

**HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM QUALITY REVIEW
McCORMICK COUNTY DSS
SEPTEMBER 2001**

At the request of the McCormick County DSS Director, the South Carolina Department of Social Services Human Services Division conducted a qualitative review of McCormick County DSS in Fall 2001.

The review was conducted on site, and consisted of case record reviews, staff interviews, client contacts, and external stakeholder interviews. In this review, the external stakeholders interviewed were foster parents, Department of Juvenile Justice and the Foster Care Review Board.

DAODAS, Mental Health, the Guardian ad Litem, and the Administrative Family Court Judge were all contacted and provided a survey, but none responded to further calls.

It must be noted that the review which generated the findings in this section was conducted in September 2001 and sampled case activity from January through August 2001. Since that time, the Agency has implemented a new computer system (CAPSS).

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SAMPLE INFORMATION

Program under review	Referrals Not Accepted As CPS Reports	CPS Investigation	CPS Treat. - Active	CPS Treat. - Closed	Foster Care - Active	Foster Care - Closed	Foster Home Licensing
Period Under Review	5/01/01 - 7/31/01	3/01/01 - 5/30/01	7/31/01	5/01/01-7/31/01	7/31/01	5/01/01 - 7/31/01	7/31/01
Case Population for Period Under Review	0	6	10	3	5	0	2
Cases Sampled	0	6	10	3	5	0	2
Cases Reviewed	0	6	6	3	5	0	2

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MEASURES AND OUTPUTS**

Outcome 1: Increase permanency for children in Foster Care (Safe and Stable Home for Every Child)

Measure	Source	County		State	
		#	%	#	%
Total Children in Care	SACWIS	5	100%	4862	100%
Children in care more than 12 months	SACWIS	3	60.00%	3052	62.77%
In care more than 12 months where permanency hearing has not been held	SACWIS	0	0.00%	1044	34.21%
Children in care for whom permanency plan has not been achieved within 3/6 months after permanency planning hearing	SACWIS	Report under development			

Summary: McCormick DSS has the structure in place to enable achievement of this outcome, after case evaluation issues are addressed.

Outcome 2: Reduce Time in Foster Care to Adoption

Measure	County		State	
	#	Months	#	Months
Average number of months in foster care until adoption is final	0	N/A	469	46.40
Average number of days/months in foster care after permanency planning hearing approves a plan of TPR or adoption for the child	Report under development			
Average number of days/months in foster care after TPR is granted	Report under development			

Summary: Not applicable to this county.

Outcome 3: Improve Child Well-Being

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Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number and percentage of children and adolescents attending school and performing: passing grades, maintaining grade level, school readiness (1 st), truancy, suspensions/expulsions, literacy, diploma/GED, secondary education	In the 2 cases reviewed where Foster Children were in school, we found that both were not on grade level, and exhibiting attendance or behavior problems. One case was receiving support services.			
Number and percentage of children and adolescents who show physical and mental health is stable or improving (therapy, screenings)	In the 6 cases reviewed, we found that the 2 children identified with mental health or adjustment issues were actively receiving therapy or counseling.			
Number and percentage of children with substance abuse are stable or improving	In the 6 cases reviewed, we found that no children were identified with substance abuse issues.			
Number and percentage of runaways	0	0.00%	95	1.95%
Number and percentage who age out of foster care and failed to meet goals	Report under development			
Number and percentage who become pregnant	From case file review and caseworker interviews, we noted one instance of pregnancy.			
Number and percentage who are adjudicated for delinquency: once, more than once.	In the 15 cases reviewed, we found no children currently involved with delinquency issues.			

Summary: Based on case reviews, children in foster care in McCormick are generally experiencing problems with school, but none with behavior or substance abuse. The Independent Living case reviewed documented a realistic case plan to prepare the child for leaving foster care.

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**Outcome 4: Reduce Time in Foster Care to Reunification Without
Increasing Re-entry**

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number and percentage of children who show physical and mental health stability and/or improvement	Based on our review of 6 Foster Care cases and caseworker interviews, all children were either receiving counseling or in a supportive placement which stabilized any physical or mental health conditions.			
Number and percentage of parents with substance abuse who are stable and/or improving	Report under development			
Average number of family/relative visits per child per month (parents, other relatives)	In the 5 Foster Care cases where visitation was a part of the case plan, we noted an average of 2 visits per child per month from family or relatives.			
Number of children who return to foster care after reunification within 12 months	0	0.00%	201	8.72%

Summary: Our case review indicated that visitation occurred on a regular and planned basis. In those instances where visitation did not occur as planned, there was documented followup with the parent or relative to address the need for visitation or reasons for not attending.

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Outcome 5: Reduce Placements of Young Children in Group Homes or Institutions (Federal Requirements)

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Percentage of children age 12 years and below placed in group homes or institutions	1	0.37%	272	100%

Summary: McCormick DSS is taking the age of the child into consideration when arranging placements, by considering the availability of individual foster homes first. The lack of individual foster homes in McCormick County precludes placement of siblings together unless in a group home or institution.

Outcome 6: Reduce/Prevent Abuse of Children in Foster Care

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number of children in foster care with substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff person	0	0.00%	98	100%

Summary: McCormick DSS has regular telephone and face-to-face contacts with foster parents by staff. The topics discussed are not clearly documented. Visits with foster children are also not clearly documenting an ongoing assessment of the child's safety.

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Outcome 7: Increase Stability of Placements and Other Aspects of Foster Children's Lives

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Percentage of children in foster care with more than two placements	2	40.00%	2690	55.53%

Summary: The majority of cases we reviewed had between 1 and 3 placements. The reasons for changing placements were documented clearly in the record.

Outcome 8: Increase Stability of Children's Lives

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Percentage of children who change schools/schools systems:	Of the 2 children in Foster Care who are attending school:			
Once	1 (50.00%) had changed school once as the result of placement			
More than once	1(50.00%) had changed school more than once as the result of placements.			
Percentage of cases with more than one change in foster care case workers	Of the 6 cases reviewed, 3 (50.00%) had more than one change in foster care caseworkers.			

Summary: The documentation in the files reviewed did not directly address changes in schools or school districts, but review staff were able to determine from dictation those changes in schools that were recorded. All cases reviewed had one or more changes in caseworkers.

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Outcome 9: Reduce/Prevent Abuse and Neglect of Children

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number and percentage of indicated cases of child abuse and/or neglect:	1	100.00%	538	36.00%
Total				
Among high-risk populations	Report under development			
Number of fatalities among children known to the agency	Reported Elsewhere			

Summary: McCormick DSS has regular staffing procedures in place to address effective case decision-making. In actual practice, case decisions are based on extensive contact with the family. As stated before, an ongoing assessment of child safety in active CPS Treatment and Foster Care cases is not clearly documented.

Outcome 10: Reduce/Prevent Recurrence of Child Abuse and Neglect

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number and percentage of cases of children with 2 nd indicated report within 12 months of the 1 st indicated report	Report under development			
Number and percentage of cases of children with 2 nd indicated report within 12 months of reunification	Report under development			

Summary: We noted that most cases reviewed did not have prior CPS history, either of unfounded reports, active agency involvement, or not accepted at referral.

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**Outcome 11: Limit the Number of Abused and/or Neglected Children
Entering Foster Care to Those Who are Truly Endangered in
Their Home**

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number and percentage of children court ordered into placement	5	100.00%	1131	23.26%
Number and percentage of children placed informally (with relatives)	2	40.00%	269	5.53%
Number and percentage of treatment cases closed with risk reduced and treatment goals achieved (i.e. parents' and children's physical/mental health and safety improved)	1	7.69%	360	7.24%

Summary: The limited involvement of clients and service providers in the closure decision, especially with CPS Treatment, calls into question the validity of the number above.

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Outcome 12: Minimize Intrusion upon the Lives of Families and Children

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number and percentage of children and families, when asked, indicate/feel that the agency intruded in their lives:	In the client interviews conducted, all interviewees felt the involvement of the agency was an intrusion into their lives.			
Where services are provided (community based)	Interviews and case record reviews indicated the provision of services was often not available in the community and as near to the client as available.			
How we deliver services (mutual planning)	In client interviews and in case record reviews, mutual planning was not occurring in CPS Treatment cases.			
When services are provided (convenient hours)	Most interviews reported that it was possible to arrange convenient times for service to be provided.			
How clients were treated (respect and dignity)	Clients interviewed reported that they were involved in planning, and treated with respect.			
Number of days/weeks from achievement of treatment goals to case closure in treatment cases	Report under development			

Summary: There are regular staffings with other agencies, with extensive progress reports provided. The evaluation of case plans in terms of activities instead of behavioral change can be barriers to the achievement of this outcome.

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Outcome 13: Increase Supply of Foster Home Placement Slots

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number of licensed foster home placement slots	2	100%	1695	100%
Kinship care	Report under development			
Placements that fit	Report under development			
Close to home	Report under development			

Summary: McCormick DSS has procedures in place to improve support to foster parents and to determine appropriate placements for children. However, there is not a plan for recruitment of new foster homes. Due to the recent death of a foster parent, McCormick DSS has 1 licensed Foster Home.

Outcome 14: Increase Number of Adoptions

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number of adoptions finalized	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Summary: Not Reviewed (Separate Organization)

Outcome 15: Reduce Number of Disrupted Adoptions

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number of adoptions disrupted within 12 months of finalization	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Summary: Not Reviewed (Separate Organization)