

Final Report
Michigan Child and Family Services Review
March 2010

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Michigan. 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. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to 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 Michigan CFSR was conducted the week of September 21, 2009. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2008, through September 25, 2009. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Department of Human Services (DHS) Children's Services Administration (CSA)
- 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 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 17 cases in Berrien County, 17 cases in Kent County, and 31 cases in Wayne County
- 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

All 40 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the children in the cases reviewed are presented in the table at the end of this section. For this table, and for other tables in the report, figures displayed may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specified outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. The second section of the report (Section B: Systemic Factors) provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

Case Characteristics	Foster Care	In-Home Services
Total Number of Cases	40	25
Date case was opened		
Opened prior to the period under review	31 (77.5%)	17 (68%)
Opened during the period under review	9 (22.5%)	8 (32%)
Child entered foster care during the period under review	13 (32.5%)	NA
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than 10	19 (47.5%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	3 (7.5%)	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	12 (30%)	*
16 and older	6 (15%)	*
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic	0	*
Asian Non-Hispanic	0	*
Black Non-Hispanic	23 (57.5%)	*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	0	*
Hispanic (of any race)	3 (7.5%)	*
White Non-Hispanic	11 (27.5%)	*
Unknown/Unable to Determine	0	*
Two or More Races Non-Hispanic	3 (7.5%)	*
Primary reason for opening case		
Physical abuse	6 (15%)	7 (28%)
Sexual abuse	1 (2.5%)	1 (4%)
Emotional maltreatment	0	0
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	12 (30%)	5 (20%)
Medical neglect	1 (2.5%)	2 (8%)
Abandonment	2 (5%)	0
Mental/physical health of parent	1 (2.5%)	0
Substance abuse by parent	11 (27.5%)	4 (16%)
Child's behavior	0	1 (4%)
Substance abuse by child	1 (2.5%)	0
Domestic violence in child's home	1 (2.5%)	4 (16%)
Child in juvenile justice system	3 (7.5%)	0
Other	1 (2.5%)	1 (4%)

*Information on in-home services cases is not available for these characteristics.

SECTION A: OUTCOMES

In the Outcomes Section of the CFSR Final Report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 items reviewed. 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 item ratings are used to determine the performance of a State on the seven outcomes, each of which incorporates one or more of the individual items. The evaluation options for these outcomes are “substantially achieved,” “partially achieved,” and “not achieved.” For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two 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. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern identified for that outcome.

The Children’s Bureau has established very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our nation’s most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. The standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being. This is consistent with the goal of the CFSR to promote continuous improvement in performance on these outcomes.

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95-percent standard established for the CFSR Onsite Review or the national standards for the six data indicators by the end of their Program Improvement Plan implementations. The Children’s Bureau recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often take time to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with the Children’s Bureau to establish a specified amount of improvement or to determine specified activities for their Program Improvement Plans. That is, for each outcome that is not in substantial conformity or item that is rated as an Area Needing Improvement, each State (working in conjunction with the Children’s Bureau) specifies the following: (1) how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the Areas Needing Improvement and (2) the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its Program Improvement Plan and still not perform at the 95-percent (for outcomes) or the 90-percent (for items) levels established for the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSR assesses a State’s current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continued Program Improvement Plans addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior Program Improvement Plan goals may have been achieved. The purpose is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the completion of a Program Improvement Plan.

The following sections provide information on how Michigan performed on each outcome in the first round of the CFSR as well as the current CFSR. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round, the key concerns observed at that time and the strategies implemented in the Program Improvement Plan to address those concerns are discussed.

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, particularly with regard to comparisons of data indicators or percentages regarding Strength and Area Needing Improvement ratings. Key changes in the CFSR case review process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews include, but are not limited to, 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 enhance consistency and ensure an assessment of critical areas such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents in planning for their children

For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of Michigan’s status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State’s first CFSR report, which was held in fiscal year (FY) 2002, the State’s status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Performance of individual sites included in the Onsite Review is presented in the tables. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate.

I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	8	3	5	16	61.5
Partially Achieved	1	1	3	5	19.2
Not Achieved	0	1	4	5	19.2
Total Applicable Cases	9	5	12	26	
Not Applicable Cases	8	12	19	39	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	89%	60%	42%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (%)	State's Percent	Meets Standards?
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6+	92.9	No
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68+	99.51	No

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 61.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to the case review findings, the State did not meet the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence or the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The primary concern identified in the 2002 review was that the State was not effective in responding to maltreatment reports in accordance with State established timeframes, particularly regarding face-to-face contact.

