

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel's mission is to review our child welfare procedures throughout the system offering summaries and recommendations for improvements benefitina children and families.

Wyoming



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Citizen Review Panel, Inc.
D10R2 March 19-21, 2007 Mini CFSR Report
Rocksprings

Case Ratings:

#D10301 (*Rocksprings*)

- Two areas needing improvement; Item 6-Stability of foster care placement; Item 8-Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives. "DFS involvement made the difference"

#D10302 (*Rocksprings*)

- One area needing improvement; Item 7-Permanency goal for child. "Grandparents willingness to step up to the plate"

#D10303 (*Rocksprings*)

- Perfect scoring case. "Good assessments and one service provider in an assessment case"

#R2298 (*Rocksprings*)

- Three areas needing improvement: Item 7-Permanency goal for child; Item 8-Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives and Item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning. "Judge did not take the recommendations of the team members"

#R2299 (*Rocksprings*)

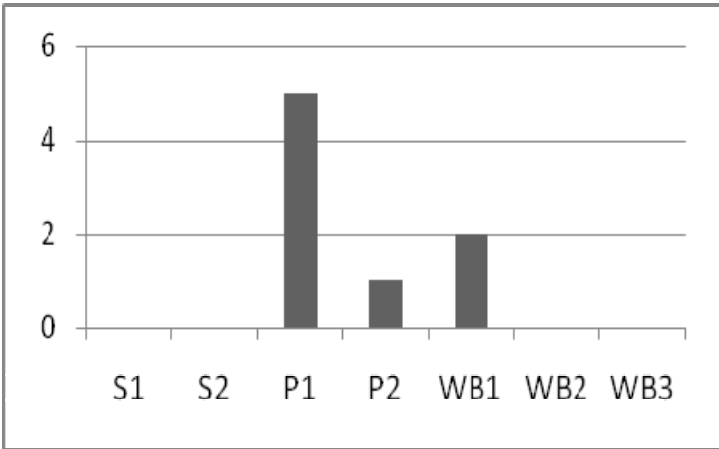
- One area needing improvement: Item 14-Preserving connections. "Everyone had positive comments about the case worker"

#R2300 (*Rocksprings*)

- One area needing improvement: Item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents. "There is a need to integrate probation services and family centered practice"

Of the 6 cases reviewed, 5 involved methamphetamine

The graph to the right shows the number of Mini CFSR instrument items rating as "areas needing improvement" in the broad outcome categories of safety, permanency and well-being.



Italic font indicates juvenile service review comments; standard font indicates child protection review comments.

DFS has taken ownership of the following policy issues:

- *There is no policy for compelling reasons not to pursue termination of parental rights (TPR)*
- WYCAPS may need a drop down box with the five Federally accepted TPR compelling reasons
- Boxes in WYCAPS; need more options on the case plan with regards to goals
- When parents refuse services from the Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS), consider involving the child's current caretakers in the case planning process
- The whole policy around assessments; what documentation is needed in assessments?

Local DFS Office issues:

- *ICWA should be recognized*

Issues requiring DFS administrative level attention:

- *Turnover of caseworkers causes inconsistency*
- *Juvenile services case workers had placement caseloads of 49-62 during the summer of 2005*
- Foster parent recruitment and retention for sibling groups and adolescents
- View the way county juvenile services and DFS juvenile services integrate and look for ways to enhance those partnerships

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel has taken ownership of the following systemic issues and/or community issues:

- *Children have to be sent out of the community for residential treatment*
- Foster parent certification and recruitment for sibling groups and adolescents

Strengths:

- Advocacy:
 - *"DFS assisted the family with financial needs"*
 - *"Original guardian ad litem (GAL) was very good; even went to the Wyoming Girls School (WGS) to see the child"*
- Communication:
 - *"Communication between county probation and DFS has improved greatly in the past three years"*
- Consistency:
 - *"Good communication between county probation and DFS caseworker"*
 - *"Child has been in consistence placement since August of 2005"*
 - *"Case had one DFS caseworker"*
- Documentation and adherence to procedure:
 - *"Parents spoke very highly of the caseworker's case work"*
 - *"Mother, county attorney, child and the WGS all had positive comments about the caseworker"*
 - *"GAL reports that DFS caseworker did a great job"*
 - *"GAL reports that the DFS caseworker is the hardest working caseworker in the office"*
 - *"County attorney felt that the assessment case was handled well by DFS"*
- Effective use of service array:
 - *"Placement at the WGS was very beneficial for the child"*
 - *"CDC, Head Start, Multi Systemic Treatment (MST), Southwest Counseling, urinary analysis (on mother), in home parenting"*
 - *"Continued medical care for child coming from a meth mom"*
 - *"DFS arranged for inpatient treatment for mom; she refused"*
 - *"MST provider did a good job of assessing the situation and providing in home services"*

