

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

During the week of April 9-13, 2007 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Dorchester County. A sample of open and closed foster care and treatment cases were reviewed. Also reviewed were screened-out intakes, foster home licensing records, and unfounded investigations. Stakeholders interviewed for this review included foster parents, Dorchester DSS supervisors, representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health and Guardian Ad Litem Program

Period included in Case Record Review: October 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007

Period included in Outcome Measures: April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007

Purpose

The Department of Social Services engages in a review of child welfare services in each county to:

- a) Determine to what degree services are delivered in compliance with federal and state laws and agency policy; and
- b) Assess the outcomes for children and families engaged in the child welfare system.

State law (§43-1-115) states, in part:

The state department shall conduct, at least once every five years, a substantive quality review of the child protective services and foster care programs in each county and each adoption office in the State. The county's performance must be assessed with reference to specific outcome measures published in advance by the department.

The information obtained by the child welfare services review process will:

- a) Give county staff feedback on the effectiveness of their interventions.
- b) Direct state office technical assistance staff to assist county staff with their areas needing improvement.
- c) Inform agency administrators of which systemic factors impair county staff's ability to achieve specific outcomes.
- d) Direct training staff to provide training for county staff specific to their needs.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

The county-specific review of child welfare services is both quantitative and qualitative.

The review is **quantitative** because it begins with an analysis of every child welfare outcome report for that county for the period under review. The outcome reports reflect the performance of the county in all areas of the child welfare program: Child Protective Services (CPS) Intake, CPS Investigations, CPS In-Home Treatment, Foster Care, Managed Treatment Services (MTS), and Adoptions.

The review is **qualitative** because it assesses the quality of the services rendered and the effectiveness of those services. The review seeks to explain why a county's performance data looks the way it does.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Ratings

The standard that must be met for all items reviewed onsite is 90%. Each outcome report has its own standard. To be rated an area of **Strength** most items must meet both the qualitative onsite review standard **and** the quantitative outcome report standard.

Section One

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

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Safety Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	100	0	0	8	0
Treatment	3	75	1	25	6	0
Total Cases	5	83	1	16	14	0

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure S1.1: Timeliness of initiating investigations on reports of child maltreatment

Data Time Period: 4/01/06 to 3/31/07

	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective $\geq 100\%*$	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
Dorchester	426	370	426	(56)

*This standard is based on state law. It is not a federally established objective.

Explanation of Item 1

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours. The outcome report indicates that for the 12 month period under review Dorchester initiated 88% of the investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours. The county failed to initiate 52 investigations within 24 hours.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	00	1	100	9	0
Treatment	2	67	1	33	7	0
Total Cases	2	50	2	50	16	0

Strategic Outcome Report Findings				
Measure S1.2: Recurrent Maltreatment – Of all children who were victims of indicated reports of child abuse and/or neglect during the reporting period, the percent having another indicated report within a subsequent six month period.				
Data Time Period: 4/01/06 to 3/31/07				
	Number of Child Victims in Founded Report	Number of Child Victims in Another Founded Report	Percent of Children in Another Founded Report	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
Dorchester	182	0	0	11.1

*This is a federally established objective.

Explanation of Item 2

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item measures the frequency with which children under agency supervision experience additional maltreatment. Onsite reviewers use information documented in the case file to determine if the children under agency care are experiencing additional abuse or neglect, whether that additional abuse results in another founded report or not. By that qualitative measure, children in foster care and treatment have experienced additional maltreatment. As an example, in a foster care case, a Dorchester child entered care on January 23, 2006, was returned home and re-entered foster care on October 31, 2006 because of a new report.

Section Two

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

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	0%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	1	100	9	0
Treatment	4	50	4	50	2	0
Total Cases	4	44	5	55	11	0

Explanation of Item 3

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item measures whether services were adequate to protect children (in the home) and prevent their removal. The decision to remove those children from their homes and place them in foster care was consistently correct. One foster care case needed improvement in this area because the family had many needs (including treatment for alcohol addiction) that were not being met, and there were other family members in the home who were not assessed.

