

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Final Report: Missouri Child and Family Services Review
September 2010

INTRODUCTION

This document presents a summary of the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Missouri. The CFSR is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. The CFSR is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSR is implemented by the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families within HHS.

The Missouri CFSR was conducted the week of June 7, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2009, through June 11, 2010. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State of Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division (CD)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period ending September 30, 2008
- Reviews of 64 cases (40 foster care and 24 in-home services cases) at three sites: 17 cases in the 35th Circuit (Dunklin/Stoddard), 17 cases in Greene County, and 30 cases in St. Louis County¹
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

Background Information

The CFSR assesses State performance with regard to its substantial conformity with seven child and family outcomes and seven systemic factors. For the outcome assessments, each outcome incorporates one or more of the 23 items included in the review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on the results of the case reviews. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The evaluation options for these outcomes are "substantially achieved," "partially achieved," or "not achieved." For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two

¹ Originally, there were 25 in-home services cases. However, one case was found to be ineligible for the CFSR because the child was in the custody of another State but was placed in Missouri and receiving in-home services through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).

outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met.

There are 22 items that are considered in assessing the State’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors. Each item reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on whether State performance on the item meets the Federal program requirements. A determination of the rating is based on information provided in the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFSR. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Overall performance on each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

Rating the Systemic Factor

Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
1	2	3	4
None of the CFSP or program requirements is in place.	Some or all of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, but more than one of the requirements fail to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, and no more than one of the requirements fails to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement.

A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome or systemic factor must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome or systemic factor.

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State’s performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round. Key changes in the process that make comparing performance difficult across reviews are the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to increase consistency and to ensure an assessment of critical areas such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents

The specific findings regarding the State's performance on safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of this Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance with regard to the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR. In the following sections, key findings are summarized for each outcome and systemic factor. Information also is provided about the State's performance on each outcome and systemic factor during the Federal FY 2003 CFSR.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

Missouri did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven CFSR outcomes during the 2010 CFSR. The State did achieve overall ratings of Strength for the following individual items:

- Repeat maltreatment (item 1)
- Foster care reentry (item 5)
- Proximity of placement (item 11)
- Placement with siblings (item 12)

The State met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence, absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff, and placement stability.

Although the State's performance on Safety Outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) and Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs) did not meet the required 95-percent level for substantial conformity, performance on these outcomes was fairly high; the outcomes were substantially achieved in 85.7 percent and 88.4 percent of the cases, respectively. In addition, although the State's performance on the items pertaining to timeliness of investigations, services to protect children in home, and educational needs of child did not reach the 90-percent level required for an overall rating of Strength, at least 86 percent and 88 percent, respectively, of the cases reviewed were rated as a Strength for these items.

In addition to these positive CFSR findings, HHS acknowledges the efforts being made by Missouri in making continuous improvements to its child welfare program in order to enhance the services provided to children and families. Since the 2003 CFSR, positive changes in child welfare practice in Missouri can be seen through the increased use of relative placements, improved timeliness to finalized adoptions, and in providing stable placements for children in foster care. Additionally, through the strength of its leadership team, the Missouri Children's Division set and accomplished challenging goals including the following:

- The State began implementation of the statewide automated child welfare information system, Family and Children Electronic System (FACES), in 2004, and child welfare case management was incorporated into FACES by 2007.
- The CD was accredited by the Council on Accreditation in November 2009.

- The CD uses a quality assurance/quality improvement model that encompasses multiple levels of staff and collaboration with stakeholders.

During the 2010 CFSR process, several initiatives were noted that will serve as foundations for further improvement in the State, including the Clinical Supervision Training curriculum for child welfare supervisors, the Results Oriented Management digital dashboard for CD staff, and the Strengthening Families approach, which assesses protective factors for families in their homes and communities. Lastly, Missouri's commitment to partnering and collaboration with stakeholders has been evident throughout each phase of the CFSR process.

