

In Focus



Quarterly Newsletter for Continuous Quality Improvement

APRIL 2010 Issue



From the Director's Desk: Spring has sprung, and we as an agency are busier than ever. Great work is happening in many areas of practice. Highlights are included in this newsletter of circuits performing exceptionally well in foster care re-entry. Repeat maltreatment is an area we have continually improved in over the past several years on a statewide level. One area of practice needing some attention is assuring older youth are receiving the appropriate services to prepare them for independence. At your CQI meeting, take time to review your own circuit's performance in the FY10 Child Welfare Outcomes Report, particularly in the areas of repeat maltreatment and foster care re-entry. Discuss conditions affecting your performance in these areas, in addition to older youth referrals and services and identify strategies for improvement. Join forces with your QA and QI team if these are significant areas of concern in your circuit. You make the difference! – Paula Neese

CQI Activities Calendar

April 2010

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

May 2010

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

June 2010

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

1st Level CQI

2nd Level CQI

3rd Level CQI

State Level CQI

Peer Record Reviews



Click on this link, [State Level CQI Minutes](#) to see what was discussed during the 1st Qtr State Level CQI Team Meeting on March 18th.

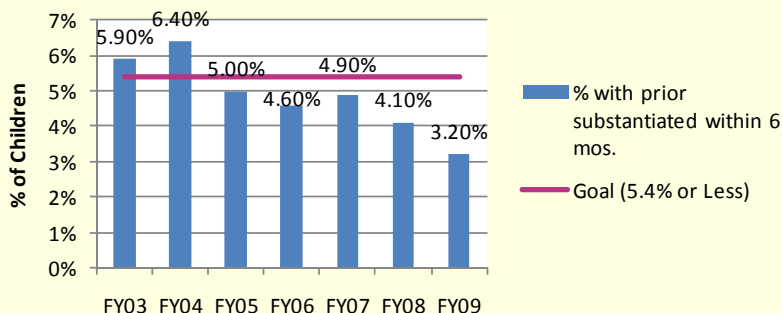
You Make the Difference!

Spring presents a good opportunity to remind ourselves about how we make a difference in the lives of children and families. There is no doubt, no matter what your job title or specific program area, the day-to-day activities you perform, when done so in a planned, timely and thorough manner lead to better outcomes for those we serve.

Amidst the many challenges we face, our collective efforts have recently resulted in National Accreditation for the Children's Division and we are now gearing up for the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in June. These processes are important as they are methods for measuring the effectiveness of policy and practice and understanding how our day to day work is impacting child safety, permanency and well-being. Effectiveness is measured by compiling statewide data from FACES and by conducting case reviews.

For example, repeat maltreatment is one CFSR measure related to safety. Prevention efforts through FCS, effective written service plans, and assuring families have access to supportive services are some activities impacting repeat maltreatment. As shown in the chart below, we are realizing success by seeing a steady decline in repeat maltreatment.

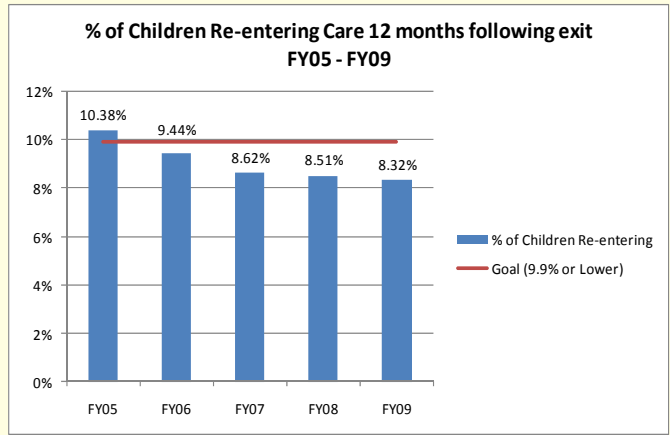
% of Children with Prior Substantiated Report within 6 Months FY03 - FY09 (Statewide)



This chart (based on the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, Measure #3) indicates fewer children are having repeat substantiated reports within 6 months.

Data entry is one activity that may seem insignificant or even unnecessary to some, but accurate data is critical for showing the impact of your hard work. Data entry is an important part of case management.

The chart to the right shows a steady decline over the past five years in the percent of children re-entering foster care within 12 months following exit, which is another CFSR measure. Activities impacting this progress would include timely Permanency Planning Review Team meetings, regular and frequent worker visits with children and improved supervision. This chart also reflects hard work and successful data entry before, during and after conversion to FACES. Your patience and diligence to learn and use the new information system has made a difference in our ability to show accountability for good outcomes.



Statewide Accreditation Celebration

The Children's Division hosted a reception on Thursday, January 14, 2010, at the Governor Office Building in Jefferson City, Missouri, to celebrate the Children's Division's achievement of attaining statewide accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA), as specified in Section 210.113 RSMo (HB 1453).

To achieve accreditation, Missouri's child welfare system was reviewed and measured against over 800 nationally-recognized standards of best practice. The standards addressed the Division's policies, procedures, programs, and practices.

"What seemed like an insurmountable goal just five years ago has become a reality," DSS Director Ron Levy said. "Successfully negotiating the accreditation process takes strict attention to detail and a tremendous dedication to excellence in job performance."

"Accreditation makes us a more professional organization," said Paula Neese, Director of the Children's Division. "It enables us to meet the incredible demands placed on the child welfare system as we work with communities to protect Missouri's children. This process will continue to make us a better child welfare organization."

First Lady Georganne Wheeler Nixon commended the Children's Division achievement saying, "The accomplishment of something that has been achieved by only a handful of other states in the nation demonstrates the length you have gone to ensure the safety of our state's children. For that, I thank you."

Sister Ann Conrad, Chair of COA's Board of Trustees, presented Paula Neese with a plaque to commemorating the Children's Division's accreditation achievement.

The Children's Division is organized within the state's 45 judicial circuits. While all circuits simultaneously aimed to meet standards of best practice, accreditation was achieved circuit by circuit over five years. The Children's Division must fulfill ongoing reporting and quality-improvement obligations in order to maintain accreditation and will undergo a recertification process by COA every four years.



CREDIBILITY • INTEGRITY • ACHIEVEMENT



CD Deputy Director Susan Savage with Sister Ann Conrad, Chair of COA's Board of Trustees

Congratulations to all CD staff on your hard work and commitment to achieve National accreditation!



Marty Daniel-Powell, Children's Service Worker, and LeAnn Haslag, Unit Manager proudly posing for a picture

KUDOS!



During Quarters 1-3 of SFY10, the following Circuits had 0.00% children re-entering foster care within 12 months following exit!

Circuits 4,6,8,15,18,10,19,33 and 44

Of the three metros, St. Louis City had the lowest percent with 3.81%.

- The Goal to achieve is **9.9% or Lower**.
- The statewide average after the first three quarters was **9.36%**.

Source: [CD FY10 Child Welfare Outcomes Report, Measure 14](#). How did your Circuit do?

CQI Successes

Southeast



25th Circuit:

Outside lights were repaired in Texas County and now the whole parking lot has lights on it so workers can see after hours.

Emergency list for circuit is updated now on a regular basis and there is a new contact list provided to foster parents when newsletters are sent out.

New carpet in Pulaski eliminates tape and workers tripping on the old worn out carpet.

An issue addressed through the FCCM CQI process was a running weekly foster parent availability report for the circuit that all staff have access to and can contact foster homes who have openings first.

State Level

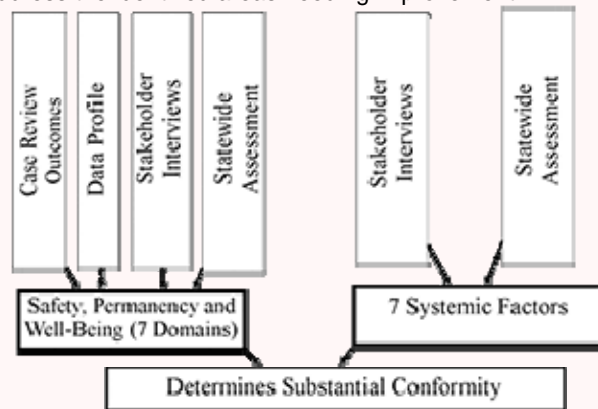
- CD10-09 introduced the new policy regarding worker visits with children in alternative care. The CD-82 and CD-84 forms have been combined so workers only have to utilize one form. The required number of face-to-face contacts with children per month has changed from two visits to one visit. The required number of face-to-face visits with resource providers was also changed from two visits to one per month.
- A Practice Point was sent out on 3/17/10 allowing for communications with the placement provider and with the child to be documented within the same contact. This will save a lot of time when entering contacts into FACES.
- Several CD forms were revised and updated since the last state level CQI meeting. The revised forms have better functionality and are more user- friendly.

Child and Family Services Review Update

The initial draft of the Statewide Assessment, which is the first phase of the Child and Family Services Review, was completed based on statewide information obtained from local circuit assessments and in collaboration with external partners and stakeholders and submitted in April to the ACF Children's Bureau Regional Office.

The second phase of the review process is an onsite review in three circuits (Circuits 21, 31, and 35), conducted by a team of Federal representatives and State representatives (including external partners). The onsite review will occur during June 7 – 11, 2010. The onsite review consists of case reviews and stakeholder interviews.

Information from both the Statewide Assessment and the onsite review are then used to determine the State's conformity with the State plan requirements for child protective services, foster care, adoption, and family preservation and support services. Statewide case information comprises a state data profile which supplements findings from the onsite review, so circuits not involved in the case review also impact CFSR results. States found out of conformity are required to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the identified areas needing improvement.



The chart above shows how the various components of the CFSR Process impact the finding of the State's conformity to federal requirements.



Don't forget to join your local Juvenile Office in participating in the upcoming webinar on child safety on May 11th from 11:30 – 1:00 p.m.! (Deadline to register is May 3rd).

This training webinar is approved as Statute 210 credit hours for CD staff and will be entered as such on staff training transcripts in the Employee Learning Center.

For questions regarding the webinar and registration, please contact Courtney Cassil at 573-522-1388 or via email at Courtney.Cassil@courts.mo.gov.

Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee (SAC)

The SAC met on February 10th in Jefferson City.

You may notice the CD Intranet home page now features links for [workgroups and committees](#) in addition to a new link for [DSS press releases](#). These were added due to SAC recommendations to improve communication within the agency.

The SAC has a designated spot on the homepage of the CD Intranet. The committee's Charter, Member Listing, Strategic Plan, meeting minutes and historical information are available for review.

Coming Up!

- April is [National Child Abuse Prevention Month!](#)
- May is [National Foster Care Month!](#)
- CFSR On-Site Review is June 7-10th!
- Survey of Employee Engagement is April 19 – May 7!
 - ✓ Goal is 70% response rate.
 - ✓ [Memo CD10-036](#) for more information.

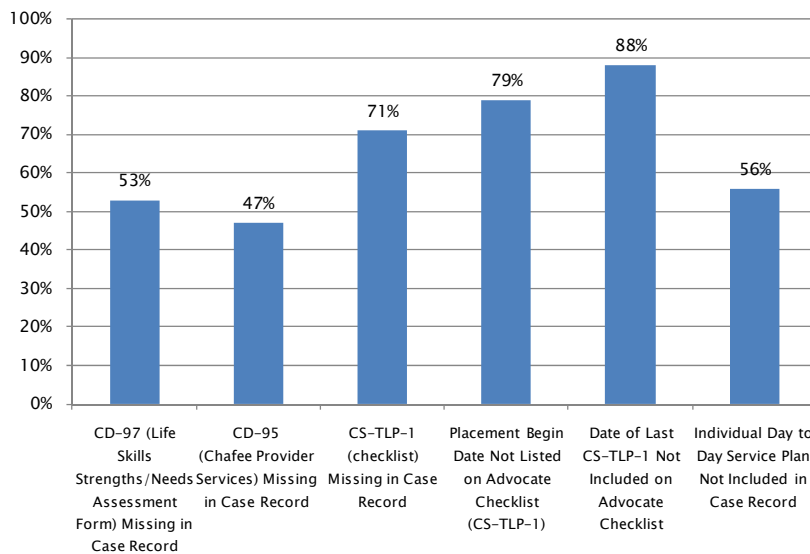
Older Youth Case Review Results

A statewide file review was conducted on March 2nd in Jefferson City. Files were randomly selected on 4% of youth ages 14-21 in alternative care case managed by Children's Division and Foster Care Case Management Agencies. Older Youth Transition Specialists, Quality Assurance Specialists, Quality Improvement Specialists and Program Development Specialists assisted with the reviews.

All forms and documentation related to best practice with the older youth and the program (Transitional Living Program, Independent Living Arrangement, Chafee, and transitioning from care/exit planning) were reviewed.

The purpose of the review was to get an overall picture of the Older Youth Program services being provided through documentation in the file. The review was to gain insight as to the strengths of the program as well as learn at a state, circuit and private agency level if the older youth program is being accessed and used as designed and per policy, to develop and recommend strategies for improvement, and to prepare for the National Youth in Transition Database implementation in October. The review specifically was looking to see if life skills for youth had been assessed, if referrals had been made, and examined the quality of services youth were receiving once referred.

Older Youth Program – Challenges



In the majority of files reviewed, referrals for services were made (72%) of the time. However, the records do not show continued involvement with the youth in terms of forms being updated per policy. The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment form is not being updated annually. 90% were due for reevaluation at the time of the review. Many of the forms do not contain dates, making it difficult to determine when the form was completed. The files also demonstrated a lack of youth input into their Individualized Action Plan. Of the 204 files reviewed, only 89 have evidence of youth involvement in their plan. The Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan is not being updated every six months. Reviewers noted that goals are not specific in terms of life skills for the youth. Over half of the files reviewed did not contain a strengths/needs assessment. 71% of youth residing in a TLA or ILA did not have documentation in the file that the apartment was seen and met safety standards. Of the small number of youth who have exited care after the sample was determined (10), there was no documentation that an exit packet or verification letter was provided to youth or that their transition plan (Adolescent FST Guide) was updated within 90 days from release. Overall, the review demonstrated that although youth are being referred, work with youth is not being documented in the case file.

What can you do now to improve services for older youth?

- Refer (CD-93, Older Youth Program Referral Form) **all** youth ages 14 to 21 to Chafee Independent Living Services.
- Ensure youth ages 14 or older, and up to three adult caregivers complete the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) at time of referral and annually thereafter and that it is placed in the record.
- Complete the Life Skills Strengths Needs Assessment Reporting Form (CD-97) or equivalent using the guidelines (CD-96) if necessary within the first 60 days of the youth turning 14 or entering care after age 14 and as appropriate when youth achieve goals and there is a need to set additional goals.
- Complete the CD-94, Individualized Action Plan, with the youth at every FST, ensure youth has signed the plan, place in the case record, *and also complete within 90 days of discharge as required by the federal Fostering Connections Act.* Provide supervisory oversight to assure case managers are setting well defined goals related to life skills.
- Ensure provider of services (whether in-house or contracted) is submitting quarterly progress reports (CD-95, Individual Life Skills Progress Form) including well-defined goals and service plans and ensure documentation is placed in the case record.
- Complete the CS-TLP-1 Checklist pertaining to safety of the residence and place in the case record (for youth ages 16 and older and in TLP Advocate or ILA placements).
- Ensure Individual Day to Day Service Plan is completed within 30 days and quarterly thereafter by the TLP provider for any youth in a Transitional Living Group Home or Scattered Site Apartment .
- Provide transitioning information (exit packet, verification letter, and important documents) to the youth and document in the case record.
- Date all documents as appropriate!

CHILDREN'S DIVISION MISSION STATEMENT

To partner with families, communities and government to protect children from abuse and neglect and assure safety, permanency and well being for Missouri's children.