In 50% of the treatment cases reviewed, the families were receiving the kinds of services needed to ensure the safety of the children who remained with their parents or relative caregivers. However, 50% of the families were not receiving the services needed to ensure the safety of the children in the home. This was often due to the parent's failure to comply with treatment plan requirements.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 4: Risk of harm						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	30	7	70	0	0
Treatment	0	0	10	100	10	0
Total Cases	3	15	17	85	0	0

Explanation of Item 4

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item measures if the agency's interventions reduced risk of harm to children. Onsite reviewers determined that in the vast majority (85%) of the cases, the agency's interventions did not reduce risk of harm to the children. Risk of harm was not reduced because either the parents were not cooperating or the services were not effective. In most of the cases reviewed, caseworkers failed to assess or recognize the risks faced by the children in the home. For example, in a treatment case, the agency received a report of children being exposed to neglectful conditions in the home and severe lice infestation. Information was in the record that the children were being excessively absent from school and this issue was not mentioned during contacts or in the plan. Reviewers

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

also found children being placed with alternative caregivers and children were still at risk of harm because background checks had not been completed. The casework in every treatment case was so poorly documented that reviewers could not determine if risks had been reduced.

Section Three

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

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

(Measure P1.1): **Foster Care Re-entries** – Of all children who entered care during the year under review, the percent that re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

	Number Children Entering Care 4/01/06 to 3/31/07	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Fos Care Episode	Number of Children Objective ≤ 8.6%	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,578	270	307.7	37.7
Dorchester	122	17	10.4	(6.5)

*This is a federally established objective.

Explanation of Item 5

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item tracks whether children re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. The outcome report indicates that Dorchester County missed the goal by six children. Contributing to the difficulties with this measure is the large error rate in screened out intakes and unfounded investigations. This suggests that some of the children reported to the agency as being at risk may have needed to re-enter foster care.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	50	5	50	0	0

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Explanation of Item 6

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. The federal standard for stability of foster care placement is that at least 86.7% of the children in care have less than two placements in the past year. The outcome report shows that 75.94% of children in foster care in Dorchester County had less than two placements. Dorchester County had 58 foster homes for 103 children in foster care. Reviewers found that half of the children in foster care were experiencing excessive placement changes.

Stakeholder Comment: “There are not adequate foster homes in Dorchester, but DSS is making the effort. Families come in and out of foster care; there is an ebb and flow. When DSS has a bunch of new hires, the agency is less effective. Effectiveness is diminished by high turnover.”

Strategic Outcome Report Findings				
(Measure P1.5): Permanency Goal for Child – Of all children who have been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the percent for which a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition has been filed.				
	Children in Care At Least 15 of Last 22 Months 011/1/2005 – 10/31/2006	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective >= 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,603	1,650	1,909.59	259.6
Dorchester	60	17	31.8	(14.8)

*This is DSS established objective. The federal agency, Administration for Children and Families, gathers data on this measure, but has not established a numerical objective.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 7: Permanency goal for children.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	50	5	50	0	0

Explanation of Item 7

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. To meet the criteria established in the outcome report, 53% or more of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months must have a TPR petition filed. Dorchester County filed a TPR petition on only 17 children. Onsite reviewers found that half of the children in foster care either had the wrong permanency plan or the agency took too long to determine an appropriate plan.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	50	1	50	8	0

Explanation of Item 8

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. To meet the federally established outcome criteria, at least 76.20% of the children returned to their parents from foster care must be returned within 12 months of their removal from home. Reviewers assessed the activities and processes used by caseworkers to accomplish the goal of reunification or placement with relatives. Reviewers found no consistent process to ensure that children return quickly and safely to their homes, when appropriate,

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P1.4: Length of Time to Achieve Adoption – Of all children who exited from foster care during the year under review to a finalized adoption, the percent that exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home.				
	Number of Children With Finalized Adoption Within Past 12 Months	Number of Children Where Adoption Was Finalized Within 24 Months of Entering Care	Number of Children Objective $\geq 32.00\%^*$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	399	63	127.68	64.7
Dorchester	2	0	1	1

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Explanation of Item 9

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item tracks the number of children where adoption was finalized within 24 months of the latest removal from home. At the time of this review the average daily foster care population in Dorchester was 82 children, 60 of those children were in care 15 of the last 22 months. Yet the agency finalized only three adoptions, and all three of those children had been in care more than 24 months. Reviewers found petitions that were filed late and hearings that were frequently continued.

Stakeholder Comment: “There is not enough manpower. We need more attorneys and more legal support staff. Dorchester brought in about 40 cases so far this year. One case can involve four, five or six children; could be lots of kids. I have cases that have been backing up through

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

the system over the years. Old cases that hadn't been to court in years need attention, and I'm trying to get TPRs caught up. It is very disheartening, very discouraging."

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P1.6: **Permanency Goal of "Other Planned Living Arrangement"** – Of all children in foster care, the percent with a permanency goal of emancipation (Indep Liv Services) or a planned permanent living arrangement other than adoption, guardianship, or return to family. Agency Objective: <= 15%

	Number of Children In Care at Least One Day	Number of Children In Care With Perm Plan "Other Planned Living Arrangement"	Percent of Children with Permanency Plan of Other Planned Living Arrangement	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	8,557	1,519	17.8%	-235.5
Dorchester	185	14	7.6%	13.8

*This is a DSS established objective.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	100	0	0	8	0

Explanation of Item 10

This is an area of **Strength** for Dorchester DSS. The standard for this objective is no more than 15% of the children in foster care should have the plan, Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). According to the outcome report the county met the minimum standard. The onsite reviewers rated this item strength because the activities and actions were appropriate for this outcome.

Section Four

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

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P2.1: **Proximity of Foster Care Placement** – Of all children in foster care during the reporting period (excluding MTS and Adoptions children), the percent placed within their county of origin.

	Number of Children In Care 3/01/06 to 2/28/07	Number of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Percent of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Number of Children Objective >= 70.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	6,455	4,041	62.6	4,518.5	(183)
Dorchester	185	137	74.1%	129	2.0

*This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation of Item 11

This is an area of **Strength** for Dorchester DSS. To meet this objective 70% or more of the children in care must be placed within the county. The outcome report indicates that Dorchester placed 74% of youth (in care 12 months or longer) within the county. Onsite reviewers found that children placed out of county were often in adjacent counties (Charleston and Berkeley) and remained in close proximity to their families.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	75	1	0	6	0

Explanation of Item 12

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item addresses the agency's ability to keep siblings together when it is in their best interest to be placed together. Based on the onsite review, three of four cases were rated strength. One case was rated needing improvement due to the lack of documentation to indicate that the agency assessed placing the children together.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

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

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	17	5	83	4	0

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Explanation of Item 13

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item addresses whether visits were provided to the parents and siblings in foster care. Reviewers found that visits were not being done twice a month as required by agency policy. Most cases had unjustified lapses of a month or longer during which visits did not occur. Visits between sibling groups in separate foster care placements were less likely to occur with regularity. Caseworkers made little or no attempt to arrange visits between children and their non-custodial parent, usually the father, even when the father had been involved in the child's life prior to the child entering foster care.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	17	5	83	4	0

Explanation of Item 14

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item measures the agency's ability to preserve a child's connection to the people, places and things that are important to them (while the child is in foster care). Based on findings from the onsite review, in 83% of the cases, there was no documentation to determine if efforts were made to maintain contacts with the people who were important to children in foster care.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	2	22	7	78	1	0

Explanation of Item 15

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item addresses the agency's effectiveness in identifying and assessing the relatives of children in foster care as possible caregivers. Based on findings from the onsite review, in 22% of the cases, there was evidence that both maternal and paternal relatives were assessed as placement options for the children in foster care. In 78% of the cases, this item needed improvement because the focus appeared to be on the mother's family, to the exclusion of the father's family.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	5	100	5	0

Explanation of Item 16

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item addresses the agency's effectiveness in promoting or maintaining a strong emotionally supportive relationship between children in care and their parents beyond the twice monthly visitation requirement. Based on findings from the onsite review, in one case, a father expressed interest in maintaining contact with his child, however there was no documentation to indicate that the agency attempted to help facilitate this contact.

Section Five

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

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	40	6	60	0	0
Treatment	0	0	10	100	0	0
Total Cases	4	20	16	80	0	0

Explanation of Item 17

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) Were the needs of the child, parents, and caregivers assessed, and 2) Did the agency take steps to meet the identified needs? In all of the treatment cases, this item needed improvement. There were numerous problems identified which include: failing to provide services for an identified need, not addressing the needs of all relevant parties – particularly non-custodial parents and alternative caregivers. Other cases focused on the mother and victim child, but failed to assess the father and/or other children in the home. Several cases had no treatment plan making it difficult to determine what services the agency was providing.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	15	6	85	3	0
Treatment	1	10	9	90	0	0
Total Cases	2	12	15	88	3	0

Explanation of Item 18

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item measures whether parents and children were actively involved in the case planning process. Based on findings from the onsite review both foster care and treatment cases need improvement. Reviewers found that fathers were not consistently involved in treatment plans. The largest issue consistently seen was the lack of documentation. According to staff, the county conducts family meetings but reviewers were not able to verify this in the documentation. Several cases contained no case plan. Several records did not document agency attempts to inform non-custodial fathers of a case plan. In at least two cases, youth were not involved in the case plan.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	50	5	50	0	0
Treatment	2	20	8	80	0	0
Total Cases	7	35	13	65	0	0

Explanation of Item 19

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This rating is based on two questions: 1) Were Dorchester DSS staff visiting children according to policy; and 2) Did the visits focus on issues related to the treatment plan? This rating is based on the CAPSS report and the findings from the onsite review. The CAPSS report indicates that 65.8% of children in Dorchester County were visited in February 2007. However, onsite reviewers determined that 80% of the treatment cases and 50% of the foster care cases needed improvement due to the content of the visits. The visits did not adequately assess risk and safety issues or discuss treatment goals. In numerous treatment cases, contacts with all the children in the home were not documented. In another Treatment case, the worker made a face-to-face contact at locations other than their place of residence for several months.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	6	100	4	0
Treatment	2	20	8	80	0	0
Total Cases	2	12	14	88	4	0

Explanation of Item 20

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item determines if workers are visiting with the parents of children under agency supervision. Visits with parents were done sporadically. When visits were done, workers met with and talked with mothers and not the fathers of the children. Reviewers found that some caseworkers failed to address relevant issues during their visits with parents. Workers did not consistently assess risk and safety issues during their sporadic visits. These deficiencies were seen in both foster care and treatment cases.

Section Six

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

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 21: Educational needs of child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	86	1	14	3	0
Treatment	2	22	7	78	1	0
Total Cases	8	50	8	50	4	0

Explanation of Item 21

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item asks two questions: 1) Did DSS assess the educational needs of the children under their supervision; and 2) Were identified educational needs addressed? The answer to both questions was “Yes” for 86% of the foster care cases reviewed. However, 78% of the treatment cases had significant deficiencies in this area. Either the educational needs of the children were not assessed, or there was no follow-up once a problem was identified.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Section Seven

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

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 22: Physical health of the child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	10	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	15	75	5	25	0	0

Explanation of Item 22

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item determines if the physical and dental health needs of children are being assessed and appropriately met. The medical needs of children in foster care were properly addressed. The medical needs of most of the children in treatment cases were either not assessed, or when assessed, not addressed. Failure to follow up occurred even in cases involving parents who were known to be negligent in attending to their children's medical needs.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	100	0	0	5	0
Treatment	0	0	8	100	2	0
Total Cases	5	38	8	62	7	0

Explanation of Item 23

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. This item determines if the mental health needs of children are regularly assessed and addressed as appropriate. The mental health needs of children in foster care were well met. However, the mental health needs of children in treatment cases were generally neglected by caseworkers. In most treatment cases the workers failed to assess the mental health needs of all the children in the family. Even when an

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

assessment was done and mental health needs were identified, there was no evidence that workers attempted to help the children and families access needed services.

Section Eight - Foster Home Licenses

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. Licensing files were lacking numerous documents and were not organized. The turnover in the Foster Home Licensing position has negatively impacted Dorchester County's ability to recruit new foster parents and to retain existing foster parents. Additionally, all of the reviewed cases had deficiencies.

- In 3 cases, the foster home license was not current.
- Numerous foster homes with late fire inspections, and were not conducted annually. In several cases, fire inspections for 2007 were not in the record.
- Foster parent quarterly licensing visits were not being conducted as required by policy. Additionally, the content of the visits did not adequately assess all required issues.
- Licensing information in CAPSS was not current.
- Supervisory review of licensing records was not being conducted.
- Licensing records did not have documentation to verify that foster parents are receiving necessary training to maintain their license (28 hours).
- Records did not have paperwork demonstrating that fire drills are being conducted.
- Sex Offender checks were missing.
- Renewal dates on licenses are incorrect.

Section Nine - Unfounded Investigations

	Yes	No
Investigation initiated timely?	7	0
Was assessment adequate?	1	6
Was decision appropriate?	1	6

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. The inadequate assessments in six of the seven cases reviewed resulted in decisions that were not supported by the facts. In each instance the investigation failed to include significant information. In one instance, collaterals were not contacted. In another case, all the children in the home were not assessed.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Section Ten - Screened Out Intakes

	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	6	1	3
	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	2	1	7
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	5	1	4

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Dorchester DSS. Although the decision to screen out six of the 10 intakes reviewed was appropriate. One report alleging neglect of children clearly should have been accepted for investigation, but was screened out. Three other screened out intakes appeared to warrant investigation, yet the record failed to justify the decision to screen out those reports.

**Dorchester County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
April 2007**

Dorchester County DSS Combined Foster Care & Treatment Tally				
Performance Item or Outcome		Performance Item Ratings		
		Strength	Area Needing Improvement	N/A*
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.				
Item 1:	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	5/6= 83%	1/6=17%	14
Item 2:	Repeat maltreatment	2/4= 50%	2/4 = 50%	16
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				
Item 3:	Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal	4/9=44%	5/9 = 56%	11
Item 4:	Risk of harm to child(ren)	3/20 = 15%	17/20 = 85%	
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				
Item 5:	Foster care re-entries		1/1=100%	9
Item 6:	Stability of foster care placement	5/10 = 50%	5/10 = 50%	
Item 7:	Permanency goal for child	5/10 = 50%	5/10 = 50%	
Item 8:	Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	1/2 = 50%	1/2 = 50%	8
Item 9:	Adoption	2/6=33%	4/6=67%	4
Item 10:	Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)	2/2= 100%		8
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				
Item 11:	Proximity of foster care placement	8/9=89%	1/9 = 11%	1
Item 12:	Placement with siblings	3/4 = 75% %	1/4 = 25%	6
Item 13:	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	1/6 = 17%	5/6 = 83%	4
Item 14:	Preserving connections	1/6 = 17% %	5/6=83%	4
Item 15:	Relative placement	2/9 = 22%	7/9 = 78%	1
Item 16:	Relationship of child in care with parents	0	5/5 = 100%	5
Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				
Item 17:	Needs and services of child, parents, caregiver	4/20 = 20%	16/20 = 80%	
Item 18:	Child and family involvement in case planning	2/17=12%	15/17 = 88%	3
Item 19:	Worker visits with child	7/20 = 35%	13/20 = 65%	
Item 20:	Worker visits with parent(s)	2/16= 12%	14/16= 88%	4
Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				
Item 21:	Educational needs of the child	8/16=50%	8/16=50%	4
Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				
Item 22:	Physical health of the child	14/20 = 70%	6/20 = 30%	
Item 23:	Mental health of the child	5/13= 38%	8/13 = 62%	7