The CFSR also identified the following key concerns with regard to the State's performance in achieving desired outcomes for children and families:

- Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was substantially achieved in 42.5 percent of the applicable cases.
- Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs) was substantially achieved in 45.3 percent of the applicable cases.
- Item 9, pertaining to adoption, was rated as a Strength in 46 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 16, pertaining to the relationship of the child in foster care with parents, was rated as a Strength in 48 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 17, pertaining to needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents, was rated as a Strength in 53 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 18, pertaining to child and family involvement in case planning, was rated as a Strength in 52 percent of the applicable cases.
- Item 20, pertaining to caseworker visits with parents, was rated as a Strength in 41 percent of applicable cases.
- The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification, timeliness of adoptions, and permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.

The State's low performance with regard to these CFSR outcomes and national data standards may be attributed in part to the following key factors:

- Lack of initial and ongoing safety and risk assessments and unaddressed safety concerns
- Inconsistent practice in engaging parents in case planning, particularly fathers and noncustodial parents
- Lack of effort or delays in achieving permanency goals
- Quality and quantity of caseworker visits with parents were not sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of children or promote attainment of case goals

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

With regard to systemic factors, Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factors pertaining to Statewide Information System; Quality Assurance (QA) System; Staff and Provider Training; Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factors pertaining to Case Review System or Service Array and Resource Development.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two items. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month time period (item 2). Safety Outcome 1 also incorporates two national data indicators for which national standards have been established. These data indicators measure the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85.7 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 100 percent of applicable 35th Circuit cases, 100 percent of applicable Greene County cases, and 69 percent of applicable St. Louis County cases. In addition to the case review findings, the State met the national standards for the national data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence and absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that there was an absence of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period in the cases reviewed. The case reviews also found that the State did not initiate a response to a maltreatment report within the timeframes established by State policy in four of the 28 applicable cases reviewed.

Missouri also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistent in initiating investigations of child maltreatment or establishing face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim in accordance with the State-established timeframes.
- The State was not effective in preventing the recurrence of child maltreatment.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Clarified policy regarding timeliness of initiating reports of child maltreatment, refined definition of “initiating” reports, and strengthened policy regarding chronic neglect and accumulation of harm
- Increased the accuracy of data regarding initial contacts through changes to the information system and established local protocols in order to respond timely to reports of maltreatment
- Implemented a non-child maltreatment alternate response process in some areas of the State
- Implemented call management and structured decision-making (SDM) protocols at the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline Unit to ensure consistent screening and classifications of calls received
- Modified training curriculum to include SDM safety and risk assessment information to ensure consistent and accurate completion of the required SDM forms
- Used Practice Enhancement Teams (PETs) to assist circuit managers in the development of strategies to reduce repeat maltreatment and maltreatment in foster care

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two items. One item (item 3) assesses State efforts to prevent children’s removal from their homes by providing the family with services to ensure children’s safety while they remain in their homes. The other item (item 4) assesses efforts to manage safety and reduce risk of harm to children in their own homes and in their foster care placements.

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 67.2 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 65 percent of applicable 35th Circuit cases, 82 percent of applicable Greene County cases, and 60 percent of applicable St. Louis County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that although item 3 was not rated a Strength, in 36 of the 42 applicable cases reviewed, the agency was effective in providing services to the family to prevent the child’s removal from the home and in conducting initial and ongoing risk and safety assessments to ensure the child’s safety. The 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- There was a lack of initial and ongoing safety and risk assessments.
- There were safety concerns in the child’s home that were not addressed by the agency.

