports that, in most cases, a court or FCRB hearing is held more frequently than once every 6 months. It was noted that review hearings are conducted by the Juvenile Court at least once every 6 months after the disposition hearing.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that administrative reviews are conducted by the FCRB at least every 6 months for children in out-of-home care and that FCRB reports and recommendations are sent to the Juvenile Court judges. Copies are sent to the parents,

foster parents, counselors, attorneys, the CPSSs, and other appropriate interested parties. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the Juvenile Court Judge reviews the report and considers the recommendations as part of the subsequent court hearing. The Statewide Assessment reports that to accommodate the growing need for FCRB hearings, six new boards were added in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2005; three in Maricopa County, one in Pima County, and two in Pinal County.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

All stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed the opinion that cases are reviewed at least every 6 months, if not more often, by both the FCRB and by the courts. Pima County stakeholders noted that in that county, cases usually are reviewed by the court every 3 months. These stakeholders expressed the opinion that 3-month reviews often are more effective, particularly if there are family substance abuse issues. They noted that the FCRB recommendations are submitted to the court and that the judges value these reports and recommendations.

Although many stakeholders said that all parties are invited to the FCRB reviews, several noted that youth rarely attend the reviews and stakeholders in Maricopa and Pima County noted that many youth do not even know that the FCRB reviews are occurring. This was not the case in Pinal County, where stakeholders indicated that youth usually know about and attend FCRB reviews. Stakeholders reported that although most youth do not attend their court reviews, they do have the opportunity to attend and speak. It was noted that those youth who attend describe it as a positive experience and express the opinion that the judge was interested in them and in hearing what they had to say. Several Maricopa County stakeholders expressed praise for a recently implemented “court orientation for youth” effort designed to encourage youth participation in court hearings. In this effort, youth in foster care are brought to the court after hours to meet with the Judicial officer and foster care alumni and learn about the court.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as a Strength because the State has regulatory requirements for holding permanency hearings no later than 12 months from the date the child enters care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter. For the most part, these reviews are held in a timely manner, although some concerns were reported in Pinal and Pima county regarding continuances. Item 27 was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Arizona statute requires that a permanency hearing be held within 12 months of the child’s initial removal from the parent or guardian, or within 30 days of the disposition hearing if reunification services were found to be contrary to the child’s best interest and not ordered. At the permanency hearing, the court determines the child’s permanent plan and

orders a specified period within which the plan must be accomplished. The Statewide Assessment reports that the court enters findings as to whether reasonable efforts were made to finalize the permanent plan and provides the facts that support this finding. The Statewide Assessment also reports that, as permitted in State law, permanency hearings are at times consolidated with review hearings for effective workload management, and findings of reasonable efforts to finalize the permanent plan are made at these consolidated hearings.

Subsequent permanency hearings are held at least every 12 months. These annual hearings provide an opportunity for the court to reconsider and modify the permanent plan for the child and to order another permanent plan for the child or reaffirm the prior plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports that stakeholder input gathered for the 2001 CFSR was overwhelmingly positive about the process for permanency hearings, including the clear timeframe provided by the hearings and the affect on timely achievement of permanency.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

All State-level and Maricopa County stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are occurring every 12 months, are conducted in a timely manner, and move the case forward with regard to permanency. However, several stakeholders in Pima and Pinal Counties indicated that some permanency hearings are not being held within the required 12-month time frame. Pima County stakeholders reported that the permanency hearings are scheduled within the required time frames, but then continuances are granted which can extend the time to 15 months and sometimes to 18 months. Pima and Pinal County stakeholders identified the following reasons for continuances:

- The high caseloads carried by attorneys making it difficult for them to have sufficient time to prepare for the hearing.
- The difficulty of finding a court date to accommodate the schedules of the multiple attorneys on a case.
- The desire on the part of the court and the agency to give the parents more time if they have been actively working on their case plans, particularly if there are substance abuse concerns and the agency wants extra time to monitor sobriety.
- Delays in filing and documentation and late publication (Pinal County only).
- Limited docketing for the court because there is only one judge who hears all cases (Pinal County only).

### **Item 28. Provides a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a system in place to file for TRP in a timely manner, there often are delays in filing in some counties and, when TPR is not filed, the agency is not consistent in documenting compelling reasons. The case reviews found that 4 (36 percent) of the 11 cases that met the ASFA timelines for filing a TPR but did not have a TPR petition, also did not have compelling reasons documented as to why TPR was not filed.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires that the court order the DCYF or the child's attorney or guardian ad litem to file a motion for termination of parent-child relationship within 10 days after the permanency hearing if the court determines that termination is in the child's best interest. State statute also defines the grounds upon which a petition for termination of parent-child relationships can be filed.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCYF shall file a motion for TPR when the child's permanency goal is adoption. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCYF assigns this goal when adoption is in the child's best interest and sufficient grounds for TPR exist. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, agency policy provides a description of ASFA TPR requirements and exceptions to these requirements, including documentation of a compelling reason.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Administration's Program Administrator or designee must approve any agency recommendation that TPR is not in the child's best interests. Policy instructs staff to consider the following to determine if there is a compelling reason that TPR is not in the child's best interest:

- the child's permanency goal;
- parent's successful interaction with the development and completion of the case plan and likelihood of imminent family reunification;
- if the parents are expressing ambivalence to parenting;
- the child's age and willingness to consent to adoption;
- child's need for a permanent parent-child relationship;
- if reunification services were ordered, but not provided;
- if the services that were provided were culturally sensitive and if the provider was successful in engaging the family in the services;
- availability of relatives or other significant persons to provide a safe, permanent home for the child;
- effects of removal from current placement on the child's long term emotional well-being and the caregiver's willingness to adopt;
- compliance with ICWA requirements relating to provision of active reunification services, placement and standard of evidence; and
- the applicability of the grounds for and supporting evidence.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

All stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review indicated that there are clear procedures in place for timely filing of TPR and for scheduling TPR hearings. They reported that the court and the agency have specific procedural and timeframe requirements that pertain to filing for TPR, determining when there are compelling reasons for not filing for TPR, and entering information on compelling reasons in the case file. However, many stakeholders indicated that the procedures were not routinely implemented as intended.

The opinions of county-level stakeholders regarding the TPR process varied somewhat across the three CFSR sites. Maricopa County stakeholders reported that although the judges are not reluctant to move children toward permanency and termination, the Attorney General’s office is reluctant to file for TPR unless a permanent home has been identified and is available for the child. They noted that in that county, the attorneys are very concerned about creating “legal orphans” if they seek TPR for a child who does not have an identified adoptive family or is age 12 or older and has expressed an unwillingness to be adopted. It was suggested that this may create delays in filing for TPR and result in children having a goal of OPPLA at young ages.

Pima and Pinal County stakeholders expressed the opinion that when a decision is made not to seek TPR, the agency is not consistently establishing compelling reasons for the decision. They also suggested that there are delays in TPR due to situations in which the court and agency gives the family more time to meet the case plan requirements, particularly in “meth” cases in which time is needed for effective treatment.