- "Services met the needs of the family"
- Engagement of the child:
 - "Child was on an individual education plan (IEP)"
- Family involvement:
 - "Dedication of the family was good"
 - "DFS attempted placement with a relative (aunt)"
 - "Both maternal and paternal grandparents were very supportive and involved"
 - "Extended family; looking at nieces and nephews for adoptive parents"
 - "Family felt they were involved and their needs were met; the family is still applying the skills they learned"
- Foster care services:
 - "Children were placed together in foster care"
 - "Respite care offered for foster/adopt family"
 - "Paternal grandparents became the adoptive family"
- Preserving connections:
 - "DFS recognized that the children were very bonded; kept together in foster care"
 - "Child has been in one consistent placement since August of 2005 (paternal grandparents)"
- Successful outcomes:
 - "Safety, permanency and well-being were met"
 - "DFS is keeping some cases open to provide some services that would not otherwise be available"
- Collaboration:
 - "School noted concerns with the child and contact DFS"

Additional contributing factors:

- "A child may start on probation with county probation then DFS works with the child when he or she goes into placement; as soon as the child comes out of placement the child goes back into county probation. The differing practice philosophies can create some disjoints for the client"
- "In a small community, the family reported that it was hard to feel good about themselves because everyone knew about the problems their child was having"
- "Often times the educational system will not accept credits from the WGS unless the child remains there for a certain period of time; judges recognize that and sometimes keep the child at the WGS for an extended period of time so that the education system will accept the credits"
- "County probation workers are school specific; if the child changes schools the child changes caseworkers"
- "Mothers methamphetamine use is a major contributing factor to the child being at the Wyoming Girls School"
- "TPRs have improved in Sweetwater County"
- "Parents refused to work with DFS despite DFS's efforts"
- "Foster mother and DFS case worker stayed involved but other professionals would not show up for meetings involving the children"

Opportunities for improvement:

- Case planning:
 - "The GAL, county attorney and the WGS all questioned whether reunification was still an appropriate goal in the case at this time"
 - "Case plan was not developed within the 60 day time frame"
 - "County attorney is encouraging DFS to consider changing the case plan from something other than reunification"
 - "ICWA was not established"
 - "Reduce foster care placements when appropriate and possible"

- “Children had four different placements”
- “There were lacking case plans in the case file; initial case plan and second case plan which had other planned living arrangement (OPLA) as a goal, but long term placement with relatives may have been more appropriate”
- Contact:
 - *“Communication between Frontier Corrections (FCS) and the family is very poor; parents report that the communication was great when the child was at the WGS, but when she was placed at FCS the communication stopped”*
 - *“Difficult for case worker to visit with mother in prison”*
- Family involvement:
 - *“Services were needed for the family to help them be successful”*
 - *“Foster family had allegations of abuse; not against the child in placement, however”*
 - *“Assessment cases often times are hard to get a good return on caseworker time; ie mother not following up with recommendations”*
 - *“Engage biological father whenever possible”*
- Aftercare
 - *“Child reported that he needed more aftercare; DFS had lost a worker, but now has the position filled”*

Systemic Barriers:

- Area conditions:
 - *“There are a lack of foster parents in Sweetwater County especially those who are able to take sibling groups”*
 - *“Mother could not find housing in Rock Springs in order to be able to qualify her to get her children returned to her custody; however she could not qualify without all her children”*
 - *“It is tricky to navigate between county probation and DFS; while it can be confusing, county probation does provide a service that helps reduce the caseloads of DFS probation”*
 - *“In order to help the coordination between county probation and DFS, it may be useful for county probation to be more family centered”*
 - *“Child had to be placed outside of her community for services”*
- Legal system:
 - *“It appeared that the judge did whatever she wanted and did not take the recommendations of county probation, the county attorney or DFS”*
 - *“GAL has not even met the child as of this date, since 9/2006; he made a recommendation at the MDT and had never met or talked to the child”*
 - *“Court was not clear in their orders who could do what or who was responsible”*
 - *“Grandparents had to pay for their own attorney; not enough attorney’s in this area who will do adoption cases”*
 - *“Judge often appoints one person to represent the child both as their attorney and GAL”*
- *“Mileage services provided by DFS have to be claimed as income by parents”*

Review process dynamics and considerations:

- Citizen reviewers in this review consisted of:
 - CASA volunteer and WYCRP Panel member;
 - University of Wyoming and DFS intern;
 - two case worker from the Northern Arapahoe Tribe;
 - case worker from the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, and
 - a worker from YAHA of Evanston.
- The period under review was January 1, 2006 through June 30, 2006.
- 3 out of 6 (50%) review samples were children of color