Missouri also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Although the agency was assessing families to identify service needs, it was not consistent in providing services to the children or the parents, particularly in the in-home services cases.
- The agency was not consistent in assessing risk of harm to children.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Developed and implemented supplemental Family Support Team (FST) training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes
- Developed a standardized supervisory case review tool to improve supervisory capacity to monitor enhanced casework practice relating to case planning
- Established procedures for caseworkers to access various funding resources
- Modified training curriculum to include SDM safety and risk assessment information to ensure consistent and accurate completion of the required SDM forms
- Modified the family assessment and case plan tools to better link services to the needs of the family and to include a mechanism for family self-assessment, as well as identified areas specifically related to child safety and risk concerns
- Strengthened policy regarding assessment of a child's safety throughout placement in foster care, implemented enhanced background screenings for foster/kinship and court ordered providers, and developed the Culture of Care initiative to improve the safety and well-being of children placed in residential settings

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations

Six items are incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all of the foster care cases reviewed. The items pertain to State efforts to prevent foster care reentry (item 5), ensure placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner as well as seeking termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining items focus on an assessment of State efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, or permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or to ensure that children who have a case goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) are in stable long-term placements and are adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 42.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was

substantially achieved in 50 percent of applicable 35th Circuit cases, 70 percent of applicable Greene County cases, and 25 percent of applicable St. Louis County cases. In addition to case review findings, Missouri did not meet the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification, timeliness of adoptions, and permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. However, Missouri met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to placement stability.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that foster care reentry was a rare occurrence. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- The State was not consistent with regard to ensuring placement stability for children in foster care.
- The child's permanency goal was either not appropriate or not established in a timely manner.
- The State had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.
- There was a lack of concerted effort to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner.
- There were delays in achieving adoptions in a timely manner.
- The State was not consistent with regard to ensuring that children with a goal of OPPLA had a permanent placement and/or were receiving services to ensure a successful transition from foster care to independent living.

Missouri also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistent with regard to ensuring placement stability for children in foster care.
- The State was not consistent with regard to establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The State did not consistently make concerted efforts to achieve children's permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The State did not consistently adhere to the timeframes established by the ASFA pertaining to TPR or to the requirement of documenting compelling reasons when the decision is not to petition for TPR.
- The State was not consistent in providing Independent Living (IL) services to youth with the goal of OPPLA.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Established agreements with other State agencies and developed diligent search procedures to improve efforts to locate relatives and absent parents
- Ensured the frequency and timeliness of FST meetings through circuit self-assessments and corrective action plans, provided a list of "expert facilitators" for FST meetings that require more expertise, and expanded the use of FST meetings to promote placement stability
- Incorporated targeted foster recruitment plans into circuit management plans, developed a recruitment and retention plan for foster homes serving older youth, implemented AdoptUsKids campaign, and awarded performance-based recruitment contracts in an effort to increase the number of resource families

- Collaborated with the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning to identify critical factors in placement stability, to conduct a resource family survey, and to develop a placement matching tool to improve placement stability for children
- Strengthened policy and practice relating to concurrent planning
- Developed policy and protocol to ensure that the permanency and services needs of children in temporary adoptive custody, relative/kinship custody, or in another State agency's custody are met
- Collaborated with the Office of State Courts Administrators (OSCA) to explore barriers to allowing the Juvenile Courts to enter temporary custody orders and transfer jurisdiction of the case to Probate and Circuit Courts to expedite guardianships
- Conducted meetings with the courts regarding procedures for filing timely TPR petitions and developed policies clarifying caseworkers' and supervisors' responsibilities in documenting compelling reasons
- Awarded performance-based contracts for resource development and committed additional CD staff to conduct home studies and finalize adoptions
- Distributed literature and conducted informational meetings, seminars, and workshops on IL and secondary education resources available to current and former foster care youth and convened a workgroup to designate and train CD caseworkers who would work specifically with adolescents in an effort to increase accessibility to the IL program

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six items that assess State performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care near their parents and close relatives (item 11); (2) placing siblings together (item 12); (3) ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13); (4) preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14); (5) seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15); and (6) promoting relationships between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 60 percent of applicable 35th Circuit cases, 70 percent of applicable Greene County cases, and 60 percent of applicable St. Louis County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that the State was effective with regard to placing children in close proximity to their parents, placing siblings together in foster care, and promoting visitation between siblings. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- The frequency and quality of visitation between children in foster care and their parents were insufficient to meet the needs of the children and families.
- The State was not consistent with regard to concerted efforts to preserve connections of children in foster care to extended families, school, and community.
- The State had not consistently made concerted efforts to search for either maternal or paternal relatives as potential placement resources.
- The State had not consistently made concerted efforts to support the child's relationship with the mother or father while the child was in foster care.

