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Human Services Program Quality Review - Pickens County DSS - May 2002

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**HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM QUALITY REVIEW
PICKENS COUNTY DSS
MAY 2002**

The South Carolina Department of Social Services Human Services Division conducted a qualitative review of Pickens County DSS in May 2002. The review was conducted on site, and consisted of case record reviews, and staff interviews. A sample of Adoptions and MTS cases where the child's county of origin was Pickens was also reviewed.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SAMPLE INFORMATION

Program under review	Referrals Not Accepted As Reports, CPS Assessment, Dual Track, CPS Treatment	Foster Care, MTS, Adoptions
Period Under Review	October 2001 - March 2002	Cases Active As Of March 31, 2002
Cases Sampled	15	10
Cases Provided by County	5	0
Cases Reviewed	20	10

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	CAPSS	69	100%	5050	100%
Children in care more than 12 months	CAPSS	25	36.23%	3143	62.24%
In care more than 12 months where permanency hearing has not been held	CAPSS	9	36.00%	660	36.03%

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Children in care for whom permanency plan has not been achieved within 3/6 months after permanency planning hearing	CAPSS	Report under development
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Summary: While data is not readily available concerning the achievement of permanency plans, the involvement of the family or the child in planning, and a thorough evaluation of case progress are major factors in this outcome.

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	10	32.70	320	47.76
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: The thorough case planning and follow through by the Greenville Adoptions office is the major factor in this finding.

Outcome 3: Improve Child Well-Being

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%

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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 cases reviewed where Foster Children were in school, we found that all were on grade level, and most were attending school and exhibiting no attendance or behavior problems. The cases with attendance or behavior problems were receiving support services.			
Number and percentage of children and adolescents who show physical and mental health is stable or improving (therapy, screenings)	In the cases reviewed, we found that the 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 cases reviewed, we found that no children were identified with substance abuse issues.			
Number and percentage of runaways	8	2.03%	95	1.95%
Number and percentage who age out of foster care and failed to meet goals	1	1.61%	20	0.38%
Number and percentage who become pregnant	From case file review and caseworker interviews, we noted no instances of pregnancy or of a foster child fathering a child.			
Number and percentage who are adjudicated for delinquency: once, more than once.	In the cases reviewed, we found that no children were involved with delinquency issues.			

Summary: Based on case reviews, children in foster care in Pickens are generally experiencing few problems with school, behavior, or substance abuse. The Independent Living cases reviewed documented realistic case plans to prepare the child for leaving foster care.

Outcome 4: Reduce Time in Foster Care to Reunification Without

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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 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 Foster Care cases where visitation was a part of the case plan, we noted an average of 1 visit per child per month from family or relatives.			
Number of children who return to foster care after reunification within 12 months	0	0.00%	11	3.97%

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.

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	43	43.9%	1193	23.7%

Summary: Pickens DSS is taking the age of the child into consideration

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when arranging placements, by considering the availability of individual foster homes first. The lack of available spaces in individual foster homes occasionally 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	n/a	4	100%

Summary: Pickens DSS has regular telephone and face-to-face contacts with foster parents by foster home licensing staff. All foster parents are seen at these contacts, and the topics discussed are clearly documented. The visits with foster children are also clearly documenting an ongoing assessment of the child's safety.

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	37	62.71%	3813	76.70%

Summary: The majority of cases we reviewed had between 0 and 3 placements. In those cases with higher numbers of placements, the reason for changing placements was generally disruptive activity by the child or placing a sibling group together.

Outcome 8: Increase Stability of Children's Lives

Measure	County		State	
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	#	%	#	%
Percentage of children who change schools/schools systems:	Of the children in Foster Care who are attending school:			
Once	6 had changed school once as the result of placement			
More than once	4 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 cases reviewed, all 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 more than one change in caseworkers.

Outcome 9: Reduce/Prevent Abuse and Neglect of Children

Measure	County		State	
	#	%	#	%
Number and percentage of indicated cases of child abuse and/or neglect:	23	67.65%	558	38.54%
Total				
Among high-risk populations	Report under development			
Number of fatalities among children known to the agency	1	0.81%	7	0.08%

Summary: Pickens DSS has regular staffing procedures in place to address effective case decision-making. In actual practice, case decisions are usually based on limited contact with the family. As stated before, an ongoing assessment of child safety in Dual Track, CPS Treatment, and Foster Care cases is clearly documented.

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

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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 had prior CPS history, either of unfounded reports, active agency involvement, or not accepted at referral.

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	36	61.02%	4223	84.95%
Number and percentage of children placed informally (with relatives)	3	3.66%	330	6.64%
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)	11	8.33%	415	7.95%

Summary: The County has a strong relationship with the Family Court and other advocacy groups which results in appropriate placement of children.

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

Measure	County		State	
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	#	%	#	%
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 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 occurring.			
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.			
Number of days/weeks from achievement of treatment goals to case closure in treatment cases	Report under development			

Summary: While there are regular staffings with other agencies, the timely exchange of progress reports was problematic. The involvement of clients and service providers in case planning and evaluation of case plans in terms of behavioral change are incentives to the achievement of this outcome.

Outcome 13: Increase Supply of Foster Home Placement Slots

Measure	County	State

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	#	%	#	%
Number of licensed foster home placement slots	33	100%	1695	100%
Kinship care	Report under development			
Placements that fit	Report under development			
Close to home	Report under development			

Summary: Pickens DSS has procedures in place to improve support to foster parents and to determine appropriate placements for children.

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)