Pinal County stakeholders also reported delays in the TPR process due to delays in completion of paperwork (documentation, publication, and filing) by the Attorney General’s Office, and the granting of continuances for hearings. These problems were attributed to an insufficient number of attorneys in the Attorney General’s office to handle the increasing numbers of cases and the fact that there is only one judge hearing all of the cases.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a process in place to notify foster and adoptive parents about court hearings and administrative reviews by the Foster Care Review Boards, there is a lack of clarity among stakeholders regarding this process and both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholders indicated that notification of court hearings is not occurring on a consistent basis. However, there was general consensus that when caregivers attend hearings or reviews, they are given the opportunity to be heard.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of dependent children receive notification and an opportunity to be heard in reviews and hearings held with respect to children in their care. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the case manager includes the caregiver’s name, address, and phone number on a cover sheet to the FCRB and the courts, which serves as a notification mailing list. In addition, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, records provided to the caregiver within 5 days of placement are to include a copy of any element of the minutes of hearings or reviews that pertains to the dates of future dependency or delinquency hearings involving the child.

The Statewide Assessment reports that resource parents were asked during focus groups and interviews to indicate whether they are invited to court hearings, FCRB hearings, and CFT meetings; whether they attend these events when invited; and whether they are given an opportunity to speak. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that resource parents reported that they are most likely to be invited to FCRB hearings, and less likely to be invited to Court hearings or CFT meetings. However, resource families reported they attend the court hearings to which they are invited slightly more often than they attend the CFT meetings, and significantly more often than FCRB meetings. According to the Statewide Assessment, most respondents in the focus groups indicated that they are given an opportunity to speak at FCRB hearings and CFT meetings, but only about half reported that they have an opportunity to speak at the court hearings they attend.

The Statewide Assessment provides the following information: “Following the July 2006 enactment of the Federal law regarding notice to caregivers, the Administrative Office of the Courts consulted stakeholders regarding implementation within Arizona. Arizona has chosen to adopt Court Rule to ensure compliance. Arizona Revised Statutes already require the Court to provide notice of Periodic Review Hearings to interested parties, and the new Rule would require that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers be provided notice of and the right to be heard in all dependency proceedings with respect to the child. The rule is pending the review and emergency adoption of the Arizona Supreme Court and is expected to be in effect by July 2007.”

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed divergent opinions about notification of caregivers regarding FCRB reviews and court hearings. A few stakeholders said that the courts and FCRB are giving notice to caregivers of all hearings and reviews. However, many other stakeholders reported that caregivers are not being consistently notified regarding reviews and hearings, although most indicated that notification regarding the FCRB is slightly more consistent than notification regarding court hearings. Several stakeholders suggested that lack of notification often is due to the FCRB and the courts not having the addresses (or the correct addresses) of the caregivers or the caregivers not appearing in the records that are sent to the court by the agency. Some stakeholders also said that caseworkers do not routinely provide verbal notification to caregivers about the reviews or hearings. The general opinion of most stakeholders is that there has been a lack of clarity about who is responsible for the notices and what the process is. A few stakeholders noted that the recent new State Rule that went into effect in July 2007 clarifying the notification process should improve this situation.

Although most stakeholders suggested that notification is not occurring on a consistent basis, almost all of them indicated that when foster parents attend the FCRB, they are given an opportunity to be heard. Many stakeholders also expressed the opinion that when foster parents attend court hearings, they most often are given the opportunity to be heard and the court is attentive to what they have to say. Stakeholders noted that if parents cannot attend the hearing, they can have input into the process by writing a letter to the court, requesting participation by telephone, or expressing their views through the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or Attorney.

### III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

#### STATUS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. During the 2001 CFSR, Arizona was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor and therefore was required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR were the following:

- There was insufficient oversight of foster homes to ensure the quality of care.
- There was no single, statewide, quality assurance system that evaluated the quality of services, identified strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provided relevant reports, and evaluated program improvement measures implemented.

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

- Instituted a statewide continuous quality improvement process that meets Council on Accreditation standards.
- Designed and implemented a statewide peer case record review of a random selection of investigation and ongoing cases.
- Increased clinical supervision of case management activities related to safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

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

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

#### **Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.**

  X   Strength                             Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as a Strength because the State has standards and policies in place to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health. However some concerns were raised by stakeholders regarding the lack of policy and procedures pertaining to children who are prescribed psychotropic medications. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the policies and procedures set practice standards that often are based on best practices established by the Child Welfare League of America and other organizations. These standards are outlined in the State's Child and Family Services Plan. Many of these standards are the same as those of the Federal CFSR and are intended to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the child.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following practices and procedures as intended to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care.

- The agency is implementing a new integrated CSA-SRA, and behavior-based case planning. Completion of the CSA is required not only following a report of maltreatment, but also prior to closing in-home and out-of-home cases, when commencing unsupervised visits, prior to reunification, and whenever evidence or circumstances suggest a child may be in danger.
- Supervisors use the integrated CSA-SRA-case planning tool to guide their clinical supervision.
- Case plan staffings are held within 60 days of case opening and at least every 6 months thereafter to review services and permanency goals.
- Case specific CHILDS data reports are provided to supervisors, managers, and administrators to provide information on case specific application of standards. Managers review the reports with their staff to identify and correct data entry errors and to identify areas for staff or systemic improvement. Field and management staff can request the development of a data report when they identify a need.
- Supervisory case reviews are conducted at the time of closure or transfer, and quarterly for ongoing case management cases, to ensure compliance with policy, accurate data entry, and to improve employee performance.
- The agency entered into a new contract for a Home Recruitment Study and Supervision whereby Foster Care Specialists from the contracted agency are assigned to support and monitor each resource family and partners with the child's CPS specialist to ensure the caregiver has the necessary training and support services to meet the needs of each child. The Foster Care Specialist is required to make one visit within 72 hours of a child placed in a resource home, monthly visits to the resource family for the first six months after a new child is placed, and a minimum of quarterly home visits thereafter. Monthly in-home visits are required throughout placement for foster homes providing care to medically fragile children.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that group care provider agencies must have a written plan for orientating and training of all staff to support the agency's goals and objectives and ensure the health and safety of children. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the initial orientation and training must include the following components relevant to children's health and safety:

- Policies and procedures regarding emergency procedures, behavior management, preventing and reporting child maltreatment, medications, infection control, and treatment philosophy.
- CPR and first aid.
- Initial health screening.
- De-escalation and physical restraint practices.

- Recognizing expected responses and side effects of medications commonly prescribed for children in care.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

All stakeholders interviewed during the CFSR onsite review indicated that the State has practices and procedures in place to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care. Various stakeholders expressed the following opinions relevant to promoting children’s safety and health while in foster care:

- There are clear licensing standards and a “kin review” process that focus on the quality of the care given to the children as well as their safety.
- Wrap-around services are provided to ensure that all aspects of the child’s safety and well-being are appropriately addressed.
- New contracts for services have been rewritten to ensure an increased level of monitoring of foster homes and of the children in the homes and contract administrators are responsible for assessing contract compliance.
- The agency has units at the local level that investigate abuse or neglect in foster care in conjunction with staff from the licensing agency. If there are concerns, the placement will be put on hold until a full investigation has been completed. Stakeholders noted that currently, “placements on hold” is a manual list, but there are plans to include it in CHILDS.
- All foster parents have three caseworkers—the child’s caseworker, the private agency caseworker, and the licensing caseworker—to ensure that all aspects of care of the child are addressed.
- Licensing caseworkers are in the foster homes on a monthly basis to monitor for safety, sanitation, and other issues.
- Frequency of visits is carefully monitored and agency practice is moving toward interviewing children individually to see how things are going in the home.
- The child’s safety and health are reviewed during the CFT meetings.
- The new PS-MAPP training for foster parents is designed to promote quality care for children.
- Every child entering foster care has a behavioral assessment known as the Urgent Response that serves as a basis for the CFT meetings, which are held for all children entering foster care.

