

**October 24 and 25, 2007 Mini CFSR Report
Gillette, Sundance and Newcastle DFS – D6R4**

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Three Strongest Review Areas:

	<u>4th</u>	<u>Overall</u>
• S2: Children are safely maintained at home when possible:	100%	95.0%
○ Very consistent performance overall on this outcome & individual items.		
• P2: Family relationships are preserved.	80.0%	85.0%
• WB2: Educational needs of children are met.	100%	87.1%
• WB3: Children's physical and mental health needs are met:	85.7%	83.3%
○ Very consistent performance overall.		

Area of need:

• P1: Children are stable in placement:	40.0%	55.0%
○ Strong overall performance in:		
▪ Item 6: Stability of placement @ 94.1%, and		
▪ Item 10: OPPLA @ 100%.		
○ Item 9: Adoption @ 0%:		
▪ Adoption not completed within 24 months due to court delays, and		
▪ 1 case in 4 th round and 1 in 3 rd round with same issues.		
• WB1: Families can provide for their children's needs:	75.0%	71.4%
○ Not locating or involving non-custodial parents effect the scores in:		
▪ Item 17B: Assessment of needs & services provided to parents;	71.4%	71.4%
▪ Item 18: Child/Family involvement in planning, and	57.1%	67.6%
▪ Item 20: Worker visits with parents.	71.4%	72.7%

Greatest Strengths from Stakeholder Interviews:

- DFS efforts have encouraged more relatives to step up and be available for children;
- teamwork around families, and
- good assessments of needs and service provision.

Review Challenge Area:

- Caseworker turnover & resulting high caseload levels;
- case planning, and
- engaging non-custodial parents.

Issues for administrative level consideration:

- Training is desired and more information about what trainings are available would be helpful;
- policy to address annual well-child check-ups, and
- caseworker turnover/understaffed workers and high case loads:
 - Three-month-old case, and there have already been two case workers. There was significant lost information in the transition, not only between case workers but also with the school counselors resulting because of this turnover, and
 - because of high case loads, workers are forced to prioritize what needs to be done the most while other smaller issues are set back.

Issues requiring local DFS office attention:

- Increased efforts to engage non-custodial parents, and
- attention to timely case plans.

Case Ratings:

#D6444 - Two areas needing improvement: Item 9 - Adoption; Item 22 - Physical health of child. (**Mother has a serious methamphetamine problem, and has relinquished her parental right; the grandmother is adopting the child**).

#D6445 - Perfect scoring case. (**Mother’s willingness to voluntarily go to inpatient treatment at WYSTAR and change her life to get her three children back had everything to do with the success of this case**).

#D6446 - One area needing improvement: Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning.¹ (**Because child and mother experienced severe trauma when they witnessed the father die in a motorcycle accident, DFS was very careful when assessing needs and offering service for child and mother’s PTSD**).

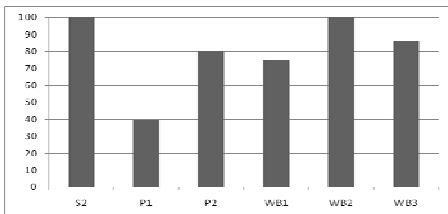
#D6450 (Newcastle) - One area needing improvement: Item 7 - Permanency goal for child. (**An entire community supported this young family**).

#R4447 - Perfect scoring case. (**Bio-family has always bowled together and DFS has added this family time in visitation and case plans to continue these ties and bonds**).

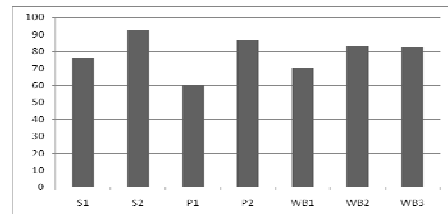
#R4448 - Six areas needing improvement: Item 7 - Permanency goal for child; Item 13 - Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care; Item 16 - Relationship of child in care with parents; Item 17 - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating)²; Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning and Item 20 - Worker visits with parent(s). (**Mother was very willing to do whatever was needed to maintain her relationship with her child, even travel long distances when her son was placed out of town at her own expense**).