Missouri also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not consistently place siblings together in foster care.
- The State was not consistently effective in promoting visitation between children in foster care and their parents or their siblings in foster care.
- The State did not consistently seek and assess relatives as placement resources.
- The State was not consistent with regard to making concerted efforts to preserve connections of children in foster care with extended families and with their cultural, racial, ethnic, or religious heritage.
- The State was not consistent in promoting the relationship between children and their parents.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Developed and implemented supplemental FST training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes
- Developed policy requiring an FST meeting prior to placing siblings separately and requiring an administrative review within 30 days if the siblings remain separated and revised CD policy to improve the requirements for the visitation plan for sibling visitation and parent and child visitation
- Developed an ongoing training module for CD staff, foster parents, and Juvenile Court staff on sibling placements and developed a targeted recruitment plan for sibling group resource homes
- Developed a statewide plan to address preserving relevant connections for children in foster care and established agreements with other State agencies and developed diligent search procedures to improve efforts to locate relatives and absent parents
- Modified data entry system requirements to accurately document and track kinship placement vendor types and evaluated and revised The Caregiver Who Knows the Child training based on a relative resource survey

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs

Well-Being Outcome 1 incorporates four items. One item pertains to State efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second item examines State efforts to actively involve parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining items examine the frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children's parents (item 20).

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 45.3 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 41 percent of applicable 35th Circuit cases, 65 percent of applicable Greene County cases, and 37 percent of applicable St. Louis County cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 47.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 42 percent of the 24 in-home services cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that in general, the State was effective in assessing the service needs of children in foster care, involving children in foster care in the case planning process, and ensuring that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children in foster care were sufficient to ensure the child's safety and well-being. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- The State was not consistent in assessing and meeting the needs of children receiving in-home services, foster parents, mothers, and fathers, or in addressing the needs of children receiving foster care services.
- The State did not make concerted efforts to involve children receiving in-home services or mothers and fathers in both the foster care and in-home services cases in case planning.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children in the in-home services cases were not sufficient to ensure the child's safety and well-being.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were not sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals.

Missouri also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistent in assessing and addressing the service needs of children, parents, or foster parents.
- The State was not consistent in involving parents and children in the case planning process.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with children and parents was not sufficient to ensure the children's safety or well-being.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Modified the family assessment and case plan tools to better link services to the needs of the family and to include a mechanism for family self-assessment, as well as identified areas specifically related to child safety and risk concerns
- Developed and implemented supplemental FST training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes, to maximize family participation in FST meetings, and to strengthen caseworker relationships with biological or adoptive parents
- Developed a list of expert facilitators for FST meetings, which require a higher level of expertise
- Utilized caseload equalization and monitored cases via the Peer Record Reviews to increase policy compliance with frequency of caseworker visits with children and parents, and developed policy and utilized PET to address the quality of caseworker visits with children and parents
- Enhanced the information system to track caseworker visitation

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs

Only one item is incorporated under Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to State efforts to assess and meet the educational needs of children in foster care and, when relevant, children in the in-home services cases (item 21).

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 88.4 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 82 percent of applicable 35th Circuit cases, 90 percent of applicable Greene County cases, and 91 percent of applicable St. Louis County cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 91 percent of the 33 applicable foster care cases and 80 percent of the 10 applicable in-home services cases

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that in general, the educational needs of children in foster care were being appropriately assessed and addressed. However, in several of the applicable in-home services cases, educational needs were not assessed or addressed, although education-related concerns were apparent and a reason for agency contact.