Despite the overall positive opinions, a few stakeholders expressed concern about the frequent use of psychotropic medications among children in foster care, particularly older children, and the lack of clear practices and procedures for ongoing monitoring and review of children taking medications. It was noted that psychotropic medications often are provided after a single evaluation, without ongoing monitoring of the medications, and in many instances, without therapy provided in conjunction with the medications to address the root cause of some of the problems. Agency stakeholders reported that there is no current formalized policy or process in place to provide oversight regarding use of psychotropic medications, but that if foster parents have concerns, they can bring their concerns to the caseworkers. Agency stakeholders also said that caseworkers can ask for a second opinion if psychotropic medications are recommended for a child, although it was noted that there is no training on this or formal process in place for obtaining a second opinion. One stakeholder reported that although there are supposed to be “med checks” every month in the group homes, often these are done just to make sure that the child is taking the medications and not to evaluate how the child is doing on medication.

An additional concern was noted by some Maricopa County stakeholders regarding the lack of agency monitoring of contracts with transportation providers. Several stakeholders said that the transportation providers were not reliable and others questioned the safety of the drivers.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength because the State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, there are multiple components of the State’s quality improvement (QI) system and that the overall system is designed to gather information from internal and external sources; analyze the information to evaluate the child welfare system’s performance; communicate the information to administrative and field staff, communities, family members, and youth; and develop action plans to address identified needs. It was noted that all DCYF staff have the opportunity to participate in the QI system in various capacities.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following as key components of the quality assurance (QA) system.

- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Teams, which are designed to make incremental practice improvements and enhance communication across levels within the agency.
- The Practice Improvement Case Review, which is modeled after the Federal CFSR, but does not include interviews with relevant stakeholders in each case. The Statewide Assessment notes that each of Arizona’s six districts participates in an annual review of randomly selected cases, using an instrument based closely on the Federal CFSR On-Site Review Instrument. Three hundred and thirty cases are reviewed each year, including fifteen of each case type in Arizona’s four smallest districts; twenty of each type in District II (Tucson), and thirty of each type in District I (Phoenix/Maricopa County). Cases for review are randomly selected from those active in the first 3 months of a 6-month period under review. The 6-month period under review ends in the month the case is reviewed, which ensures current practice is measured. Cases are reviewed by supervisory, management, and other staff in the district under review. Each completed instrument is read by the District Practice Improvement Specialist and the Central Office Child and Family Services Manager to ensure reviews are accurate and thorough and that there is consensus on item ratings. Item ratings are based on a review of the CHILDS record, the hard file, and interviews with case participants when necessary.

- Data Reports that are intended to monitor outcome achievement and data integrity. Data reports provide information on areas such as timeliness of data entry of investigative findings and placements of children in out-of-home care, numbers of children entering and exiting out-of-home care, achievement of adoption milestones, and many others.
- The Business Intelligence Dashboard, which is an online analytical reporting tool that helps field staff monitor and manage their District's, Area's, and Unit's caseload by viewing preconfigured data and creating analytical reports related to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Action Plans for Outcome Achievement that address areas identified as needing improvement through the case review process and are developed in conjunction with input from caseworkers and supervisors.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that to support the agency's QI efforts, DCYF has a Practice Improvement Unit in the central office and dedicated practice-improvement staff in all districts. Practice Improvement Specialists in each of the State's six districts lead case reviews, provide data and performance information to management and CQI Teams, facilitate district action planning, and monitor and lead district practice improvement activities. District Automation Liaisons identify and facilitate correction of data errors and assist district staff to develop and use data reports to manage and monitor their day-to-day work.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

All stakeholder interviewed during the CFSR onsite review praised the State's QA system, particularly the State's case review QA component, the Practice Improvement Case Review. Several stakeholders noted that the State's case review is similar to the CFSR case review process except that interviews with the various stakeholders involved in the cases are not part of the State's review process. They noted that each district must develop a plan for improving performance and that the agency provides consultation to help the district develop and implement the plan. Stakeholders indicated that QA information is shared with agency staff at all levels.

Stakeholders also praised the State's use of practice improvement specialists to provide consultation to caseworkers and supervisors on individual cases when problems have been identified. According to several stakeholders, caseworkers welcome the feedback from the specialists and appreciate having the opportunity for open discussion about their cases. In addition, stakeholders had high praise for the quantity and quality of data available from CHILDS that supports QA activities at both the county and unit levels, particularly regarding the timeliness and quality of caseworker efforts.

In addition to the Statewide QA processes, Maricopa County stakeholders noted that caseworkers in that county have weekly and monthly clinical supervision that permit in-depth reviews of cases and a focus on QA. This type of clinical supervision is implemented in other areas of the State as well. These stakeholders also noted that there are supervisory case staffings once a month. However, these stakeholders suggested that it is difficult to be as thorough as needed in the case staffings because each caseworker has about 30 - 40 cases, which means that supervisors may need to staff about 180 cases a month.

#### IV. TRAINING

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

#### STATUS OF TRAINING

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of training. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2001 CFSR and therefore was required to address the factor in its PIP.

The following key concerns relevant to this systemic factor were identified in the 2001 CFSR:

- Due to the high rate of vacancies in the agency, caseworkers were not completing core training prior to assuming a case load.
- The training did not provide sufficient practical information and skills to enable workers to do their jobs, and the practices and procedures training did not match the court procedures.
- There was insufficient formal training in the specialty areas.
- Training usually was held in Phoenix, requiring many new hires and existing caseworkers to travel long distances to access training.
- There was no clear process for monitoring the consistency and quality of training for foster parents.
- There were insufficient opportunities for advanced and specialized training for foster parents, especially in the areas of caring for older children and children with emotional and/or behavioral issues.

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

- Revised the curriculum for the case manager initial training.
- Revised the curriculum for the initial supervisor training.

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

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

**Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.**

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as a Strength because the State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for staff who deliver these services. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, in 2001 DCYF received legislative support and funding to develop a comprehensive training program, improve the training curriculum, and enable new caseworkers to receive training prior to assuming cases. To implement this effort, DCYF established the Child Welfare Training Institute (CWTI) in 2002.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CWTI developed an initial training model, called Case Manager Core, which has 3 weeks of classroom instruction, followed by 1 week of field experiences, and a final 3 weeks in the classroom. Further field experience continues for approximately 14 weeks. The Case Manager Core curriculum incorporates policies and procedures relative to the work performed, and CHILDS application training. The Statewide Assessment notes that the new curriculum is more practical and hands-on than the prior curriculum, and is designed to follow the life of a case and day-to-day practice in the field, and to develop critical thinking skills. The Statewide Assessment notes that the new Case Manager Core training has been praised by trainees and their supervisors.

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers may not be assigned as a primary worker on a case until they have completed the Case Manager Core training. The CWTI tracks completion of all Core trainings through the CHILDS automated system, and notifies trainees of necessary make-ups. Certificates of completion are not issued until all make-ups are complete.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the CWTI ensures it is providing timely and effective training to all staff by continually evaluating, updating, and improving its training programs. The CWTI maintains records on all trainings, including identification of attendees and trainee evaluations. The CWTI makes changes to curriculum based on trainee recommendations provided in the evaluations.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that in addition to core training for caseworkers, supervisor core training is provided to all supervisory staff within the first 12 months of becoming a supervisor. The curriculum was revised in 2003, and again in 2006, to better meet the needs of new unit supervisors. According to the Statewide Assessment, the greatest barrier to effective supervisory training has been the workload of the supervisors. Their increasing case supervision duties make it difficult for them to be out of the

office at training for even a few hours, much less to travel to another location for that training. The CWTI has been striving to address this barrier by making some of the supervisor training classes available in the districts, so that time away from the office is less of an issue.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that core training for Parent Aides is provided to State employed case-aides and contracted parent aide staff for 9 days over a 4-month period. In 2006, the CWTI reviewed this core training and identified a need for updated material. For example, the Parenting Skills and the Visitation segments of this curriculum need to be revised to reflect current best practices in the field. The CWTI plans to make these revisions during SFY 2008.

