

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.



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D7R4 January 8-10, 2007 Mini CFSR Report; series I

Case Ratings:

#D7261

- One area needing improvement: #18-child and family involvement in case planning.

#D7262

- Three areas needing improvement: #2-repeat maltreatment; #3-services to family to protect children in home to prevent removal (case may have needed to be substantiated earlier and intervention done to prevent removal); #18-child and family involvement in case planning.

#D7263

- Perfect scoring case; opened June 1990 for abuse, special needs, child has been in specialized foster care since 1993, developmental disability (DD) waiver case.

#D7264

- Three areas needing improvement: #7-permanency goal; #18-child and family involvement in case planning and #20-worker visits with parent(s).

#R4256

- Two areas needing improvement: #17-needs and services of child, parents, foster parents and #20-worker visits with parent(s).

#R4257

- Perfect scoring case; worker and family involvement was very positive; delinquent behavior was very advanced.

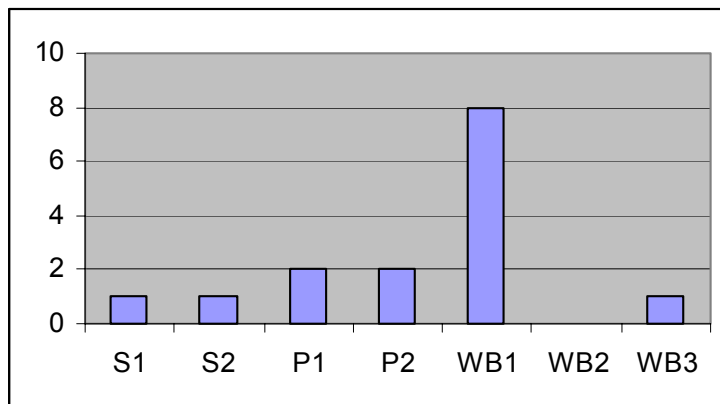
#R4258

- Five areas needing improvement: #7-permanency goal for child; #13-visiting with parents and siblings in foster care; #16-relationship of child in care with parents; #17-needs and services of child, parents, foster parents and #23-mental health of the child. Child has been in placement since 2002 and has been in seven different placements and two crisis placements.

#R4259

- One area needing improvement: #18-child and family involvement in case planning; court closed case and ended probation and child abruptly went home with no transition services.

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.



Department of Family Services (DFS) has taken ownership of the following policy issues:

- “CHINS cases are in CPS according to supervisor; other DFS offices they are in JS; may need consistent policy”
- “Does DFS consider independent living as a long term goal? Should it be long term foster care or long term placement? Independent living is a skill, not a goal.”
- “Maintaining permanency; offer additional services to maintain permanency; become proactive in post permanency placements; maybe open a YFS or prevention case”
- “What can be done for children after 18 years of age; Diana Shaffer will be going to a peer to peer in February; also look at CHAFEE funds and the child having to remain in custody after 18 to receive (college education assistance) funds”
- “Must exhaust all other options before stating that OPLA is a permanency goal”
- “Residential habitat homes; people losing funding by agreeing to permanency; post placement support

Local DFS Office issues:

- Juvenile services:
 - “There appears to be lacking consistency and confusion with regards to who should be doing CHINS cases”
 - “Better coordination with CPS”
- Child protection services:
 - “Casper CPS does not do prevention cases; they either do them as assessment or investigation or they don’t open a case at all according to a CPS supervisor”
 - “Better coordination with JS”

Issues requiring DFS administrative level attention:

- “High turnover (calculated at 72% by the district manager during points of this PUR); 8 or 12 positions were empty at the Casper DFS office during some of the period under review. There are a number of options to look at such as resources in the community, interagency help, triage teams or traveling DFS teams”
- “Financial services; JS can not or will not pay for legal fees but are held to the same permanency standards of CPS”

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

- “While grandparents do not have to be certified; but an emphasis on training for grandparents might be very beneficial”
- “CHAFEE funds requirements; college educational funds; child has to remain in custody after 18 to receive those funds; should be based on needs”
- “Residential treatment school credits not transferring to main line school systems”

Strengths:

- Advocacy:
 - “Child is attending college on a full ride scholarship; the DFS worker helped her move into the dorm”
 - “GAL is supportive and keeps in touch with family”
 - “All medical needs have been met”
 - “Child has an advocate who takes her to the A+ program”
- Consistency
 - “Good relationship with caseworker”
 - “Everybody loved the DFS caseworker”
 - “Family loved the DFS case worker who held the entire family accountable”
- Documentation and adherence to procedure:
 - “Good assessments for mom and boys”
 - “Child was removed at the first neglect substantiation”

- “DFS caseworker far exceeded the expectations of the family and DFS policy”
- Effective use of service array
 - “Family partnership was held five days after boy was discharged from the Wyoming Boys School equating to a very positive transition”
 - “Bus passes provided for mom for transportation”
 - “Parenting classes were offered and attended by mom”
 - “DFS worker did a great job of providing quality services”
 - “LifeNet did a great job for the child”
- Engagement of the child:
 - “Child had great potential to be successful with his case plan”
 - “Education was very important to the case and child sees the need to graduate”
- Family involvement:
 - “Caseworker and dad involved in child’s case”
 - “Mother was given every opportunity to be successful”
 - “Maternal grandparents were very involved”
 - “Foster mother felt that she had all of the services she needed”
- Foster care services:
 - “Good transitional services when child returned home”
 - “Good family and individual therapy”
- Preserving connections:
 - “Relative placement was looked at right away and then used once background checks were approved”
 - “Having grandmother as a back up plan and involved in the case was very positive”
 - “DFS offered assistance for mom to see child in placement”
 - “Child was able to maintain all of her cultural connections”
- Successful outcomes:
 - “Family was very pleased with outcome of the case; the child has been out of placement for 9 months and doing well”
 - “DFS has 232 contacts from 1996 to 2006 and invested a \$110,000.00 in this family’s success”
 - “True permanency has been achieved for the child”
 - “Permanency goal was met in the case”

Additional contributing factors:

- “Child will age out of care at NSI in Sheridan”
- “Transportation was an issue for mom”
- “Unidentified sexual issues for the boys”
- “Boys needed contact with mom”
- “Financial assistance is needed for grandparents; hopefully will be solved with subsidized guardianship”
- “Child was in placement from 2004 (age 5) to 2006”
- “Child was in St. Joes at 6 years of age”
- “DFS was uncertain about Cathedral Home’s policy on parental visitation”
- “Youth orchestrated all the elements of her case”
- “Father relinquished his paternal rights”
- “Two older boys in the case will reunify with dad...*in prison*”

Opportunities for improvement:

- Case Planning:
 - “Case plan says reunification, but subsidized guardianship is the current case plan”
 - “One case plan done at beginning of case which covered mother and was signed by mother and caseworker, but grandmother could have or should have been involved since she has custody of the children”

- “No initial case plan for placement”
- “None of the case plans included grandfather’s signature who was an active part of the girl’s life and her case; others left out of case plan like LifeNet”
- “No permanency goal and no case plan when the child came into the system”
- “Case plans should be a living document (new case plan form is coming from DFS)”
- “No case plan for the first four months when the case plan was opened; policy requires it within first 60 days”
- “A visitation plan may have been needed to be included in the case file”
- Collaboration:
 - “Better coordination between CPS and JS on joint cases”
- Family Involvement:
 - “When children were taken from the mother, they could have no contact with any family member for eight days; they were very close to their grandmother”
 - “Contact with mom is desired by the two boys; maybe even phone calls or letters”
 - “In the WBI placement, there was no family involvement in the case planning”
 - “Family partnership would have been helpful in the case to discuss TPR with mom who has an extended and continuous drug history”
 - “Family said that they would have appreciated a family partnership meeting”
- Communication:
 - “Communication from Wyoming Boys School could have been better according to father”
 - “Family contact was not happening with parents when child was in Jeffrey Wardel Academy”
 - “Cathedral Home did not realize his probation ended and he could just leave Cathedral Home; poor communication between DFS and Cathedral Home resulting in no transition for child; worker admitted that the relationship could have been better”
 - “CWCC did good visits with mom, but DFS did not stay in touch with mom”
 - “Contact with mom may have been helpful for child and helped resolve the issues between mom and child; court order would have had to be modified for that to happen”
- Documentation and adherence to procedure:
 - “Medical records should be in file”
 - “Child may have benefited from coordination between the various assessments”

Systemic Barriers:

- Legal System:
 - “Options and services for 18-21 year olds in the system is a gray area; especially with placements; look at Massachusetts program for 18 year olds where child can sign a contract with DFS and family”
 - “Better placement options especially for mental health and young sex offenders”
 - “Policy on foster care screenings is needed”
 - “Court told DFS to terminate parental rights; DFS filed the papers; AG wants the mother to agree, but mother won’t agree so DFS is now in contempt of court”
 - “DFS can not or will not pay for legal fees incurred by Juvenile Services”
- Staff Turnover:
 - “Staff turnover at the Casper DFS Office (CPS); estimated at over 70% since last review by district manager”
- Transportation
 - “Transportation for kids in Casper; bus system could be better”
- Financial Services
 - “Affordable housing is difficult to find and needed in Casper”
 - “When people agree to guardianship, most often their financial support and/or services cease; this often times delays or prohibits guardianship”
- Placement and Service Options

- “Better placement options especially for mental health and young sex offenders”
- “Mentoring programs are often grant funded and short lived”
- “Child stated that she was sent to far away to be successful with mom; child was from Casper and was sent to Jeffrey Wardel; DFS had tried other options locally”
- “Closer to home placement options”
- Education
 - “Roosevelt School will not take the youth challenge and allow the child to graduate”

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Review process dynamics and considerations:

- Citizen reviewers in this review consisted of:
 - WYCRP Administrative Assistant;
 - Casper City Council member;
 - foster parent;
 - Uplift director;
 - CASA volunteer;
 - child advocate, and
 - 4 DOH representatives.
- The period under review was October 1, 2005 through March 31, 2006.
- 3 out of 8 (37%) review samples were biracial

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