

**March 12-13, 2008 Mini CFSR Report
Cody/Greybull/Powell Department of Family Services (DFS) – D5R1**

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Three strongest review areas:

- Safety 1 - 100%
- Safety 2 - 100%
- Well Being 2 - 96.7

Greatest strengths from stakeholder interviews:

- Strength based approaches and engagement of others by DFS.

Review challenge area:

- Well Being 1; 17c - assessment and service provision for foster parents.

Issues for DFS administrative level consideration:

- Third party perpetration policy and procedure consideration. Law enforcement did the investigation, but there was never any entry into WYCAPS resulting in someone not getting put on central registry;
- foster care versus adoption; may need separate SS49 forms;
- WYCAPS needs to be modified and updated to match policy in a number of different areas such as concurrent case planning, allegations, and face to face visits for caseworkers when they see three different parties in one setting or visit;
- through DFS policy and practice, we reward relatives financially to put kids in the state custody;
- how to address permanency goals for children who are older but still in DFS custody;
- involvement of parents in MDTs needs to clearly be defined as to what it looks like in policy;
- death benefits from deceased father taken for child's care in placement and then mother ordered to pay child support;
- there is a need for recognition of, and training for, family assistance workers;
- out of county foster care placements need to require good communication between DFS offices, and
- why aren't APS cases being reviewed as well using a process similar to the Mini CFSR process?
- Many safety assessments have to be overridden in WYCAPS because it says one thing but the case workers know differently and have valid concerns;
- no existing resources to hold foster care appreciation functions;
- assessments are described as cookie cutter and there are many areas that are not WYCAPS bullet point areas that need to be identified, and
- staff training for blood borne pathogens such as Hepatitis B as well as medication administration and training.

Issues requiring local DFS office attention:

- PRIDE training teaches foster parents that they need to have information about their child's case but some DFS offices are hesitant to do that possibly not knowing what information to share. A consistent message and follow thru needs to be honored; SS49 form usage is also somewhat confused;
- getting mental health reports from the providers and in the case files, and
- given that it is a large geographic area, foster parents feel that they are somewhat disenfranchised from DFS.

Case Ratings:

#D5487 (Cody) – Two areas needing improvement: Item 9 – Adoption and Item 17 – Assessment and services provision for child, parents and foster parents.¹ **The diligent efforts of the family assistance worker and caseworker ensured good services for the child.**

#D5488 (Powell) – Perfect scoring case. **The relationship of the MDT members and their meetings on a monthly basis made a big difference in the case.**

#D5490 (Greybull) – Perfect scoring case. **Boys relationship with aunts and mother helped the young man be successful.**

#R1483 (Cody) – Perfect scoring case. **The court has worked with DFS and the family and then opted to keep the child at Dorm 4 of the Wyoming Boy's School to get services for his substance abuse problems and acquire independent living skills along with other needed counseling.**

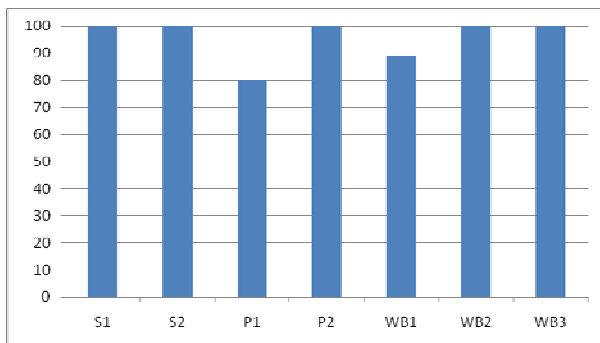
#R1484 (Cody) – One area needing improvement: Item 15 – Relative placement. **Good coordination between DFS and others involved in the case.**

#R1485 (Cody) – Perfect scoring case. **Grandmother wished the child was still on probation to help keep him on track.**

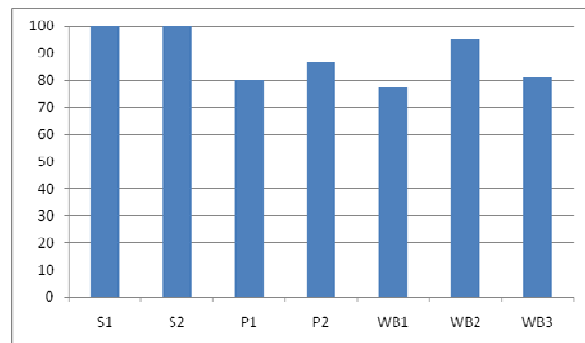
#R1486 (Cody) – Perfect scoring case. **Nobody interviewed in the case would have had anything done differently; the child said she wished she was back on probation.**

#R1489 (Powell) – One area needing improvement: Item 15 – Relative placement. **The extensive services available were incredible for the child; father's side of the family was not researched or involved.**

#R1491 (Greybull) – Perfect scoring case. **Caseworker awareness of the case helped tremendously.**



The graph above shows the percentage composite scores of this Mini CFSSR review (round IV).



The graph above shows the percentage composite scores for the first three rounds of Mini CFSSRs.

¹ 17C; assessment and service provision for foster parents was rated as an area needing improvement.

Strengths:

- Education:
 - “Greybull and Basin schools allowed child to attend both schools at once for different classes;”
 - “tutoring was set up even though the child did not make good use of it;”
 - “Powell School District aggressively pursues educational neglect,” and
 - “school counselor also worked with the mother in the case.”
- Effective case planning and work:
 - “Permanency goal of reunification set forty five (45) days after case opened;”
 - “good work was done getting father involved in the case after an extended period of not being involved in the child’s life;”
 - “child asserted a different sexual persuasion; it was included in the case plan for the child to change schools which resulted in a much better atmosphere for the child who then did better in school;”
 - “MDTs are family oriented;”
 - “good efforts to engage absent parents and extended families;”
 - “probation case worked as if it was an Intensive Supervision Probation (ISP) case;”
 - “caseworker physically worked with youth to complete community service;”
 - “same case worker throughout the entirety of the case;”
 - “child placed in the same community;”
 - “good case management and collaboration with others;”
 - “lots of formal and ongoing informal assessments done for risk and safety in the case;”
 - “AD04 positions are very useful in juvenile services cases to help monitor the cases and work with the children;”
 - “concerted efforts were used throughout the entire case to involve the father;”
 - “caseworker helps co-facilitate the criminal thinking group, with a child on her caseload in it;”
 - “caseworker was very committed to the case and made visits during the evenings and on weekends;”
 - “caseworker consistency and retention;”
 - “good documentation in the case file;”
 - “child felt that if his world went to pieces he would go back to his caseworker;”
 - “good safety and risk assessments;”
 - “worker visits with child and parents were frequently (more than policy) and of quality;”
 - “caseworker would try and locate the mother out of state when she was in the area transporting another child to a treatment center;”
 - “frequent and quality case worker visits;”
 - “good coordination between the juvenile services and child protective case workers,” and
 - “once DFS got involved in an educational neglect case, the child started attending school regularly and her grades improved.”
- Effective use of service array:
 - “Counseling offered to the father in the home;”
 - “good use of risk assessments;”
 - “individual and family counseling;”
 - “after school programs in Powell developed by the family therapist;”
 - “wilderness trip was provided for the child;”
 - “Disneyland trip was provided for the child;”
 - “mentoring for the child was provided;”
 - “Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), individual groups, Urinary Analysis (UAs), Cedar Mountain services were used in the case for a successful outcome;”
 - “MACI, Ansell Casey, other assessments were done on the child;”