The Statewide Assessment notes that new training is now provided in three areas of the State. However, it was acknowledged that, many trainees still have to travel and remain in the core training site for weeks at a time. The CWTI hopes to reduce some of this travel and time through the use of alternative modes of training delivery.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed positive opinions regarding the core training for new case managers. They noted that there are many opportunities for experiential training through field work, mentoring, and shadowing of experienced caseworkers. They also reported that caseworkers do not receive their own cases until they complete the core training and that program managers are adamant about compliance with this policy. Agency stakeholders reported that training evaluations indicate that participants are satisfied that the training actually helps them build the skills necessary to do their job. Stakeholders from the courts indicated that the training is effective in building skills relevant to court-related activities.

Despite these generally positive perceptions, several Pinal County stakeholders expressed the opinion that some of the things that are taught in training apply to Maricopa County or Pima County and not to their own community. They suggested that the core training is geared toward non-rural counties and the examples and topics used do not really apply to Pinal County. Pinal County agency stakeholders also noted that because training is not local, they have difficulty hiring people because not many people are willing or able to spend 6 weeks away from their homes in Phoenix, Tucson, or Prescott to complete training.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as a Strength because the State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP. In addition, DCYF requires that direct service staff receive 24 hours of in-service training each year. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, full-time direct care staff must complete at least 24 hours of additional training each year. Full-time support staff in group-care facilities are required to complete at least 4 hours of annual training. Enforcement of training requirements for group-care providers occurs with contract and licensing reviews. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Office of Licensing, Certification and Regulation monitors to ensure all training requirements have been met prior to licensure, certification, or renewal.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCYF encourages staff to attend community workshops and conferences, and provides opportunities for the pursuit of Bachelor and Master of Social Work Degrees through tuition reimbursement and/or student stipends. This is done in collaboration with Arizona State University Schools of Social Work. Additional training is provided by the Division's Policy Unit, the CHILDS Project, and local districts, as needed. The Statewide Assessment notes that CWTI partners with the agency's central office policy section and local districts to implement training on new statewide policies. The Statewide Assessment also notes that continuing education hours can be achieved by attending specialized workshops or conferences or through advanced training provided through the CWTI. According to the Statewide Assessment, CWTI tracks attendance at all trainings and evaluates whether the training counts toward the employee's annual 24 hours of continuing education.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Agency stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite review noted that supervisors and caseworkers must complete 24 hours of ongoing training each year. They noted that participation in training is tracked by the CWTI, which issues reports on the number of staff who have completed their training requirements.

According to agency stakeholders, there are a variety of means for staff to meet the 24 hour requirement. They noted that there are courses geared to staff specialty, developed through the University partnership to build professional skills, courses available through the Arizona Government University that are offered on an ongoing basis, and conferences or workshops that staff can use to meet their required hours if approved by their supervisor. In addition, there is planned annual training available from the training division, there are new policies trainings, and there are specialized courses available for supervisors. Stakeholders also noted that there is online training to reach staff in more remote areas of the State.

Agency stakeholders in all counties noted that there are multiple training opportunities, but that often caseworkers do not have the time to attend them because of caseload responsibilities. They noted that most of the training that is accessed to meet the 24-hour requirement involves agency training on new policies or on the CHILDS system. Stakeholders also noted that most of the supervisor-level ongoing training occurs in Phoenix, which makes it difficult for supervisors in other counties to access. Pinal County stakeholders reported that the county has its own 2-day ongoing training each year and the topics are developed based on suggestions from the unit supervisors.

Stakeholders also noted that there is a title IV-E funded masters in social work program and after completion of the program, the student must work for the agency for 2 years.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength because the State requires that current or prospective foster and adoptive parents receive training before a child is placed in their home, and that they are required to participate in 6 hours of in-service training annually. The State also requires in its contracts that staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E receive training that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, in February 2005, DCYF initiated the PS-MAPP program for the preparation and selection of all new resource (foster and adoptive) parents. PS-MAPP is a 30-hour group session program of 10 meetings in over 10 weeks.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the PS-MAPP objectives include five core abilities that families must have to be successful resource parents, which are assessed based upon 12 critical skills. The five core abilities are:

- Meet the developmental and well-being needs of children and youth.
- Meet the safety needs of children and youth.
- Share parenting with a child's family.
- Support concurrent planning.
- Meet their own family's needs.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, potential resource parents who can not attend a group session can be prepared using the PS Deciding Together one-to-one program. PS Deciding Together involves seven face-to-face consultations between the potential resource parents and the Foster Care Specialist of the contracted provider agency. Completion of PS-MAPP or Deciding Together training is required prior to licensure and prior to placement of a child (aside from court-ordered placements with unlicensed kin or significant others). The Statewide Assessment notes that pre-service training also is required for kinship parents who are applying for a foster home license. In addition, existing licensed foster parents who were trained prior to PS-MAPP or Deciding Together must attend a 6-hour Mini PS-MAPP session prior to their next license renewal or by November of 2007. Mini PS-MAPP is a curriculum designed to deliver the consistent core philosophies of PS-MAPP, Family-to-Family, and Family-Centered Practice.

The Statewide Assessment reports that foster parents providing medically fragile care services must complete 12 hours of advanced pre-service training in addition to PS-MAPP. As of January 2007, foster parents who are affiliated with a Regional Behavioral Health Authority agency to provide therapeutic foster care services must complete an 18-hour advanced training curriculum that is a companion to the baseline PS-MAPP program. Foster parents licensed as professional foster parents are required to complete at least 12 hours of pre-service training in de-escalation, physical restraint practices, and medical/health care issues, as well as training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, foster parents with a regular license must complete at least 6 hours of in-service training annually. Foster parents with a professional foster home license must complete an additional 6 hours of in-service training annually, related to the care of the special needs children who are placed in their homes. An annual “Professional Development Plan” is developed with each foster parent to identify and plan the in-service training that the foster parents will attend during the coming year. Licensed foster parents who have participated in PS-MAPP or Deciding Together, or who have already completed a Mini PS-MAPP session, may attend annual advanced training in basic training subjects; special subjects relating to child health, growth, or development; or placing-agency policies. More extensive training is not required for adoptive parents, but many adoptive parents are also licensed as foster parents and therefore are subject to foster parent training requirements.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that information on the PS-MAPP training program is provided to Native American Tribes. It was noted that in December 2006, the PS-MAPP training manager and a co-facilitator held two PS-MAPP Overview workshops at the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona’s (ITCA) annual conference. In January, a PS-MAPP Leader session was hosted and sponsored by the Fort Mohave Tribe and agency staff and other foster and adoption agency staff in the area attended. This Tribe also has hosted a Mini PS-MAPP session.