#R4449 - Three areas needing Improvement: Item 17 - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating);³ Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning; Item 20 - Worker visits with child. (**Drug court held mother accountable in addition to youth, and provided consequences when rules were not followed by parents**).

#D4451- (Sundance) - Perfect scoring case.



The graph above depicts the composite scores of the **ROUND IV** Mini CF SR in the broad outcome categories of *safety, permanency and well-being*. A total of eight case cases were reviewed; six in Gillette, one in Sundance and one in Newcastle.



The graph above shows the percentage composite scores of the **three previous rounds** of Mini CF SRs with the greatest cumulative strength being in Safety 2 (S2) and the lowest cumulative area being in Permanency 1 (P1).

¹ No case plan was done

² 17b; assessment of needs and provision of services for parents rated as ANI

³ 17b; assessment of needs and provision of services for parents rated as ANI

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Strengths:

- Effective coordination with the education system:
 - “Once the child had an individual education plan (IEP) and a mentor, her grades improved;”
 - “child is not interested in school, but he is on an IEP and is receiving services needed to graduate school or get a GED,” and
 - “the relationship between the case worker, clients and high school counselor has contributed to the positive outcome of this case.”
- Effective case planning and work:
 - “Mom still calls case worker if she has questions or problems, even though the case is closed,” and
 - “youth considers her DFS worker “one of the greatest supports of her life.”
 - “Mom referred to case worker as her “savior;”
 - “this was a family centered case because the workers used history of the family and the interests of the mother to look at the strengths and needs of the family;”
 - “this case was very well organized and thought out. You could tell the case worker was always thinking a couple of steps ahead with regards to perspective case plan goals;”
 - “there were no additional intakes of abuse or neglect once DFS got involved with the family;”
 - “the agency used relatives for placement options, but after placement the elderly grandmother and aunt had medical issues that prevented them from caring for all the children;”
 - “the child and the mother were involved in the case planning and treatment team meetings;”
 - “this family is really into bowling and the child is an excellent bowler; the case worker advocated for child to continue to bowl with the family.”
 - “Despite the termination of parental rights (TPR), the case worker fought to make sure that the grandmother and extended family still have contact with the family. The children do see their mother occasionally, but identify her as their aunt;”
 - “efforts to contact the father have been made, however he has not been located;”
 - “case worker has done absolutely everything possible to engage the family;”
 - “concerted efforts were made to locate the father. There were warrants out for his arrest, letters and phone calls were made to family members to locate him and the police were also looking for him;”
 - “there were at least two quality face-to-face visits between case worker and family every month throughout the life of the case;”
 - “the case worker had a big involvement and connection with the children in the case;”
 - “case files were very easy to read, thanks to the tabs and organized nature of them;”
 - “the only change in placement during the period under review was placement back with the mother;”
 - “agency helped the foster mom quit smoking so that the children could live in a smoke-free environment;”
 - “mother was asked if she got enough services, she said “yes, and then some.” She said that she received services that she did not necessarily want but now feels they were necessary;”
 - “all required dental screenings and doctor visits were completed;”

- “the entire sibling group was placed in the same foster home;”
- “the placement was in the same community as the mom, and when mom was placed at WYSTAR, the case worker took the children to visit the mom at least twice a month;”
- “all required assessments were done and needs were addressed;”
- “the contact with the foster mom has been helpful,” and
- “although there were six case workers with this case the transition between them was great.”
- Effective use of service array:
 - “There was ongoing monitoring of the child in this case, by both the drug court and DFS. Drug court gave her two random urinary analysis a week;”
 - “child is receiving independent living (IPL) services in case he ages out of the system and chooses not to go home;”
 - “mother felt that her needs were being assessed and met through services arranged by the caseworker;”
 - “the needs were very well identified and appropriate referrals were made;”
 - “formal and informal assessments for chemical dependency have been done for this family,” and
 - “the children are back in the home and it appears to be a very stable environment. The children are still receiving counseling services, despite the case being closed.”
- Family involvement and support:
 - “Father said “I will do everything that I legally have to do with this child, and nothing more;”
 - “mother quit drinking when moving to Gillette;”
 - “the relationship between the mother and the son; they are very connected despite the trauma involved in this case;”
 - “the foster mother and the mother have a very good relationship;”
 - “mother’s determination has made this case successful,” and
 - “potential safety concern with mom’s boyfriend was addressed and mom cut ties.”
- Legal
 - Court orders are written in a way in this county that if the parents do not comply with the case plan, they are held in contempt and can go to jail,” and
 - “the drug court did a great job holding mom accountable. Mom went to jail for 48 hours for having drug paraphernalia in the home.”