Missouri also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that the State was not consistent in its efforts to meet children's educational needs, particularly children in the in-home services cases. To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Developed a protocol to include relevant Department of Elementary and Secondary Education personnel at FST meetings, designated an education liaison at the State level, and developed local and State level plans to alleviate barriers and address educational disruptions for children in foster care

- Developed local protocols for children in foster regarding permission of custodian to access records needed for enrollment and incorporated accountability measures for transfer of educational records into residential facility contracts to improve the flow of educational records and reports when children transfer schools
- Consulted with National Resource Centers and other national education resources regarding early identification of educational neglect, truancy, and suspension of children in foster care and incorporated the risk factors into the CD's family assessment tool and service plan
- Developed protocols for accessing early interventions for students at risk for educational neglect, truancy, and suspension and for children expelled due to the Safe School Act and incorporated this information into new caseworker and foster parent training

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs

This outcome incorporates two items pertaining to State efforts to assess and meet the physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs of children in foster care and children in the in-home services cases, if relevant.

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 68.3 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 69 percent of applicable 35th Circuit cases, 87 percent of applicable Greene County cases, and 59 percent of applicable St. Louis County cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 70 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 65 percent of the 20 applicable in-home services cases.

The 2010 case reviews found that, in general, the mental health needs of children in foster care were appropriately assessed and adequately addressed. However, the 2010 CFSR also found that the physical and dental needs of children in foster care and in the in-home cases were not consistently assessed or addressed. Additionally, mental health needs of children receiving in-home services were not consistently adequately assessed and/or addressed.

The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in meeting children's physical health needs.
- The State was not consistently effective in assessing and meeting children's mental health needs, particularly children in the in-home services cases.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Revised the family assessment tool to include the assessment of medical and mental health needs for in-home services cases
- Assigned a dental coordinator to each region to identify barriers and facilitate access to dental providers

- Partnered with the Division of Medical Services (DMS) to decrease the administrative burdens for Medicaid providers in an effort to increase the ability of CD staff and families to access dental resources
- Developed a statewide comprehensive children’s mental health plan to increase the level of cooperation between the courts, the Department of Mental Health, the CD, and families
- Designated five regional mental health coordinators who established local teams to identify barriers, plans to overcome the barriers, and created partnerships to improve to accessibility to available mental health resources

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating an information system that can provide accurate and timely information pertaining to the status, demographic characteristics, location, and case goals for the placement of every child in foster care.

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System in the 2010 CFSR. The 2010 CFSR determined that FACES can readily identify the legal status, demographics, location, and goals for all children in foster care.

Missouri also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Case Review System

Five items are included in the assessment of State performance for the systemic factor of Case Review System. The items examine development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the timeframes established in ASFA (item 28), and notification of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers about case reviews and hearings to be held regarding the children in their care and about their right to be heard in those proceedings (item 29).

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State was holding permanency hearings in a timely manner. However, the CFSR also identified the following concerns:

- Parents are not consistently involved in the development of the case plan.

- Although the State has a process in place to conduct 6-month periodic reviews of the status of each child, the 6-month reviews do not occur consistently.
- State statute provides a process for TPR in accordance with ASFA; however, this process is not consistently implemented as intended across the State.
- Findings of the onsite CFSR case review indicate that ASFA requirements for filing TPR were met in 61 percent of the 18 applicable cases.
- Although there is a process in place for notification of hearings and the opportunity for caregivers to be heard, the process is not being implemented consistently, particularly with regard to the opportunity for caregivers to be heard.