The Statewide Assessment reports that resource parents were asked during focus groups and interviews to discuss the strengths and gaps of PS-MAPP training and in-service training, and to identify whether the training has made them capable of working with the foster children in their care and the children’s birth families. Most resource parents stated the PS-MAPP training was helpful and informative, particularly hearing directly from new and experienced resources parents. Resource families suggested the need for training on substance exposed newborns, the difference between adoption and guardianship, more “how to” information, “dos and don’ts for court,” parenting teenage boys, common mental health diagnoses of foster children, CPS forms and documents, and what to do if parents do not want to work with the foster parents. The Statewide Assessment notes that foster parents also suggested having more foster parents serve as co-leads in the training, and having more foster parent mentors. Furthermore, according to the Statewide Assessment, resource parents suggested that agency caseworkers are not always “on board” with the philosophy communicated in PS-MAPP.

According to the Statewide Assessment, there currently is no Spanish language version of the PS Deciding Together curriculum, which is needed for rural families who are most comfortable attending classes in Spanish. The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF is in the process of contracting with an outside vendor for translation services.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most of the information provided by stakeholders regarding this item is similar to that found in the Statewide Assessment. Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency’s PS-MAPP training is highly effective and well liked by foster parents. All stakeholders reported that new prospective foster parents must complete the PS-MAPP training in order to be licensed, and must participate in at least 6 hours of ongoing training each year for licensure renewal. They also noted that foster parents who were trained prior to the implementation of PS-MAPP must take a 6-hour refresher training called “Mini-MAPP” to ensure that all foster parents are aware of the new approach being promoted by the agency. There was general agreement among stakeholders that there are sufficient opportunities to access ongoing training and that much of the training available to foster parents is of high quality. Potential adoptive parents also are trained on PS-MAPP.

A few Pinal County stakeholders expressed concern that there is not enough training for foster parents on how to deal with non-responsive caseworkers. Stakeholders in this county also identified a need for a Spanish language version of the PC Deciding Together program for rural foster parents. A Maricopa County stakeholder reported that foster parents have expressed the concern that the agency does not provide child care when foster parents attend training and this can be a barrier for foster parents to participate in the on-going training opportunities. This was not identified as an issue in either Pinal or Pima County.

A few Pinal County stakeholders said that relative caregivers who are court-approved but not licensed should receive the mini training because it would help them understand more about what is in the best interests of the child. (Court-approved non-licensed relative caregivers can participate in the foster parent pre-service training, but are not required to.)

**V. SERVICE ARRAY**

<b>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</b>				
Rating	<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>Substantial Conformity</b>	
	1	2X	3	4

## STATUS OF SERVICE ARRAY

Arizona is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2001 CFSR and therefore did not address this factor in its PIP.

Findings for the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has an array of services that meet many of the needs of children and families with regard to achieving safety, permanency, and well-being, concerns were identified by stakeholders and in the Statewide Assessment regarding the quality and availability of mental and behavioral health services, particularly when higher levels of mental health service are needed. In addition, item 23, which addresses meeting children’s mental health needs, was rated as a Strength in only 72 percent of the cases reviewed during the onsite review and the Statewide Assessment reports that the Practice Improvement Case Review data indicate that, in both 2005 and 2006, only 78 percent of cases were rated as a Strength in this area. Item 35 was rated as a Strength in Arizona’s 2001 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF has access to a full array of services that meet the title IV-B requirement to provide services to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of every child. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCYF provides a continuum of services to address the wide variety of child and family needs through agency case management, provider contracts, referrals to community resources, engagement of the faith-based community, and collaborations with educational entities, juvenile justice, and Arizona’s title XIX behavioral health managed care system. The Statewide Assessment reports that the State provides the following programs and services:

- Healthy Families Arizona Program
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families Programs
- Homeless Youth Intervention Program
- Child safety, risk assessment, case management, and permanency planning
- Comprehensive in-home services
- Arizona Families In Recovery Succeeding Together (F.I.R.S.T.) substance abuse treatment program

- Housing assistance
- Parent aide
- Parent skills training
- Behavioral health services, including referral to the title XIX behavioral health services
- Family team meetings, such as Team Decision Making; Family Group Decision Making; and the behavioral health system's Child and Family Teams
- Out-of-home placement and placement supervision
- Subsidized Guardianship
- Adoptive home identification, placement and supervision
- Adoption Subsidy
- Independent Living and Transitional Independent Living services, including skills development, subsidy, and educational vouchers
- Medical and dental services for youth in out-of-home care
- Referral to community and faith-based resources
- Family-to-family initiative

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, when resource parents were asked to identify strengths and gaps in services, they reported that there is a need for a directory of support services, a resource phone line, and more CASA involvement. Resource parents identified as "helpful services" caseworkers who check in with them routinely to see if they need anything, Foster Care Specialists, CPS Kinship Liaisons, case aides, parent aides, transportation assistance, financial reimbursement, and foster parent support groups.

The Statewide Assessment notes that birth parents also were asked what services and supports provided by CPS they found effective. They identified counseling, anger management, parenting classes, parenting support groups, housing subsidy, parent aide, child care, and information about family Court as helpful services. The Statewide Assessment also notes that parents identified needs for greater availability of support services for protective parents, family services (as opposed to individual counseling), evening and weekend appointments, intensive out-patient and in-patient programs for substance abuse and dual diagnosis treatment, and aftercare services. Similar to resource parents, biological parents stated that sometimes there is a lag between identification and initiation of services. Parents also observed differences in the knowledge and follow-through of caseworkers and expressed the opinion that caseworkers need to have smaller caseloads than they currently carry.

The Statewide Assessment reports that although mental and behavioral health services have improved through the collaboration with the agency, there is room for more consistent practice. According to the Statewide Assessment, stakeholders identified a need to improve the following:

- Therapist's experience and knowledge about the needs of children in foster care.
- Response to requests for mental health assessment on babies.

- Timely and seamless transition of services from the Urgent Response team to the ongoing service provider.
- The level of service approved and provided in relation to need.
- The definition and provision of wrap-around services.
- The availability of services statewide to meet the referral volume.
- Service accessibility for young adults.
- Availability of a range of treatment approaches, to include family therapy, behavior management, and peer support services.
- Integration of behavioral health and CPS services and goals.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed mixed opinions regarding the adequacy of the service array in the State. Many stakeholders identified services that they believed to be exceptional, such as the Arizona Early Intervention Program for children from birth to age 3, independent living services for youth (which are provided up to age 21), Drug Court, health services, and dental services (particularly for children in foster care). Several stakeholders praised the Promoting Safe and Stable Families programs, the credentialed Healthy Families program, Family Builders, and Family Connections. Stakeholders also commended the agency for its general practice of institutionalizing pilot initiatives that have promising results.

However, many stakeholders also identified gaps in services. The key service gaps mentioned most frequently by stakeholders in all sites were transportation services and behavioral/mental health services. With regard to transportation services, stakeholders reported that, because of the extremely high caseloads carried by caseworkers, they are not able to assist with transportation. They also noted that although the agency does provide some transportation services for children in foster care through private contractors, many foster parents will not use these services because they perceive them as unreliable and unsafe for the children. Although parent aides often assist with transportation, most stakeholders indicated that there are not enough of them.

With regard to behavioral health services, stakeholders expressed the opinion that there are problems with availability and quality of these services. They also noted that progress toward permanency is slowed by the lack of sufficient and high-quality behavioral health services. Various stakeholders expressed the following opinions regarding behavioral health services:

- Many of the individuals providing therapy are not credentialed. Several stakeholders mentioned that under the behavioral health managed care system, therapy/counseling often is provided by individuals who have only Bachelor's degrees. They noted that there is extensive turnover in the therapist positions with the behavioral health contractor.
- The therapists and psychologists who are employed by the managed care behavioral health services provider are not trained or experienced in child development, working with children who are victims of abuse or neglect, working with children who are in foster care, and working with adoptive families. Some stakeholders reported that there is resistance among therapists employed by the behavioral health contract to addressing the issue of sexual abuse with the children and parents simply because they are not trained in that area.

- There are very few residential treatment facilities for children or parents with mental health problems and, because of the costs, the behavioral health managed care agency often will not approve in-patient treatment, even when it is court ordered. Stakeholders noted that a recent bill passed in the State legislature will allow the court to ask for an explanation from the behavioral health provider for not providing the services or treatment.
- The number of Home Care Training to Home Care Client services (formerly known as therapeutic foster homes) is insufficient to meet the need.
- There is a lack of “high end” mental health services for children who need something more intensive than regular counseling, such as children who are self-mutilating or who have suicidal ideation.

Various stakeholders also indicated that the following services are scarce and that often there are long waits to access the services that are available.

- Affordable transitional housing for youth.
- Services for violent offenders.
- Paternity testing services.
- Pre-school services for children in foster care.
- Respite care for foster parents.
- Services for drug-exposed infants and their caretakers.
- Housing, particularly for youth and single parents.
- Placement services for children with developmental disabilities and for adolescents.
- Domestic violence services.
- Supports for (non-licensed) relative caregivers.
- Child care services for foster parents attending ongoing training opportunities (Maricopa County).

**Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP.**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has an array of services available for parents and children, concerns were identified by stakeholders and in the Statewide Assessment regarding access to services, including extensive delays in service provision, and the lack of availability of services in some jurisdictions in the State. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Arizona’s 2001 CFSR but, because the factor was in substantial conformity, the State was not required to address this item in its PIP.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

The Statewide Assessment reports that staff resources and case volume are the most significant contributors to service delays and inconsistency of service. They also noted that rural areas frequently find employee recruitment particularly challenging, so that there are greater vacancies in those areas, creating problems with timely service delivery.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed the opinion that there is a more substantial service array in the metropolitan areas of Tucson and Phoenix than there is in the rural areas of Pima and Maricopa County as well as in other rural areas of the State. Pinal County stakeholders noted that Pinal is one of the fastest growing counties in the State and services have not kept up with demand. Although stakeholders in all counties reported that there are long wait lists for mental and behavioral health services, there was general agreement that these services are most lacking in Pinal and in other rural counties in the State. However, stakeholders across the sites reported that there are extensive waiting lists for psychological evaluations, which may take months to schedule. Stakeholders noted that this is particularly problematic because often psychological evaluations are ordered for the parents and/or the child before the agency or the court will make a determination regarding what types of services are needed or would be most beneficial to the child and family. Therefore, if there are delays in obtaining the psychological evaluation, all other services are delayed as well.

Several stakeholders also expressed the opinion that although outpatient substance abuse treatment is readily available for parents and children (through AZ Families First), there are insufficient resources for inpatient services, and it is difficult to get approval for inpatient services. They noted that even when approval is received, there are delays in accessing the services. In Maricopa County, a few stakeholders identified long waits for youth wanting to access independent living services. However, Pinal County stakeholders reported that they do not have waiting lists for independent living services in that county.

Several stakeholders expressed the opinion that some of the delays experienced in accessing services may be attributed in part to caseworkers not making the appropriate referrals and submitting the correct paperwork in a timely manner.

Several stakeholders identified various specialty services as unavailable in many jurisdictions. They noted that in most areas of the State, there is no access to pediatric dentists, child psychologists and psychiatrists, residential treatment, and treatment for children with special needs such as sex abuse offenders. Some stakeholders reported that although the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program is available in 23 sites, there are waiting lists for these services in some areas, and the Promoting Safe and Stable Families service array is more limited in the rural communities than it is in the urban centers. In contrast, most stakeholders noted that in-home services are available statewide.

In addition, the case record review findings indicated that in four cases, youth who had a goal of OPPLA and who met the age criteria for IL service had not received any independent living services at the time of the onsite review.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as a Strength because the array of services provided by the State can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF supports the provision of individualized services through policy and practice. An individualized case plan is required for every child in out-of-home care. The Statewide Assessment reports that the Division's assessment and case planning process has been revised to ensure that it is behaviorally based and describes the precise behavioral changes necessary within each family.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Almost all stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed the opinion that the agency is effective in individualizing services to meet the unique needs of children and families. Several stakeholders noted that individualization starts with case plans that are tailored for specific children and families and continues through the participation of the children and families in various team meetings and the provision of wrap-around services to address problems. Some stakeholders suggested that individualization of case planning and services is a relatively new approach for the agency and that it has been supported and fostered by the Family-to-Family initiative sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. They also noted that individualization of services and case plans has increased considerably since implementation of the TDM meetings. In addition, intensive in home services are designed to be tailored to the needs of families and contractors are required to be creative and flexible in meeting those needs.

Maricopa County stakeholders did not express concerns about culturally or linguistically relevant services in that county and noted that the county has been making concerted efforts to meet the needs of African American, Latino, and Native American children and families. They noted that there are caseworkers who speak Spanish and that there is an ICWA unit. A few Pima County stakeholders suggested that the relationship between the agency and the Tribe is not as positive as it could be and that this sometime impacts the ability to individualize services to be culturally relevant for Native American children and their families.

Pinal County stakeholders also indicated that while there are services for Spanish-speaking families, they are insufficient to meet the need in the county.

**VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY**

<b>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</b>				
	<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>Substantial Conformity</b>	
Rating	1	2	3	<b>4X</b>

**STATUS OF AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2001 CFSR. Findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength because in implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Division benefits from a large and diverse stakeholder community available for consultation. Consultation occurs at both the central office and local district levels through advisory groups, case specific reviews, oversight committees, provider meetings, and collaborative groups.

The Statewide Assessment reports that consultation with youth primarily occurs through the State’s Youth Advisory Board, comprised of youth who are or were in out-of-home placement, caseworkers, and other agency and community professionals. The Board meets quarterly to discuss challenges facing youth as they prepare for adulthood, and provides input on the program goals and objectives in

the State Plan on Independent Living. Youth also participate in various staff and provider trainings, conferences, and public forums to educate staff, providers, advocates, and the general public on the needs of older youth in care.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Community Network Teams were created throughout Arizona as part of the Governor's Reform Plan to strengthen DCYF's local advisory boards. There currently are 19 Community Network Teams across all 15 Arizona counties. The Network Teams are comprised of State agency representatives, community providers, families, educators, Tribes, courts, domestic violence and other victim advocates, faith-based and philanthropic organizations, and businesses. The Networks are charged with submitting a plan to the Department's Director identifying existing services, resources, and family supports within the community, including service gaps.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that consultation with the Tribe is obtained through the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona. These meetings provide a forum for gathering input from the Tribes on the State plan and on the annual progress reports.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that the State has many collaborative efforts in place that serve as a forum for DCYF to obtain input into its efforts to meet the needs of children and families. Stakeholders identified the case flow management summits that are held between the agency and the courts as designed to expedite permanency and improve court operations. Stakeholders also reported that the work of the Court Improvement Committee and the Family-to-Family initiative ensures that the agency receives information from community stakeholders which can be translated into the State's goals and objectives for the CFSP.

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that there is a child welfare advisory committee in which the provider community and the agency meet to exchange information and concerns. Stakeholders also noted that the courts provide input to the department on CFSR and PIP planning, which is integrated with the agency's planning for the CFSP. Maricopa County stakeholders noted that the county agency routinely convenes stakeholders to proactively engage them in developing procedures and raising and addressing issues of concern and that their suggestions are often implemented. Maricopa stakeholders also praised the Tinker Toy Collaborative which, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, is chaired by the Presiding Judge and includes Juvenile Court administration, the Division's District 1 Program Manager, and representatives of the local Regional Behavioral Health System. The Collaborative meets twice a month to address system issues, divert dependencies, and develop better communication between (among) systems.

Maricopa County stakeholders also indicated that the CIP conducts quarterly State-wide forums along with the Governor's office and Children's Alliance. In addition, the Children's Justice Task Force is a statewide group that DCYF participates in along with Law Enforcement and the courts as well as others.

Stakeholders also noted that the agency provides the Tribes with published reports and involves them in title IV-E and IV-B planning.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength because the State develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP. This item was rated as a Strength in Arizona’s 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interview Information**

The Statewide Assessment notes that input received from the various consultation processes addresses the annual reports as well as the CFSP. Stakeholders commenting on this item indicated that the Tribes in the State provide input to both the CFSP and the Annual Reports of Progress and Services through the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona.

**Item 40. The State’s services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because the State’s services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF is involved in extensive programmatic and administrative collaboration with other Federal or Federally assisted program to ensure that children and families are served in the most integrated manner possible. Some of the key Federal and federally assisted programs include the following: TANF, the Department of Health Services, the Division of Behavioral Health Services, and the Department of Education. DCYF also coordinates with the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections to ensure that children with criminal and delinquency issues receive child protection services when needed. Each year DCYF conducts numerous child safety and risk assessments initiated by a report from a youth’s juvenile probation officer or guardian ad litem, or by a court order from a Juvenile Court Judge hearing a delinquency or criminal matter.

The Statewide Assessment reports that co-location of staff from agencies serving the same families is effective in coordinating service delivery. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, examples of co-location occurring across the State include the following:

- Investigative CPSSs are co-located with law enforcement and other agencies in child advocacy centers in many communities throughout the State. In Maricopa County, agency caseworkers are out-stationed in Police Departments in Scottsdale, Peoria, Glendale, and Chandler and complete joint investigations as outlined in the Maricopa County Protocol.

- Many DCYF offices are in multi-service offices that house other divisions or programs such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities, TANF, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program (JOBS), and Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Many communities have co-located child welfare caseworkers and behavioral health staff, such as RBHA and Arizona's F.I.R.S.T. In Pima County, behavioral health network liaisons are housed with the Division Mental Health specialists. In Maricopa County, Comprehensive Service Providers are co-located in all of the eight non-specialized sections (those other than In-Home and Adoptions); and Arizona's F.I.R.S.T. is co-located in five sections and plans to expand to all sections by the year's end.
- In Pima County, a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist is housed in the same office as the County's Young Adult Program (YAP) and 98 percent of his clients are YAP youth. The County's new Education Liaison is also housed at this office, to address the educational needs of YAP youth.
- Maricopa and Pima Counties have child welfare agency staff located at the county court buildings. Two case aides and one court liaison are placed at the Pima County Court. Agency caseworkers also are placed in each of the Juvenile Courts in Maricopa County, and are part of a team comprised of liaisons from Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Court Administration, and the RBHA.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCYF entered into a title IV-E agreement with the Navajo Nation in April 2007, and renewed an agreement with the Hopi Tribe in the same month. Although neither Tribe has made a referral under the agreements, training on CHILDS and other training for Tribal social service staff has occurred. A title IV-E agreement with the Administrative Office of the Court (AOC) became effective July 2005. The AOC began their program with Maricopa and Pima County juvenile probation offices.

### **Stakeholder interview information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite review expressed the opinion that the agency's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally assisted programs serving the same population. One of the collaborations that received high praise from many stakeholders was the coordination between the agency and Medicaid, which allows the agency to operate its own health care coverage program. Medicaid eligibility staff and child welfare agency staff are co-located to promote coordination of services.

Examples of other coordinated efforts noted by stakeholders were the following

- The agency coordinates with TANF and some local offices are multi-service offices where TANF and child welfare services are co-located.
- The agency coordinates with Child Support Recovery to locate absent parents.
- The agency coordinates with mental health services and in some agencies mental health services and child welfare services are co-located in the same office.

DCYF and Tribal stakeholders noted that there is a Memorandum of Understanding with the Navajo Tribe that focuses on how the Tribe and DCYF can improve coordination of services.

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

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

**STATUS OF FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION**

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. During the 2001 CFSR, Arizona was in substantial conformity with this factor. Findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength because the State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Arizona maintains standards for foster family homes and child care institutions in statute, rules, and policy. These standards are regularly reviewed and updated with stakeholder input. The standards are enforced through licensing, certification, and court approval processes, including personal interviews, an extensive home study, a criminal background check, and a CPS record check. Licensed homes are monitored for compliance by community-based agencies under contract with the Division through annual license renewal home studies and home visits by the licensing specialist. All licensing and regulatory functions within the Department of Economic Security are consolidated within the OLCR.

Relatives or kin who care for children under DCYF’s supervision can become licensed as family foster parents by meeting the same requirements as non-related foster parents, or can provide care as a court-approved kinship home. Court-approved kinship caregivers

do not receive foster care maintenance payments, but are assisted to apply for child-only TANF benefits if they choose and are eligible for State-funded personal and clothing allowances and reimbursement for specified expenses. Court-approved kinship caregivers and all other adult household members must complete a criminal background check, CPS records check, and the interview and home study process. Court-approved kinship caregivers may access foster care training, but are not required to participate in the training.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

All stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite review expressed the opinion that the State has licensing rules for foster care providers and child care institutions that have been established to protect children. They noted that licensing is completed internally by OLCR staff. Stakeholders indicated that licensing concerns include sanitation, health and safety issues, life safety inspection, background checks, physician statements, child immunizations records, pre-service training documentation, CPR training, notice of inspection, requirements from the Department of Development Disabilities, and a licensing home study. They reported that home studies are consistent and are portable within the State. Additional visits are required immediately after placement so that safety can be monitored and the appropriateness of the match can be assessed.

Agency stakeholders noted that foster parents and group homes have different criteria because group home have to meet physical and mental health requirements and a higher level of qualifications. Agency stakeholder also noted that licensing workers must participate in the PS-MAPP process. The behavioral health agency licenses the therapeutic foster homes.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength because the State’s standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the OLCR ensures that the licensing standards are applied equally to licensed foster homes, licensed relative homes, and licensed child care institutions. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the agency allows relatives to either pursue licensure and receive a foster care maintenance payment, or be approved as an unpaid court-approved kinship placement. The Statewide Assessment reports that this practice allows the Division to place more children with relatives while maintaining standards for all placement types. Relatives who do not wish to pursue licensure can still provide a home to related foster children, without compromising the children’s health or safety, by meeting established standards for court approval. Relatives who wish to become foster parents must complete the same process as all other licensed foster parents.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Agency stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed the opinion that the agency applies licensing standards and rules consistently and that this is monitored by the licensing authority.

Relatives of a certain degree don't have to be certified by the court to adopt but they do have to be approved by the court.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength because the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statutes require foster parents and adoptive parents to have a Fingerprint Clearance Card issued by the Arizona Department of Public Safety. State statute specifies the crimes for which a foster or adoptive applicant is denied a Fingerprint Clearance Card. These crimes are not in full alignment with the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006; therefore, legislation must be introduced and passed during the 2008 legislative session. Arizona was provided a delayed effective date of October 1, 2008 for State legislative amendments.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the results of the criminal history background checks are provided to DCYF and to the licensing authority for foster parent applicants. DCYF issues a notice of clearance, non-clearance, suspension, or revocation. The results of criminal background checks for adoptive parent applicants are provided to DCYF and to the court. Kinship provider criminal background check results also are provided to DCYF for clearance or non-clearance. Clearances are included in the home study that is submitted to the court for approval.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, child care institutions are required to have staff complete fingerprinting prior to providing direct supervision to children in care. Group home and shelter staff are fingerprinted through the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The Department of Public Safety, Fingerprinting Division applies standards established in State statute to determine whether to issue a fingerprint clearance card or deny clearance, and to determine the clearance level of an issued card. An appeal process to determine a "good cause exception" is available for those who do not clear the background check through the Fingerprint Board due to certain crimes that are specified through State statute. Federal criminal background clearance is effective for six years for childcare institution staff and foster parents. Re-printing is required in the seventh year.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite review reported that criminal background checks are completed and that all foster, relative, and adoptive parents must have a finger print card for conducting criminal background checks. They noted that clearance usually is obtained prior to a child being placed in the home, unless the care giver is an unlicensed court-approved kinship placement. In the latter cases, the caregivers may provide care to children while the results of the criminal background check are pending. The State's process for criminal background checks is effective in ensuring that the caregivers have been cleared.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as a Strength because the State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Arizona recruitment efforts aim to establish an array of potential foster and adoptive parents that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of the foster child community, and is equipped with the skills, tools, and supports to adequately meet the needs of children in their care. The Statewide Assessment notes that recruitment efforts seek to build strong relationships with communities of color, increase the numbers of foster and adoptive families of color, and build on the cultural alliances of these communities.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCYF contracts with community agencies for additional resource family recruitment, study, and supervision. The contract that went into effect in November 2006 describes requirements for targeted and child specific recruitment. Recruitment focuses on individuals who reflect the ethnic/racial population of children in custody and the neighborhoods where the children were removed. Targeted recruitment occurs for sibling groups, older children, specific ethnic groups, geographic areas and any other priority areas identified by a District. Each agency submits a targeted recruitment plan to its District semi-annually. Contracted providers recently submitted their first progress reports on the required program outcomes, which will be reviewed and monitored by District contract administrators and Recruitment Liaisons.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that State policy requires child specific recruitment be conducted to find adoptive families for legally and non-legally free children for whom no homes are found on the CHILDS Provider (Adoption) Registry, including children with special needs. The referral for child specific recruitment is to be initiated within 5 days of conducting a CHILDS Provider (Adoption) Registry search resulting in no available homes; or within 5 days of concluding an adoptive Family and Home Evaluation (home study) case conference that resulted in no identified placement. For children who are not legally free, child specific

recruitment is initiated on a selective basis, determined by the child's particular circumstances. All appropriate recruitment resources are to be explored and/or utilized within three months of the referral for child specific recruitment.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR onsite review expressed the opinion that the agency is engaged in diligent recruitment, but that there is a general lack of foster homes and adoptive families. They noted that the agency uses Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping in order to direct recruitment of foster homes to the neighborhoods where the children come from to support the ethnic diversity of the children. They also noted that DCYF has sought African American agencies and Hispanic groups to conduct recruitment, and that there is an agency position dedicated for recruiting Native American homes. With regard to Native American homes, stakeholders reported that Native American children usually are placed initially in non-Tribal homes because the Tribes have recruitment problems. Lately they have increased recruitment activities. However, a few stakeholders reported that the Tribes experience difficulties getting DCYF to place Native American children into relatives' homes.

Several stakeholders suggested that recruitment of foster parents should be supported by efforts to retain existing foster parents, and that the agency does not make concerted efforts with regard to retention. They noted that the agency does not collect information on why foster parents cease being foster parents, so it is difficult to focus on retention because the factors associated with retention are not known. Some stakeholders reported that it is difficult in the State for foster parents to get respite care services and this may be one reason why foster parents are leaving. Respite care can be provided by licensed foster parents only, so there is a need to create a network of foster parents who can provide respite services. Other stakeholders suggested that foster parents often struggle in their relationships with the child's caseworker and this again may be an area where efforts are needed to ensure retention of foster parents. Stakeholders suggested that foster parents usually are effective recruiters of other foster parents, but when they are seen as struggling and experiencing difficulties with the agency, they are not going to be effective recruiters.

Stakeholders in Maricopa County noted that Home Recruitment Study and Supervision (HRSS) is a consortium of providers that began 9 months ago. They have received 5000 inquiries to date, increased foster homes by 82 and certified 22 homes in Maricopa County since its initiation. They hold approximately 11 meetings per month to introduce the community to the idea of becoming a foster parent. Stakeholders reported that the focus of the HRSS is on diligent recruitment of ethnic and culturally diverse foster parents.

Some stakeholders also reported that DCYF expects contracted foster care provider agencies to recruit foster homes and that the cost of recruitment has been built in to the contract daily bed rate. They noted that provider agencies believe that there may be more effective ways to recruit than what the agency says that they want them to do, and they would like to use more evidence-based practice in their recruitment efforts.

Pinal County stakeholders noted that there are many Hispanic families in the community who are foster care providers and that they use GIS mapping to try to keep kids in their local communities.

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

Strength                       Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as an Strength because State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF policy supports the placement of children in other jurisdictions. Adoption Promotion funds are available statewide to encourage and promote cross-jurisdictional adoptive placements. These funds can be used to cover unexpected incidentals that do not qualify as non-reoccurring adoption expenses and would otherwise hinder the finalization of an adoption. These expenses may include transportation costs associated with cross-jurisdictional placements.

The Statewide Assessment notes that child specific recruitment uses an array of inter-State adoption recruitment resources to expeditiously locate permanent homes for children across jurisdictional lines. According to State policy, child-specific recruitment includes registering the child with the *Arizona Adoption Exchange Book* photo listing, the National Adoption Exchange Association's AdoptUSKids photo listing, Wednesday's Child and other cross-jurisdictional resources, such as regional exchanges. Special recruitment also includes listing on Adoption.com, and notices in quarterly newsletters to Arizona's foster parents and adoptive parents.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR on-site review reported that the agency has practices and procedures in place to place children across jurisdictions, particular placements in adoptive homes. They noted that the agency has the following procedures in place:

- There is a report that tracks whether we are using the inter-jurisdictional resources for children.
- There is a waiting children's book that goes to surrounding States.
- The agency is linked to Adoption Media.
- The agency is working with Wendy's Wonderful Kids to conduct child-specific recruitment nationally.
- There is a Heart Gallery chapter.
- The agency participates in Wednesday's Child.
- The agency has an adoptive child and adoptive family registry.
- The agency is effective in placing children with relatives in other States.
- There are 96 children registered for AdoptUSKids.

Maricopa County stakeholders noted that they will access the local system first and then the central office will place the child on a national registry. They also noted that efforts are made to look for and place with relatives outside of the State, but that it is a very slow process because many States have very long turn-around times for home studies. They noted that in some States, the home study can take 3 to 6 months. Agency stakeholders indicated that they attempt to initiate an ICPC for a relative even in the very initial stages of the investigation, if a relative has been identified.

Pinal County stakeholders noted that placements outside the State are largely made with relative caregivers, but the ICPC can take 6 months to finalize. They noted that to address this problem, the court in Pinal County has approved 30-day visits and subsequent extensions.