Opportunities for improvement:

- Case planning and work:
 - “There is no case plan in this case, and it is 90 days into the case. There has been an informal case plan done, and the family knows what needs to happen and is aware of the permanency plan. Reviewers felt that if there was a case planning session done, the child and family would understand the need for CHINS;”
 - “there was never a formal risk assessment; however there were constant informal risk assessments,” and
 - “family is very confused as to who their case worker is since the last worker has left.”
- Use of service array:
 - “There did not appear to be any assessments for the mental health of the child and mother for any medications that could assist with the family’s dealing with trauma.”

- Family involvement and support:
 - “Father was initially involved in the case through the phone until he moved to Oklahoma and contact faded away;”
 - “family initiated getting services as well as the case worker;”
 - “mother does not see herself as being chemically dependent, despite two DWI’s and one public intoxication charge,” and
 - “there could have been agency involvement to terminate the father’s parental rights, although mother was not cooperative in naming the name of the possible father. Once mom indicated who the father could be, there were no additional steps to established father’s paternity.”

Systemic Barriers:

- Regional issues:
 - “Mother had some significant concerns about how the case was run within the YES house and not being notified of treatment team meetings,” and
 - “the dentist in town does not agree to see children under five, although the agency requirement is to have the children have two dental visits per year.”
- Legal:
 - “Youth’s case ended when she was 17 and was dropped out of drug court while she was in the process of her recovery;”
 - “foster family feels that with everything that has happened, they are frustrated with the adoption because it has taken so long. The mother signed for relinquishment in May of 2006 and it will be 2008 before the adoption is finalized;”
 - “lack of communication between drug court, county probation and DFS;”
 - “CHINS appears to be initiated out of no-where. There is no information on who filed the CHINS petition, although the CHINS petition did seem appropriate,” and
 - “court dockets are far behind; the father’s TPR has set back the adoption permanency plan.”

Additional contributing factors:

- “The foster-adopt family was very accepting of the children and took in all three children when they originally thought that they would only be adopting one child,” and
- “the father was not named on the birth certificate; another person was named who was likely not the father.”

Review process dynamics and considerations:

- Citizen reviewers in this review consisted of:
 - Sheridan County School District #2 superintendant;
 - Wyoming Citizen Review Panel executive director;
 - DFS Juvenile Services consultant;
 - YES House director;
 - Eastern Shoshone Social Services worker;
 - Transitional Living Coordinator from YES House;
 - Eastern Shoshone Social Services director, and
 - DFS advisory board member.
- The period under review was October 1, 2006 through September 4, 2007.

Strengths:

- “More relatives stepping up to provide care for children;”
- “using new service plan; feels it helps engage the family;”
- “YES House Day Program is a good resource”;
- “children are usually placed within the same community;”
- “DFS does well keeping sibling groups together, as long as they are not large sibling groups; stakeholders feel that there should be more foster homes recruited for large sibling groups;”
- “providers stated that they routinely see physical and dental reports and feel that DFS is on-top of this requirement,” and
- “the court in this area feels that DFS does an excellent job under difficult circumstances.”

Needs:

- “(JS) currently no re-entry services available;”
- “clean pleasant working environment (building);”
- “more phone lines - public, law enforcement and mental health complaining they cannot get through;”
- “independent living services are not adequate; depending on the provider;”
- “high level of intake compares to numbers in larger offices (*90-100 per month*);”
- “better search for non-custodial parents and relatives by caseworkers,” and
- “caseworker turnover.”

Foster care issues:

- “More FAW’s and help with visitation;”
- “suggestion for child welfare workers to have an identification;”
- “confusion about signature for medical treatment;”
- “foster care coordinator over extended with current geographic area;”
- “suggestion to use experienced foster parents to help prepare new ones with realistic idea of foster care challenges, and
- “focused recruitment of foster parents:
 - Need more foster parents who are team players, and
 - need more diversity in foster homes to meet needs of foster care population.”

Systemic Barriers:


- “Distance supervision and one worker offices present significant challenges;”
- “high number of methamphetamine cases;”
- “lack of treatment for parents in drug cases;”
- “lack of housing;”
- “resistance to relative placement (MDT & foster parents);”
- “no control or knowledge of who gets IL services,” and
- “can’t access services over state lines.”

Training:

- “New workers need CORE training within 60 days; current training pattern has all new workers in training at the same time 6-7 months later which is too late.”

Court/legal issues:

- “Foster parents not included in court hearings (they are typically included in MDTs);”
- “connection of criminal and juvenile cases for delinquents delay progress in juvenile cases as they require resolution of criminal before proceeding;”
- “court dockets; hearings set 1 ½ year out (*TPRs are 1-1.5 years out*);”
- “GAL’s oppose visits with parents in jail;”
- “inconsistent who gets notice of hearings; no notice to foster parents;”
- “takes weeks to get court orders;”
- “canceling permanency hearings; with already crowded docket;”
- “delays create situations where parents come out of prison to challenge TPR after lengthy work and preparation for permanency for a child;”
- “the court feels that there is a lack of service providers in this community and feels that the current service providers are over-worked;”
- “the court feels that there needs to be more information exchanged between DFS and the court indicating when hearings will take place;”
- “in adult and juvenile court, there are no treatment options or service options; WYSTAR is the closest in-patient, in-state facility besides Casper;”
- “health care provider felt that the court has hand-cuffed DFS by treating TPR’s like the death penalty and has put the parent’s rights over the best interest of the child,” and
- “there is nobody tracking when cases need to get set for hearings.”



Program Improvement Plan

Office determined strengths:

1. Diversity of staff;
2. get along well;
3. balanced staff;
4. team approach;
5. huge turnover rate recently and we still made it work;
6. some laughter and light heartedness, appropriate use of humor;
7. stressful job and we support each other;
8. supervisor has used a “team approach” with new case workers by pairing new case worker with seasoned case worker;
9. administration has been very available when new workers have staff; caseworker: “I can always call someone even when they are not here;
10. administration has been trying to match caseworker strengths to various cases;
11. core group exists within the office which appears to be stable;
12. juvenile services and child protective services interacts very well together;
13. good working relationship with community partners such as law enforcement and others
14. at a recent meeting with the school social workers, there was willingness to build a team between the two groups of social workers;
15. good relationship with Crook County Attorney’s Office;
16. good relationship with the community in Newcastle and Sundance;
17. improved relationship with the Campbell County Attorney’s Office, and
18. good partnering with other agencies such as the hospital community initiative grant and therapist will be hired and place to deal with re-entry; county attorney’s office; teamed up with GALs and County Attorney’s office for more useful protocol for MDTs; also the community initiative grant.

Office determined needs and concerns:

1. Support for foster parents;
2. more workers; (did get a worker from Sheridan)
3. another probation officer in the Sundance/Newcastle area; current worker has a caseload of over 40;
4. need for another supervisor; current supervisors have a number of people over a large geographic area;
5. consider shared supervision between CPS and JS in smaller offices;
6. current telephone system is maxed out; need resources to address this;
7. need a better working environment - healthy building (hot in the summer and cold in the winter/no light);
8. ongoing training such as annual in service and timely core training for new workers with more in depth training; current best practice training; updated training on current trends;
9. another state car (currently have six for entire office (3 JS and 3 CPS); they do share but it is still a deficit for CPS;
10. clerical turnover is high; can work at McDonalds for comparable pay; salary and stress are factors;
11. reimbursement form is not timely when you use your own transportation (would be better monthly), and
12. staff retention.

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

1. DFS office is developing an internal work improvement plan.