

**Oconee County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2006**

During the week of October 30 to November 3, 2006 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Oconee 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, Oconee DSS supervisors, and representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health and Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Period included in Case Record Review: October 30 to November 3, 2006

Period included in Outcome Measures: October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006

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.

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Ratings

The standard that must be met for all items reviewed onsite is 90 percent. Each outcome report has its own standard. To be rated **Strength** an item 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.

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

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

Data Time Period: 10/01/2005 to 09/30/2006

	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective 100%*	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,180	14,647	100 %	-1,533
Oconee	207	182	100 %	-25

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

Onsite Review Findings

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

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0
Treatment	0	0	2	100	8	0
Total Cases	1	33	2	64	16	0

Explanation of Item 1

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours of the intake. The outcome report indicates that for the 12 month period under review Oconee initiated 88% of the investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours of accepted intakes. Onsite reviewers determined that the county failed to meet this requirement because of data entry errors and because staff were overwhelmed by the volume of work.

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Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure S1.2: Recurrence of 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.

Indicated Reports Between 04/01/05 to 03/31/06

	Number of Child Victims	Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Rept	Number of Children Objective <= 93.90%	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	10,231	62	9,606.91	562
Oconee	262	3	246.02	12.98

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Onsite Review Findings

Safety Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	9	90	1	10	0	0
Total Cases	19	95	1	5	0	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is an **Area of Strength** of for Oconee DSS. This item assesses repeat maltreatment of children within a 12 month period. By that standard, both the outcome report and the onsite review indicate that recurring maltreatment of children under agency protection is not a significant problem in Oconee County.

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Section Two

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

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	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	6	56	5	44	9	0

Explanation of Item 3

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. Most of the foster care cases were rated not applicable because the children entered care prior to the period under review. However, the decision to remove those children from their homes and place them in foster care was consistently correct.

Half of the treatment cases were rated area needing improvement for two reasons. The most common reason was the agency's failure to require drug abuse assessment, testing and/or treatment for parents with a history of substance abuse. Reviewers also found that children were sometimes placed with relatives who needed assistance to ensure the safety of children in their care, but were not consistently given the needed assistance.

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure S2.2: **Risk of harm to child** – Of all unfounded investigations during the reporting period, the percent receiving subsequent reports within six months of the initial report.

	Number Alleged Child Victims in an Unfounded Rept 4/01/05 to 3/31/06	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective $\geq 91.50\%$ *	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	14,488	1,123	13,256.52	108.48
Oconee	178	14	162.87	1.13

*This is a DSS established objective.

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Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 4: Risk of harm.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	14	70	6	30	0	0

Explanation of Item 4

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. There was no evidence of children in group or foster home placements being at risk of harm. There was no evidence of the agency working toward returning children in foster care to parents or relatives where they might be at risk.

However, reviewers found that the children in 60% of the treatment cases reviewed faced potential risks of harm. Some of that risk resulted from conditions described in Item 3 above. Other children were at risk because they were not being consistently seen each month. At the time of the review the agency had five treatment caseworkers to monitor 385 children living with their parents or relatives.

Stakeholder Comment: Sometimes the agency may go too far in trying to prevent foster care placements. She worries about cases with safety plans, especially when they go on too long. Safety plans are meant to be temporary, and sometimes it's better for the child to go into foster care.

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Section Three

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

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.1: **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 10/01/05 to 09/30/06	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Foster Care Episode	Number of Children Objective $\geq 91.40\%^*$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,463	257	3156.04	41
Oconee	55	2	50.27	3

*This is a federally established objective.

Explanation of Item 5

This is an area of **Strength** for Oconee DSS. Children re-entering foster care within a year of discharge is a rare occurrence in Oconee County. The foster care unit is effective in determining when sending a child home to a parent or relative is not in the child's best interest. Staff is effective in presenting the agency's position in court.

Stakeholder Comment: Cases are well prepared, presented neatly and the caseworker's testimony is on point. The presentations are well done and improving steadily. Court orders are uniformly on point, and he receives them promptly.

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Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.2: **Stability of Foster Care Placement** – Of all children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, the percent that had not more than 2 placement settings.

	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number of Children With No More Than 2 Placements	Number of Children Objective $\geq 86.70\%$ *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,994	3221	3462.80	-241.80
Oconee	68	61	58.06	2.04

*Note: This is a federally established objective.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0

Explanation of Item 6

This is an area of **Strength** for Oconee DSS. The federal standard for stability measured by the outcome report applies only to children in care less than 12 months. Onsite reviewers looked at the stability of all children in foster care. By both measures lack of placement stability is not a significant problem for foster children in Oconee County.

Stakeholder Comment: Placement stability for children has gone from acceptable to exceptional in the last five years. There is a lot more communication than in the past, and a very clear message from the director.

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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 10/2005 –09/2006	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective >= 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,616	1,697	1,916.48	-219.48
Oconee	118	77	62.54	14.46

*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.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 7: Permanency goal for children.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80	2	20	0	0

Explanation of Item 7

This is an area of **Strength** for Oconee DSS. The outcome report shows that TPR petitions are being filed on an acceptable percentage of children in foster care. This is an exceptionally strong area for Oconee County. Onsite reviewers judged this item by two criteria: (1) does the child in foster care have the correct permanency goal? and (2) did the agency take too long to determine that goal? Both cases rated area needing improvement involved children with the plan of adoption. In both cases the plan was correct but it took too long for the agency to determine to pursue adoption for those children. The agency's history with those cases dates back to 1999 and 2000 respectively. Onsite reviewer findings and stakeholder comments show that those types of delays in permanency planning are no longer a problem in Oconee DSS. Consequently, this is no longer an area needing improvement.

Stakeholder Comments: The agency is diligent in following up on treatment plans. Treatment plan requirements are clear and address problems well. Some parents just can't do what is required and workers won't put the kids back in the homes if the plans are not complete or the homes are not safe.

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Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P1.3: **Length of Time to Achieve Reunification** – Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caregiver, at the time of discharge from foster care, the percent reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home.

	Number of Children Where Fos Care Services Closed. Last Plan Was Return Home 10/01/05– 09/30/06	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20% *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,463	2,003	1,876.81	126.19
Oconee	34	22	25.91	-3.91

*This is a federally established objective.

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	100	0	0	9	0

Explanation of Item 8

This is an area of **Strength** for Oconee DSS. The federal standard applied to this item is that at least 76.2% of children entering care should return home within 12 months of entering care. Only 65% of the children entering care in Oconee County return home within 12 months. However, the rate of children returning home should be assessed along with other factors.

Onsite reviewers saw that an unusually high percentage of the children being served by Oconee DSS came from families where parents and relatives used and manufactured methamphetamines. The characteristics of those families made them resistant to treatment services and rendered them unsafe for the return of their children.

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Strategic Outcome Report Findings

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 W/in 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	417	66	133.44	-67.44
Oconee	31	4	9.92	-5.92

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 9: Adoption.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	7	100	3	0

Explanation of Item 9

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. The outcome report shows that only four of the 31 adoptions completed last year were done within 24 months of the child entering foster care. Onsite reviewers did not look at completed adoptions, but children with the plan of adoption, to determine if those adoptions might be completed within 24 months of the child entering care. This item was rated an area needing improvement for all seven cases with the plan of adoption. It is significant that seven of the 10 cases in the review sample had the plan of adoption. This, paired with the fact that Oconee DSS had 107 children in foster care yet completed 31 adoptions in 12 months, indicates that an extraordinary amount of work is being done to pursue permanency for children whose plan should have been changed to adoption years ago.

Stakeholder Comment: The legal staff is the best it's been; the in-house team is working well. They do all they can but there is a backlog. They do their job.

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Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P1.6: **Permanency Goal of “Another Planned Permanent 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.

	Number of Children In Care at Least One Day 10/01/05 – 09/30/06	Number of Children In Care With Perm Plan “Other Planned Living Arrangement”	Number of Children Objective >= 85.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	8,467	1,468	7,196.95	-197.95
Oconee	144	16	122.40	5.60

*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 Oconee DSS. The standard applied to the outcome report suggests that less than 15% of the children in foster care should have the plan of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). Oconee met this standard because only 11% (16/144) of its children have the plan of APPLA. Onsite reviewers determined that children with this plan received independent living services specific to their needs.

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Section Four

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

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 10/01/05 – 09/31/06	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	6,317	3,914	61.96	4421.90	-507.90
Oconee	144	74	51.39	100.80	-26.80

*This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation of Item 11

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. To meet this standard at least 70% of the children in care must be placed within the county. The outcome report shows that 51% of Oconee County children are placed within the county. Although the county had 29 foster homes to care for its 107 children, many of those foster parents were unwilling to care for the type of children entering care.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	4	100	0	0	6	0

Explanation of Item 12

This is an area of **Strength** for Oconee DSS. Onsite reviewers found that siblings who were not placed together were separated for appropriate reasons, not simply because there was no placement willing to take all of them. Oconee County does a very good job of keeping sibling groups together.

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Stakeholder Comment: Good judgment is used in placing foster children, and the agency is very effective in listening to mental health counselors and in keeping siblings together.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	75	1	25	6	0

Explanation of Item 13

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. In 75% of the cases reviewed the children in foster care visited with both parents when appropriate, and visited their siblings in other placements. The case rated as needing improvement involved a sibling group of six children in four different placements. Reviewers found that the case involved a child having visits with only one of his siblings.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	88	1	12	2	0

Explanation of Item 14

This is an area of **Strength** for Oconee DSS. Reviewers found that foster care caseworkers worked with other service providers within the community and with foster parents to identify and preserve the significant relationships of the children in foster care.

Stakeholder Comment: Interagency staffings are held regularly by [the DSS Director], and he meets with her monthly in meetings with all the directors of local agencies in the “Oconee Leadership Forum,” which [the DSS Director] was instrumental in setting up. He also sees her at the FCRB meetings, and they email frequently about cases.

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Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	80	2	20	0	0

Explanation of Item 15

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. In 80% of the cases reviewed it was evident that all known paternal and maternal relatives were assessed as potential placements for the children in foster care. However, in some cases the agency focused on finding and assessing maternal relatives. Even when the identity and location of paternal relatives was known, they were not consistently assessed as potential caregivers for the children in foster care.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0

Explanation of Item 16

This is an area of **Strength** for Oconee DSS. The cooperation and initiative of foster parents contributed to the agency's ability to involve parents in their children's lives beyond the minimum required visits of twice per month. The high percentage of parents who continued to use methamphetamines and other drugs made visits irregular and sometimes not in the child's best interest.

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	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	16	80	4	20	0	0

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Explanation of Item 17

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. Initial assessments were generally well done. Ongoing assessment of needs and issues in all treatment cases were thorough and identified needs were addressed. However, ongoing assessments in 40% of treatment cases were inadequate. Some workers identified significant issues within a case, but took no appropriate action to address those issues.

Stakeholder Comment: Some workers are more effective than others. Some are on top of monitoring cases, responsive to other agencies, keeping up with drug screens, etc. Others are non-responsive and they have spoken with supervisors when this happens, and the supervisors have been responsive. Coordinating cases works well, except when workers are not up to par. It seems that treatment plans are more “cookie cutter” and not tailored well enough, because of the overload of cases.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	10	67	5	33	0	0

Explanation of Item 18

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. Foster care staff consistently involved parents and age appropriate children in the case planning process. Foster youth discussed their plans with workers during monthly visits and signed their treatment plans. The same was true in only half of the treatment cases. In families with several children treatment workers sometimes focused on the victim child, or on several but not all of the children in the home.

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Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	2	20	8	80	0	0
Total Cases	11	55	9	45	0	0

Explanation of Item 19

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. Workers generally conducted face-to-face visits with children in foster care according to agency policy. During the period under review the agency had five or fewer treatment staff that was required to see 385 children in treatment cases each month, for an average of 77 children per month. Consequently, children were often not seen.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	100	0	0	7	0
Treatment	2	20	8	80	0	0
Total Cases	5	38	8	62	7	0

Explanation of item 20

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. Parents in foster care cases were seen monthly, and more often as need warranted. Parents in treatment cases were seen sporadically. Gaps were seen in monthly visits between the time one caseworker left the agency and another began working the case.

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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	8	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	6	72	2	25	2	0
Total Cases	14	88	2	12	2	0

Explanation of item 21

This is an area of **Strength** for Oconee DSS. The educational needs of children in foster care were appropriately addressed. Caseworkers communicated directly with school officials when needed. School records were in case files. The same was true for most, but not all children in treatment cases.

Stakeholder Comments: The school and DSS email back and forth, and they get quick responses. DSS does well in responding back and letting her know what steps are being taken. DSS does coordinate effectively with law enforcement, and foster care seems to be working well. She doesn't see recurrence of maltreatment. They are short staffed, but have good relationships and they are doing what needs to be done.

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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	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	6	60	4	40	0	0
Total Cases	15	75	5	25	0	0

Explanation of Item 22

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. Generally, the medical needs of children in foster care were being met. In some cases treatment workers documented, but did not react to changing circumstances in the case. For example, the health of an infant born to parents whose other children were placed with relatives was not given proper attention, though the agency's history with the parents should have prompted close scrutiny.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	100	0	0	3	0
Treatment	2	40	3	60	5	0
Total Cases	9	75	3	25	8	0

Explanation of Item of 23

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. The mental health needs of children in foster care were properly managed. That was often the case because those children were in group care or therapeutic facilities in other counties and those facilities attended to the mental health needs of those children. However, the mental health needs of most (60%) of the children in treatment cases were not well managed.

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Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. The outcome report shows that of the 143 children with a foster care episode in the past 12 months, 71 were placed within the county (50%), which is below the standard of 70% placed within the county. The available 29 foster homes may not be sufficient. A review of licensing records showed that documentation both in the files and in CAPSS was generally very good. The three problems most often cited were 1) inconsistencies between the CAPSS record and the hard copy files, 2) foster parents who may be waiting until the last minute to complete training hours, and 3) missed quarterly visits.

Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

	Yes	No
Was the investigation initiated timely?	4/5 = 80%	1/5 = 20
Was the assessment adequate?	4/5 = 80%	1/5 = 20
Was the decision appropriate?	4/5 = 80%	1/5 = 20

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. Four of the five assessments were adequate. The one inadequate assessment could not support the decision to unfound the case. School information documented bizarre behavior in the children. The agency needed to know why that behavior existed. The worker requested no medical or mental health assessment.

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Onsite Review Rating Summary			
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	1/3 = 33%	2/3 = 67%	17
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	19/20 = 95%	1/20 = 5	0
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	6/11 = 56%	5/11 = 44%	9
Item 4: Risk of harm to child(ren)	14/20 = 70%	6/20 = 30%	0
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.			
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	0	0	10
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	10/10 = 100%	0	0
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	8/10 = 80%	2/10 = 20%	0
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	1/1 = 100%	0	9
Item 9: Adoption	0	7/7 = 100%	3
Item 10: Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)	2/2 = 100%	0	8
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.			
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	4/4 = 100%	0	6
Item 12: Placement with siblings	4/4 = 100%	0	6
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	3/4 = 75%	1/5 = 25%	6
Item 14: Preserving connections	7/8 = 88%	1/8 = 12%	2
Item 15: Relative placement	8/10 = 80%	2/10 = 20%	0
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	1/1 = 100%	0	9
Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.			
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, caregiver	16/20 = 80%	4/20 = 20%	0
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	10/15 = 67%	5/15 = 33%	5
Item 19: Worker visits with child	11/20 = 55%	9/20 = 45%	0
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	5/13 = 38%	8/13 = 62%	7
Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.			
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	14/16 = 88%	2/16 = 12%	4
Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.			
Item 22: Physical health of the child	15/20 = 75%	5/20 = 25%	0
Item 23: Mental health of the child	9/12 = 75%	3/12 = 25%	8

**Oconee County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
November 2006**

Screened Out Intakes

	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
Was Intake Appropriately Screened Out?	8	1	1
	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	4	2	4
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	1	3	6

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Oconee DSS. Although the decision to screen-out eight of the 10 intakes reviewed was appropriate, the 20% error rate is too high. The reason given for one inappropriately screened-out intake was “Unable to locate.” However, the record did not indicate effort by the agency to locate the family even though the intake was rated High Risk. No documented contact with the school or law enforcement. The other intake inappropriately screened-out involved a child allegedly sexually molested by a grandparent. At the very least the agency should have made a referral to law enforcement.