- “counselor from Texas continued the work with the child from Texas over the phone;”
- “both mother and daughter have had good psychological assessments;”
- “child will be discharged from the WBS with either a GED or his graduation from high school,” and
- “the Wyoming Boys School (WBS) has assisted the child in getting a mountain bike and clothes for college.”
- Family Involvement and Support:
 - “Mother’s proximity to the group home helped facilitate weekly visits;”
 - “family loyalty helped the child be successful;”
 - “maternal grandmother and maternal aunt have been very supportive despite the child’s mother not being supportive,” and
 - “family paid for a great deal of treatment prior to DFS involvement.”
- Legal System:
 - “Child had to pay reimbursement and wash windows for the school after the child destroyed a laptop computer;”
 - “court retained child past 18 birthday in order that the child could continue to receive services;”
 - “court was very involved in the child’s education; every time the child got a D he had to do another hour of community service and every time he got a F he had to do two hours of community service,” and
 - “GAL felt that everyone’s involvement in the case was exactly the right amount needed.”

Opportunities for improvement:

- Case planning and work:
 - “Case documentation could be more complete to clearly delineate what has been done and discussed;”
 - “better communication with the foster parents with regards to who is going to pick the child up,” and
 - “counseling reports and safety assessments need to be in the case file.”
- Family involvement and support:
 - “Contact with father’s side of the family,” and
 - “while there was a thorough search for relative caregivers on the maternal side of the family, there was none on the father’s side; the father was a convicted sex offender but efforts beyond him were lacking.”

Systemic Barriers:

- Education System:
 - “School stated that they were going to pass the child to the next higher grade even though he has failing grades; the MDTs are empowering the child to make his own choices;”
- Regional Issues:
 - “Limited services in the area for a child to receive personal services in education,” and
 - “Yellowstone Behavioral Health took from November to April to get her in for services.”
- Legal System:
 - “More support from the court to get evaluations done on the mother may have been useful in the case;”
 - courts and prosecuting attorney could support the workers more when the caseworker has evidence or a feeling of a need for a parent,” and
 - “once the child is adjudicated as a delinquent by the court, the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) was removed severing a connection that was important to the child.”

Additional contributing factors:

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The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel’s mission is to review our child welfare procedures throughout the system offering summaries and recommendations benefiting children and families

- “The building layout in Powell, with public health, sheriff’s department, county attorney, WICK and DFS really makes a difference for the collaboration of services;”
- “group home was not aware of the step-father in the home and his involvement in the case;”
- “two children would not attend dental screenings or do follow up dental exams and cleaning;”
- “delay in getting mental health services for six months, however school stepped up and provided services in the interim;”²
- “mother was not compliant and helpful in the case at all;”
- “child was arrested for driving while under the influence after dropping her mother off at a local tavern;”
- “child has been in the Wyoming Girl’s School (WGS) for an extended period of time, but the mother has only visited the girl twice,” and
- “mother told the child that when he turned 18, and if he had not “straightened up” she was leaving; she did exactly that.”

Review process dynamics and considerations:

- Citizen reviewers consisted of:
 - Casey Family Programs systems improvement specialist;
 - Eastern Shoshone case worker;
 - Eastern Shoshone case worker;
 - Wyoming Citizen Review Panel member;
 - Counselor;
 - Education official;
 - Eastern Shoshone Tribal legal services worker;
 - Foster parent, and
 - Northern Arapaho Social Services worker.
- Why aren’t APS cases reviewed as well?
- Review who should be scheduled to be interviewed in the Mini CFSR process;
- consider doing a review of cases in off years; suggested randomly selecting a case file and applying the instrument:
 - review with a greater emphasis on quality versus quantity on these select reviews.
- WYCRP work with Cody, Greybull and Powell DFS on creating a white paper on staff retention as it is very good in this area³, and
- strategically schedule stakeholder meetings.

Thought:
 The system does a good job of insuring safety; but once in placement it may fall short in helping those same youth become productive citizens.

² This does not appear to be the norm; apparently the child was on the wrong list of some sort.

³ This may also be applicable to do with the Laramie DFS office on foster parent recruitment and retention.

Promising Trends:

- “Powell School District aggressively pursues educational neglect cases;”
- “youth reported that they generally see their case workers once a month;”
- “good recognition of concurrent case planning by DFS management and staff:
 - One caseworker has a concurrent case plan on every case.”
- “New DFS on call rotation in the Basin area has worked much better; quicker response and better relationship building between law enforcement and DFS;”
- “Health Coalition in Big Horn County is a great support for the child welfare system in general;”
- “good use of available resources; children going into placement is a last option;”
- “forensic interviewing resources are available and training has been given;”
- “DFS is most always involved in the educational plans;”
- “system is doing a good job of assessing and providing in home services; Yellowstone Behavioral Health in Powell is offering in home services which is a part of lower placements;”
- “school counselor has a grandparents group for grandparents caring for their grandchildren;”
- “in Powell Public health and DFS are co located in the same building and staff cases together;”
- “management encourages workers to “get out in community;”
- “MDT process is open and constructive,” and
- “everyone in the child welfare system generally looks at the family’s strengths and they build off that.”

Concerning Trends:

- “There is a need for both sexual victimization and perpetration counseling services in the area;”
- “according to a youth, her brother was taken out of her home because of abuse charges; but she did don’t get removed or understand why. It took her running away and becoming delinquent to get removed from the home;”
- “a sixteen year old child has been in DFS custody for eight years;”
- “youth feel that some facilities use visitation with their families as a consequence;”
- “a youth felt that immediate family was considered for placement, but not extended family;”
- “foster care resources are somewhat limited, especially for teenagers; keeping siblings together can be a problem;”
- “need more independent living resources in the area;”
- “jurisdictional issues involving foster parent usage;”
- “funding for training is a problem in several agencies,” and
- “a TFC program could not be developed in Powell due to a lack of participation.



Program Improvement Plan

Office determined strengths:

1. Low staff turnover equating to consistency:
 - o Good collaboration between DFS workers and other stakeholders in the community “makes my job enjoyable;”
2. we “know” the people we work with - professional knowledge of our partners;
3. regularity of our family partnerships;
4. support from our supervisors is very good;
5. working with the attorney general’s office is comfortable;
6. good sense of teamwork;
7. recognition of caseworker’s strengths and skills; triage by management in case assignment;
8. tenure allows us to be able to “navigate” the system;
9. true family centered practice;
10. family assistance workers have the ability to make immediate responses;
11. dedicated family assistance workers;
12. manageable case loads:
 - o specialization has helped;
 - o Title 19 Medicaid services have increased so there are more services, and
 - o greater school services.
13. Open and have an attitude that we can always do a better job, and
14. out of home placements are not seen as solving every problem, system values trying to keep kids in a community; culture is important.
15. Multi Disciplinary Team (MDTs) meetings and family partnerships are constant and ongoing.

Office determined needs and concerns:

1. Some systemic issues, like obtaining mental health assessments, have existed for decades;
2. dislike regarding the assessments and the new case plans as they do not encourage the caseworker to think, especially new workers;
3. family assistance workers need more compensation for what they do;
4. services for disabled children could be more plentiful such as funding for home improvements and changes; pretty significant gaps for developmental disability waivers and children are falling through the cracks;
5. foster parent and staff interactions through training and support groups:
 - a. Currently working with Dr. Richard Delaney on foster parent support issues.
6. Consideration of caseworker input for minimal child support when the situations warrants.

Office determined Program Improvement Plan for the upcoming year (PIP):

1. Continue feedback on the new case plan with the policy/creation committee;
2. WYCAPS⁴;
3. Foster care:
 - a. SS49 form understanding and usage:
 - i. Foster care versus adoption; may need separate form for each.
 - b. Start foster parent and staff meetings again.
4. Contribute to a white paper on staff retention.

⁴ Please see DFS policy issues on page 1.