The State also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistent in involving parents in the development of case plans.
- Administrative reviews were not consistently held in a timely manner and did not meet the Federal requirement that a third-party participant must be involved in the review.
- The State did not have a consistent process in place to ensure that each child in foster care had a permanency hearing every 12 months. In addition, many of the 12-month hearings involved only “paper” reviews and a full hearing was not held unless one of the parties requested it.
- The State did not consistently comply with the statewide process for filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.
- The State did not have a statewide process to ensure the consistent notification of caregivers about court hearings or to ensure that caregivers could be heard in those hearings.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Developed and implemented supplemental FST training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes
- Developed a standardized supervisory case review tool to improve supervisory capacity to monitor enhanced casework practice relating to case planning
- Established agreements with other State agencies and developed diligent search procedures to improve efforts to locate relatives and absent parents in order to maximize parental and family involvement in FST meetings and case planning
- Revised CD policy to clarify administrative review requirements and recruited third-party participants for administrative reviews
- Increased the ability to track 6-month administrative reviews and capture administrative review information separately from FST meetings by changing relevant forms and data entry requirements
- Collaborated with OSCA to improve the timeliness of 12-month hearings and ensure joint accountability for timely hearings, developed a Court Issues Workgroup, developed local protocols between the court and the local CD office, and revised FST policy to include discussion of the permanency hearing date

- Provided training to judges, court staff, guardians *ad litem*, and CD staff on ASFA and permanency hearings consistent with State and Federal regulations
- Conducted meetings with the courts regarding procedures for filing timely TPR petitions and developed policies clarifying caseworkers' and supervisors' responsibilities in documenting compelling reasons
- Collaborated with OSCA to amend a State statute to ensure consistency with ASFA requirements regarding filing of TPR petitions within 60 days of a judicial determination that the child is an abandoned infant or that no reasonable efforts are required
- Revised consumer surveys for foster parents to incorporate questions regarding hearing notifications and opportunities to be heard in court and completed comprehensive Child Welfare Training with OSCA in order to increase the ability of foster parents to be notified of court dates and to be heard in court

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Quality Assurance System

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of QA System is based on whether the State has developed standards that ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30), and whether the State is operating a statewide QA system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provide with quality services that protect their health and safety. In addition, the State has a number of processes in place to monitor the quality of services and identify the child welfare system's strengths and needs.

Missouri also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Staff and Provider Training

The systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training incorporates an assessment of the State's training provided to new caseworkers (item 32), the ongoing training provided to agency staff (item 33), and both initial and ongoing training provided to foster and adoptive parents (item 34). This systemic factor does not assess the training of service providers other than child welfare agency staff unless the service providers are private agency caseworkers, operating under a contract with the State, who have full case management responsibilities.

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The 2010 CFSR determined the following:

- The State is operating a child welfare training program that provides initial training for new caseworkers to prepare them for their jobs.
- The State provides initial and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents, including relative and kinship providers that addresses the skills needed to parent foster and adoptive parents effectively.

However, the 2010 CFSR determined that although investigators and supervisors are required to obtain a certain number of training hours annually, there is no requirement for other CD staff to participate in training that would address the skills and knowledge base necessary for them to carry out their duties with regard to services included in the CFSP.

Missouri also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Service Array and Resource Development

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development incorporates answers to three questions: Does the State have in place an array of services that meets the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? Are the services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and family served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State has an appropriate array of key services that addresses the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of children and families. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns:

- Many of the services in the State's service array are not accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions.
- There are waiting lists for such key services as affordable housing, dental services, substance abuse treatment, psychiatric services, and other behavioral and mental health services.
- A lack of transportation in some areas is a barrier to accessing services.
- Although Missouri has the assessment and planning tools to identify individualized service needs to meet the unique needs of children and families, the State does not have the capacity to provide these services consistently to families statewide due to the lack of accessibility and availability of many of the key services in some parts of the State.

The State also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Although the State had an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families, the availability of services did not meet the demand, and there were numerous gaps in services.
- Services were not accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions in the State, particularly in rural areas.
- Services were not available to meet the individualized needs of children and families.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Assigned a dental coordinator to each region to identify barriers and facilitate access to dental providers
- Partnered with DMS to reduce administrative burdens on Medicaid providers in an effort to increase the ability of CD staff and families to access available dental resources
- Developed and implemented Family Drug and Safety Training to increase the ability of CD staff and families to access Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services
- Arranged for State resource and recruitment contractors to work with circuits to identify needed resources
- Developed a recruitment and retention plan for foster homes serving older youth, implemented AdoptUsKids campaign, and awarded performance-based recruitment contracts in an effort to increase the number of resource families
- Developed and implemented performance based contracts for family/parent aides and parenting class services to increase the availability of these services
- Developed a recruitment plan for multi- and bilingual staff in circuits with an identified need and made CD forms available in Spanish to increase services to meet the needs of non-English speaking families
- Issued statewide transportation contracts to increase the availability of transportation services and recruited regional service organizations to provide transportation services
- Developed and implemented supplemental FST training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the CFSP and producing Annual Progress and Service Reports (APSRs) (items 38 and 39), and the extent to which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The 2010 CFSR determined the following:

- The State engages in ongoing consultation with a broad array of key stakeholders, is effective in soliciting their input with regard to the CD's overall goals and objectives, and is responsive to their recommendations.
- The State consults with a wide range of stakeholders when developing its APSRs.
- The CD collaborates and coordinates activities with Federal or federally assisted agencies to address the needs of the children and families they serve.

Missouri also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State's efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children (item 45).

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The 2010 CFSR determined the following:

- The State has standards for foster family homes, group homes, and residential child care facilities, and the standards are applied equally to all licensed family foster homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.
- The State provides for comprehensive background checks as a component of licensing for all foster and adoptive placements.
- The State uses a variety of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive and permanent placements for waiting children.

However, the 2010 CFSR also found that although individual circuits and counties develop foster and adoptive home recruitment plans, and there are some activities at the State level in place for the purpose of foster home recruitment, there is no effective statewide process that recruits for general and specialized foster homes reflecting the ethnic and racial diversity of the population and/or children in foster care.

Missouri also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Table 1. Missouri 2010 CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved*	Met National Standards?	Rating**	Percent Strength
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	85.7	2 Yes		
Item 1. Timeliness of investigations				ANI	86
Item 2. Repeat maltreatment				Strength	100
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	67.2			
Item 3. Services to protect children in home				ANI	86
Item 4. Risk of harm				ANI	69
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	42.5	1 Yes 3 No		
Item 5. Foster care reentry				Strength	93
Item 6. Stability of foster care placements				ANI	70
Item 7. Permanency goal for child				ANI	72.5
Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	59
Item 9. Adoption				ANI	46
Item 10. Other planned living arrangement				ANI	75
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	62.5			
Item 11. Proximity of placement				Strength	97
Item 12. Placement with siblings				Strength	91
Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	62
Item 14. Preserving connections				ANI	82.5
Item 15. Relative placement				ANI	70
Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	48

* 95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

** Items may be rated as Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of cases must be rated as a Strength.

Table 2. Missouri 2010 CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved	Rating**	Percent Strength
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	No	45.3		
Item 17. Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	53
Item 18. Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	52
Item 19. Caseworker visits with child			ANI	83
Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	41
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	88.4		
Item 21. Educational needs of child			ANI	88
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	68.3		
Item 22. Physical health of child			ANI	71
Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of child			ANI	82

* 95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

** Items may be rated as Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of item 21) must be rated as a Strength. Because item 21 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95-percent Strength rating applies.

Table 3. Missouri 2010 CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Statewide Information System	Yes	3	
Item 24. The State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care			Strength
Case Review System	No	2	
Item 25. The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions			ANI
Item 26. The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review			ANI
Item 27. The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter			Strength
Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act			ANI
Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child			ANI
Quality Assurance System	Yes	4	
Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children			Strength
Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented			Strength
Staff and Provider Training	Yes	3	
Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services			Strength
Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP			ANI
Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children			Strength

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Service Array and Resource Development	No	2	
Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency			Strength
Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP			ANI
Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency			ANI
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Yes	4	
Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP			Strength
Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports delivered pursuant to the CFSP			Strength
Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population			Strength
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Yes	3	
Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards			Strength
Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds			Strength
Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children			Strength
Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed			ANI
Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children			Strength

* Scores range from 1 to 4. A score of 1 or 2 means that the factor is not in substantial conformity. A score of 3 or 4 means that the factor is in substantial conformity.

** Items may be rated as Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI).