

Child and Family Services Review 2016

Region 3

Regional Advisory Council Summary

Within Region 3, 18 cases were reviewed, 6 from each office in the region. The cases were a combination of In-Home cases and Foster Care Cases. Cases were reviewed for items related to Permanency, Safety and Well-being. Please note not all items were applicable for each review resulting in small number of cases being reviewed for some items, in some instances as few as 2 cases. Below is a summary of Strengths and Areas Needing Improvement (ANI's) for each item.

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

Item 1: Were the agency's responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within time frames established by agency policies or state statutes?

Strengths

- Timely contact was made with children per Careline time response (same day, 24 or 72 hour response) or sooner when assessed by the area office to be necessary.

ANI's

- Lack of timely contact with children.
 - There was sometime a delay in timely contact when the child was outside of the family home and in a setting assessed to be safe.
 - Parents did not allow contact with the children.
 - Multiple reports be accepted in a short timeframe, each resetting the clock in regard to response time.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Item 2: Did the agency make concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after reunification?

Strengths

- Appropriate report track change (Family Assessment Response to Investigation).
- Appropriate assessment and provision of services.
- Appropriate seeking of legal intervention (removal) of child to ensure safety.

ANI's

- Lack of referral to services or lack of timely referral to services.

- Lack of full and ongoing assessment of parent needs, and subsequent modification of services.
- Safety factors identified, but no safety plan implemented or safety plan not updated.

Item 3: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care?

Strengths

- Safety and Risk assessed and addressed.
- Concerted efforts were made to ensure risk and safety assessments were completed.
- Timely and accurate informal and formal safety and risk assessments.
- Quick response when new safety factors emerged - timely safety planning.
- Timely and ongoing provider contacts.
- Removal of child from parents care when safety planning was not possible.

ANI's

- Safety Plans made, no follow up to determine if they were being followed.
- Not assessing all family or household members who are in a caregiving role.
- No documentation of seeing child alone.
- No formal safety assessment after safety incident.

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

Item 4: Is the child in foster care in a stable placement and were any changes in the child's placement in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s)?

Strengths

- Placement move for the purposes of achieving a more permanent plan for the child/youth.
- Stable placements for children.
- Placement in a stable pre-adoptive home.

ANI's

- None.

Item 5: Did the agency establish appropriate permanency goals for the child in a timely manner?

Strengths

- Establishment of appropriate permanency goal in a timely manner.
- Timely juvenile court filings.

ANI's

- Lack of timeliness to change the child's permanency goal despite case circumstances.

Item 6: Did the agency make concerted efforts to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement for the child?

Strengths

- Department provided appropriate and timely services.
- Placements or movement of placement for the benefit of proceeding toward successful permanency planning.

ANI's

- Foster parent hesitancy to move forward with adoption.
- Delays due to subsidy negotiations in regard to post adoption services or supports.
- Lack of service provision in the home to support reunification.
- Court delays.

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

Item 7: Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings?

Strengths

- There was clear documentation when placement of siblings together was therapeutically contraindicated and reassessment of the continued appropriateness during the period under review.

ANI's

- None

Item 8: Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationships with these close family members?

Strengths

- Effort to ensure sufficient quality and quantity, and also to find novel solutions and tailor visitation to the needs of the children/parents when these goals were not possible.

ANI's

- Failure to increase visitation when the plan changed to reunification.
- Make-up visits were not scheduled when visits were missed due to holidays.
- Lack of visitation with fathers.
- Visitation occurring in the evening when the child/youth had homework to do.

Item 9: Did the agency make concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends?

Strengths

- In the majority of cases the record reflected conversations with children about connections.
- Visitation with extended relatives, half-siblings not in care, and/or placement at schools of origin occurred.

ANI's

- Lack of fatherhood/paternal relative engagement and maintenance of connections.
- Lack of contact with adult siblings or siblings not in care within the state.

Item 10: Did the agency make concerted efforts to place the child with relatives when appropriate?

Strengths

- Departmental efforts to place with relatives noted, however due to specialized needs of children and/or the potential relatives own issues this created a barrier to placement with relatives.
- The Department assessed relatives in state who were not found to be viable resources.

ANI's

- Adult siblings were not explored.
- The Department did not attempt to identify/locate additional resources by reaching out to previously identified relatives who were unable to be utilized as a placement resource.
- No exploration or assessment was done with potential paternal relatives.
- Lack of re-assessment of relatives despite a significant length of time passing.

Item 11: Did the agency make concerted efforts to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregivers from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation?

Strengths

- Parents were often encouraged to attend medical/educational/dental appointments for the child.
- Encouragement of positive relationship between parents and foster parent.

ANI's

- Lack of communication between the SW and the parents.
- The parents were often updated by the foster mother as to the child's well-being.
- The parents were not invited to medical appointments.

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

Item 12: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess the needs of and provide services to children, parents, and foster parents to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family?

Strengths

- Child was interviewed alone and asked of their needs/desires and offered services.
- Discussion with parents routinely occurred regarding their needs.
- Consistent contact with case participant's providers.

ANI's

- Lack of thorough assessments due to lack of face to face contact with children, parents, and foster parents and contact with providers.
- Fathers were often not engaged.
- Participants not asked what they thought their needs may be.
- A thorough assessment of individualized needs were unable to be completed due to a lack of contact with the target child, parents, caregivers, and providers.
- Needs were discussed in the beginning of the case but were often not followed up on or addressed again.

Item 12A - Needs Assessment and services to children

Strengths:

- Visits occurred with children alone
- Consistent contact with providers and RRG staff.

ANI:

- Contact with children was not alone, and the discussions were not around the child's needs or services.
- Not meeting frequently enough with the target child to gather a thorough assessment of their needs.
- Contact with providers were infrequent and at times did not occur impacting the ongoing assessment of the child.

Item 12(b) – Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess the needs of and provider services to parents to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with family?

Strengths

- Adept at making initial assessments.
- Good ongoing assessments.

ANI's

- Good initial assessments, but lack of ongoing assessment as the case progressed, including with providers and other stakeholders.
- Lack of initiating services.
- Lack of assessment of the non-custodial parent and other caregivers.

Item 12C - Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

Strengths

- Good assessment of foster/adoptive parents resulting in no identified needs.

ANI's

- Lack of contact with and ongoing assessment of foster/adoptive parent needs.
- Implemented services found not to be appropriate.
- Foster parent did not feel supported.
- Lapse in visitation to the foster home.

Item 13: Did the agency make concerted efforts to involve the parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis?

Strengths

- Mothers were involved and incorporated into case planning.
- Good engagement with youth.
- Social worker's bringing out case plans to visits and thoroughly engaging parents/FP's/child in development and providing case plan to family

- Parents/child being invited to ACR's

ANI's

- Lack of fatherhood engagement, assessment or incorporation of father's in case planning overall. There were reports of being "aware" of the case planning, but not feeling a part of the actual development of the plan.
- Lack of involvement of case planning discussion with parents, children, pre-adoptive parents and/or legally appointed guardian.
- Parents were not provided with a copy of the finalized case plan.

Item 14: Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and child (ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child (ren) and promote achievement of case goals?

Strengths

- When the child was visited on a consistent basis discussions occurred around the child's strengths, needs, safety and well-being which often resulted in a positive relationship between child and SW.

ANI's

- Lack of consistent contact with the children within their homes. Children were sometimes not interviewed alone and or asked about safety, permanency or well-being.
- Visitation was brief in duration and did not reflect work towards case plan/goals and safety.

Item 15: Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child(ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child (ren) and promote achievement of case goals?

Strengths

- Parents were actively engaged in case planning and their own progress in treatment.
- Social Workers maintained contact with parent's providers on an ongoing basis.

ANI's

- Frequency of visitation was lacking.
- Fathers were not always visited or part of the case as a whole.
- The visits were short in duration and/or were not of substance.
- Parent needs were not continually assessed.
- Location of contact was not optimal (court hearings or during supervised visits).

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

Item 16: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs, and appropriately address identified needs in case planning and case management activities?

Strengths

- Thorough initial and ongoing assessment of needs, with clear documentation.

ANI's

- Lack of ongoing assessment.
- Lack of ongoing provider contact.

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

Item 17: Did the agency address the physical health needs of children, including dental health needs?

Strengths:

- The children's well child medical and dental needs are being met.
- Foster parents are involved in meeting the children's needs and in relaying information to bio parents.

ANI's

- Lack of assessment, and follow up with providers, children, and caregivers.
- Lack of follow up regarding treatment recommendations.
- Lack of follow up with the caretakers/providers regarding side effects/effectiveness of medication that was prescribed.
- Lack of ARG Nursing consults.
- Lack of discussion with caretakers regarding the monitoring of medication.

Item 18: Did the agency address the mental/behavioral health needs of children?

Strengths

- Consistent assessment of the child via collateral contacts and request for formal assessments of children.
- Needs were routinely assessed and discussed during visits and part of case planning.

ANI's

- Lack of documentation and follow up with providers.
- Recommendations were not followed up on.
- Services were not put in place in a timely manner or not provided at all.
- Lack of assessments.
- Gaps in contact with children.
- Visits did not focus on the child's BH needs.
- Lack of confirmation of medication management.