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

- Incorporated CFSR standards for face-to-face investigative contacts into the Child Protective Services (CPS) Peer Review Tool
- Revised policy and associated forms addressing process to be followed for exceptions to face-to-face guidelines
- Provided increased supervisory monitoring of face-to-face contacts through a case reading process

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

Key Findings of the 2002 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

Strength **Area Needing Improvement**

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 26 (40 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

Michigan policy states that an investigation of child abuse or neglect must be initiated within 24 hours of receiving the referral. Initiation can occur via a telephone or face-to-face contact with someone other than the referral source. The following are the three priority response times:

- Priority 1, immediate response: Initiate investigation immediately and face-to-face contact with each alleged child victim within 24 hours.
- Priority 2, 24-hour response: Initiate investigation within 24 hours and face-to-face contact with each alleged child victim within 24 hours.
- Priority 3, 24-hour response and 72-hour face-to-face contact: Initiate investigation within 24 hours, and face-to-face contact with each alleged child victim must take place within 72 hours.

Although by policy only DHS caseworkers can initiate an investigation, in certain circumstances State policy allows face-to-face contact by law enforcement to be considered the initiation of the investigation.

The results of the assessment of item 1 are presented in the table below.

Item 1 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	9	4	5	18	69
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	7	8	31
Total Applicable Cases	9	5	12	26	
Not Applicable	8	12	19	39	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	100%	80%	42%		

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 18 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy. It was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in eight cases when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes. The eight cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement included nine reports that were not investigated in a timely manner. Of these nine reports, four reports were assigned as Priority 1, four reports were assigned as a Priority 2, and one report was assigned as a Priority 3. In all nine reports, face-to-face contact did not occur within the timeframes required by State policy although investigations were determined to be initiated according to State policy in four of the nine.

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 69 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 1 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS uses the CPS Minimal Priority Response Criteria to ensure that the appropriate response is determined at assignment. When the information received from the reporter is not sufficient to reach a decision regarding the appropriate response, DHS conducts a preliminary investigation typically by completing telephone calls. Within 24 hours of the receipt of the complaint, a decision must be made to accept, transfer, or screen out the complaint.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, data relevant to the outcomes and items reviewed by the CFSR are from the following sources:

- Case readings by supervisors and some private child placing agencies (CPAs) conducted from November 1, 2008, through February 28, 2009 (it is important to note that the data for the case readings include practice that occurred prior to the period under review)
- Michigan's State automated child welfare information system, the Service Worker Support System (SWSS)
- Survey and focus groups with DHS staff, foster parents, adoptive parents, parents with children in out-of-home placement, and parents receiving in-home services conducted in preparation for the CFSR

The following data relevant to the timeliness of investigations were reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- Case readings indicate that in 89 percent of the 1,118 CPS cases reviewed, investigations began within 24 hours of receipt of report.
- SWSS data indicate that through June 30 of FY 2009, Priority 1 referrals were initiated timely in 51.3 percent of the cases assigned for investigations, Priority 2 referrals were initiated timely in 65.8 percent of the cases, and Priority 3 referrals were initiated timely in 73.6 percent of the cases.
- SWSS data also indicate that through June 30 of FY 2009, children in Priority 1 referrals were seen timely in 58.3 percent of the cases, children in Priority 2 referrals were seen timely in 48.1 percent of the cases, and children in Priority 3 referrals were seen timely in 66.9 percent of the cases.

According to the Statewide Assessment, focus group participants reported that it is difficult for caseworkers to make timely contacts with children during weekends and holidays. The Statewide Assessment indicated that staff turnover and caseload issues may influence performance in this area. Additionally, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, there is a lack of clarity in the type of contacts required for initiation of an investigation.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally responds to reports of abuse and neglect in a timely manner. However, a few stakeholders in Wayne County expressed the opinion that the initiation of investigations sometimes is delayed because the referral is not received from intake in a timely manner.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 20 (31 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine if there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review, and, if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. The results of the assessment of item 2 are presented in the table below.

Item 2 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	6	3	8	17	85
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	1	3	15
Total Applicable Cases	7	4	9	20	
Not Applicable	10	13	22	45	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	86%	75%	89%		

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 17 cases when there was only one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family within a 6-month period. Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three cases when there were at least two substantiated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period. In one case, referrals were 3 months apart; in another case the referrals were 2 months apart; and, in the final case rated as an Area Needing Improvement, referrals were 1 month apart. Two of the three cases involved recurrence of substantiated domestic violence.

In addition to the recurrence of substantiated maltreatment reports, reviewers reported the following findings with regard to the number of maltreatment reports on the family during the life of the case (“life of the case” refers to the time from the date of the first allegation of abuse or neglect to the time of the Onsite Review):

- In 23 cases, there were fewer than 3 reports.
- In 20 cases, there were at least 3 reports but fewer than 6 reports.
- In 15 cases, there were between 6 and 11 reports.
- In 7 cases, there were 15 or more maltreatment reports, including 1 case with 31 referrals.

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 85 percent of the applicable cases, there was no recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month period. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 2 was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that when a new CPS referral is received on a family who has an open case or a pending investigation, the new referral will be evaluated and assigned using the same standards as any other referral. Additionally, policy requires that when a referral is received on a family with a history of child abuse and neglect, the caseworker must review the case history and determine trends related to child abuse and neglect to ensure proper service provision.

Participants in focus groups conducted as part of the Statewide Assessment reported ongoing struggles with large CPS caseloads and challenges with regard to the retention of CPS caseworkers and the recruitment of applicants. The Statewide Assessment also noted that in FY 2007, title IV-B (2) funds usage was restructured with a focus on the highest risk families, which included families with children in out-of-home placement with the permanency goal of reunification and DHS post-adoption families at risk of disruption. Until the change in FY 2007, eligibility for title IV-B (2) funds was broader and could include non-DHS families at risk of abuse and neglect.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite CFSR said that they have seen cases with maltreatment recurrence. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that the lack of preventive services contributes to maltreatment recurrence.

Safety Outcome 2

Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	11	10	21	42	64.6
Partially Achieved	0	5	2	7	10.8
Not Achieved	6	2	8	16	24.6
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	65%	59%	68%		

Status of Safety Outcome 2

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 64.6 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The primary concern identified in the 2002 review was that the State was not consistently effective in addressing the risk of harm to children, particularly in situations in which relative placements were occurring without home studies and background checks. Additionally, there were cases in which the family's history with child welfare was not taken into account in the assessment of risk, often because the information had not been collected or was not available to the caseworker.

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

- Revised policy and implemented changes to the Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths (CANS) to ensure that the top three needs and strengths identified are addressed in service plans
- Revalidated the Structured Decision Making (SDM) initial risk assessment and reassessment tools and conducted case reads to determine accuracy of tool completion
- Developed and provided training to supervisors on the accurate use and completion of the SDM Safety Assessment to enhance supervisory oversight
- Revised policy to require background checks of relative caregivers prior to or at the time of placement
- Piloted and evaluated the use of a tablet PC for after-hour background checks

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or reentry into foster care

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 42 (65 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home, or if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For applicable cases,

reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families that would prevent placement of children in foster care and at the same time ensure their safety. The results of the assessment of item 3 are presented in the table below.

Item 3 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	6	10	13	29	69
Area Needing Improvement	5	1	7	13	31
Total Applicable Cases	11	11	20	42	
Not Applicable	6	6	11	23	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	55%	91%	65%		

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Although no services were provided when the child was removed from the home, the removal was necessary to ensure the safety of the child (six cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal (14 cases).
- Services were provided after reunification of the child (eight cases).
- Efforts were made to provide services prior to removal and/or reentry (four cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. This included but was not limited to the following: Families First, domestic violence assessment, shelter, and intervention; substance abuse assessment and treatment; intensive in-home services; group, family, and individual counseling; psychological evaluations; family reunification services; after-care services; emergency shelter; assistance with household expenses; child care services; speech therapy; early education intervention; employment support; and behavioral intervention.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 13 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- Services were not provided to the family and the children remained at risk in the home (seven cases).
- Services were provided, but they did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home (five cases).
- Services were not provided to protect the children in the home, and the children were subsequently removed (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 69 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 3 was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers assess the risk and safety factors in the family and determine the services based on the needs of the child and family. Services to preserve families and protect children are provided either directly by DHS or are purchased from local community partners or through State contracts. The Statewide Assessment reports that the State’s Families First program, which is an intensive, home-based, and evidence-based model program, is effective in preserving families prior to removal and after reunification. Additionally, the Family Reunification Program provides effective post-reunification services to families.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the State uses the DHS Birth Match process to match information regarding a parent of a newborn child to information about that parent whose parental rights have been terminated because of neglect or abuse or who has a history of severe physical abuse with another child. This match occurs based on childbirth records of the hospital through the Department of Community Health (DCH) that is cross-referenced with the DHS listing of parents whose parental rights have been terminated or who severely abused another child. This process is designed to allow DHS to identify cases as soon as possible after a child is born and take action to ensure child safety and according to the Statewide Assessment, has been cited as a national best practice for assuring child safety.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State’s effectiveness in protecting children in their homes and preventing removal or reentry into foster care. Some stakeholders indicated that DHS is effective in providing services to prevent removal and reentry, particularly through Families First and the Family Reunification programs. However, other stakeholders reported that there is a waiting list for Families First and Family Reunification services. Stakeholders also reported that, in general, families need more services than are available, particularly prevention services.

Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. The results of the assessment of item 4 are presented in the table below.

Item 4 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	11	10	21	42	65
Area Needing Improvement	6	7	10	23	35
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	65%	59%	68%		

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 42 cases when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through the following: conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children's home or in the children's foster home and addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment.

Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 23 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no initial safety or risk assessment (one case).
- There was no ongoing safety and risk assessment in the child's home during the period under review (14 cases).
- The ongoing safety and risk assessments conducted in the foster home during the period under review were not adequate and issues were not addressed (three cases).
- There were continued risk concerns in the home that were not addressed and/or monitored by the agency, and the children were at risk in the home (10 cases).
- The case was closed without any safety and risk assessment (four cases).
- There was no ongoing safety plan (two cases).
- There was risk of harm or safety issues during visitation with parents and other relatives, and the agency did not appropriately address those issues (one case).
- There was no safety and risk assessment of the parent's/relative's home prior to reunification (one case).
- Assessments were completed on the family without the State agency having face-to-face contact with the family (three cases).

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 65 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assess and address the risk of harm to the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 4 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, SDM safety and risk assessments are completed on families receiving in-home CPS services and on families who have children in out-of-home placement. Caseworkers use the assessments to assist in completing court reports, at important case decision points, and to determine the child's risk and safety at placement changes. The risk assessment may be completed at any time during the investigation but must be completed within 30 days of receipt of the child abuse and neglect referral and prior to case disposition. The factors on the risk assessment tool serve as the initial baseline level of risk and determine the service level that guides the caseworker contact standards for the case. The safety assessment ensures that major aspects of danger are considered to ensure child safety as well as addresses reasonable efforts issues with families and the court.

Additionally, foster care caseworkers complete the safety assessment on cases currently open for services with a permanency plan goal of reunification, on cases in which termination of parental rights (TPR) has not occurred, and on cases in which the agency is recommending that children be returned to their parents. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, a reunification assessment is

completed in foster care cases to guide the decision to reunify the child with his or her family or to change the child's permanency planning goal.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that an Updated Service Plan (USP) is completed on a family when the case is opened for ongoing in-home services. The USP consists of the risk reassessment, the Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths (FANS), the CANS, the safety reassessment, and the service agreement. The first USP must be completed within 90 days of the CPS complaint and every 90 days thereafter or more frequently if necessary. Additionally, a risk and safety reassessment and reassessments of the FANS and CANS must be completed if there is a new substantiated investigation or if there are other significant changes in case status.

The following data from case readings were reported in the Statewide Assessment as relevant to item 4:

- 96.6 percent of the investigations reviewed had assessments of the safety and well-being of all children in the family, including children who resided in another location.
- 89.1 percent of the cases reviewed had a safety assessment completed as required by policy.
- 82.9 percent of the decisions on the safety assessments reviewed were supported and documented by evidence in the case file.
- 50.8 percent of the safety plans reviewed addressed all of the relevant safety factors.
- 94.9 percent of the cases reviewed had a completed risk assessment that was supported by the facts of the case.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency generally is effective in conducting safety and risk assessments. Stakeholders reported that the agency provides caseworkers with standardized formal tools to conduct the assessments, and that these are completed at required intervals throughout the life of the cases. However, stakeholders expressed different opinions about the effectiveness of the assessment tools. Some stakeholders indicated that the assessment tools are beneficial in that they consistently determine the needs and services of the families. In contrast, other stakeholders expressed concern that the assessment tools are not of good quality and do not adequately assess the issues in the family.

II. PERMANENCY

Permanency Outcome 1

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	6	5	8	19	47.5
Partially Achieved	3	4	12	19	47.5
Not Achieved	1	1	0	2	5.0
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	60%	50%	40%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (Scaled Score)	State Score (Scaled Score)	Meets Standards?
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6+	106.8	No
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4+	95.5	No
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7+	118.5	No
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5+	105.4	Yes

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 47.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, Michigan 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, the State met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to placement stability. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:

- The State was not consistent with regard to ensuring placement stability for children in foster care.
- The State did not consistently make concerted efforts to achieve reunification or permanent placement with a relative in a timely manner.

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

- Incorporated improvement goals for foster care placement stability into the management annual performance objectives
- Developed and implemented strategies to increase the number of foster homes in order to improve placement stability
- Expanded the Family to Family program, as resources allowed, to a minimum of 30 sites
- Implemented policy to require Team Decision Making (TDM) in Family to Family sites when placement changes were being considered
- Reviewed and revised court rules regarding child protection dispositional, permanency planning, and termination hearings
- Developed and distributed a management report identifying relative placements that extend beyond 12 months to address the length of time in foster care

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

Item 5. Foster care reentries

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 13 (32.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of the assessment of item 5 are presented in the table below.

Item 5 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	4	3	6	13	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	3	6	13	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	7	14	27	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	100%		

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in 12 cases when the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode. In one case, a child reentered foster care within a 12-month period, but the State made concerted efforts to prevent the reentry.

Rating Determination

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the cases reviewed. Item 5 also was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Performance on the Composite 1 Measure Relevant to the Permanency of Reunification

The data below are presented to provide additional information about foster care reentry. There is no national standard for the measure of foster care reentry. National standards with regard to permanency have been established only for the scaled composite scores. The measure of foster care reentry is part of Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification. The State's performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

Michigan's performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was the following: In the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period for the data indicators, 3.2 percent of children exiting foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is lower than the 25th percentile of 9.9 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a reunification assessment is completed on children in out-of-home placement to guide the casework decision to reunify a child with his or her family or to modify the permanency planning goal based on the family information. If the decision is made to reunify the child with the parents, policy mandates that the caseworker continue to monitor the risk and safety of the child in the home and to have weekly face-to-face in-person contacts with the parent and child in the family's home for the first month. Caseworkers may extend this period of contact to 90 days, if necessary. Additionally, the SDM tools, including CANS and FANS, are used to identify the needs of the child and family so that the appropriate time-limited reunification services and family support services are provided to the family.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State does not have a high percentage of reentries into foster care.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 6. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, whether the changes in placement settings

were necessary to achieve the child’s permanency goal or meet the child’s service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child’s most recent placement setting. The results of the assessment of item 6 are presented in the table below.

Item 6 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	9	4	17	30	75
Area Needing Improvement	1	6	3	10	25
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	90%	40%	85%		

Item 6 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s current placement was stable and that the child either did not experience a placement change during the period under review (24 cases) or that the placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests (i.e., they were intended to further achievement of the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services for the child) (six cases).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review, and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to attain the child’s permanency goal (seven cases).
- The child’s placement setting at the time of the onsite CFSR was not stable (five cases).

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 25 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in 10 cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in five cases experienced three or four placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 75 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2002 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 4: Placement stability

The data below are presented to provide additional information about placement stability. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State’s performance on Composite 4 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Michigan's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability was the following:

- C4.1: 85.8 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national median of 83.3 percent but less than the 75th percentile of 86.0 percent.
- C4.2: 72.6 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the 75th percentile of 65.4 percent.
- C4.3: 45.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the 75th percentile of 41.8 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the child's placement is based on the individual assessment of the child's needs and the first consideration for placement must be relatives. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the State uses TDM meetings (or permanency planning conferences) to discuss placement issues for children and to identify potential relative placements. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the State has implemented the following policies to prevent unnecessary placement changes for children in foster care:

- Each CPA must develop and implement a written plan that addresses unplanned moves of children in foster care and contains measures that the CPA will take to correct the causes of disruptions and unplanned moves.
- Within 90 days of the child's initial placement into foster care, the caseworker must make a placement decision and document the reason for the decision.
- CPA Licensing Rules require that foster care providers be notified of the intent to move a child from a home at least 14 days prior to the move, and allow foster parents to appeal that decision within 3 days of notification of the intended move.
- Placement of children younger than 10 years old in residential or other institutional settings requires written approval from the State program office.

The Statewide Assessment notes that focus group participants, including DHS and private CPA staff, court appointed special advocates (CASAs), court representatives, foster parents, and foster youth, reported that although caseworkers often are able to find a temporary home willing to take a child for the night, finding an appropriate, long-term initial placement is difficult.

According to the Statewide Assessment, case readings from 1,221 foster care cases indicate the following:

- In 94 percent of the cases reviewed, the placement was considered to be in the child's best interests.
- In 96 percent of the cases reviewed, documentation indicated that the child was in the least restrictive setting.
- In 67 percent of the cases reviewed, children did not have a placement change.
- In 52 percent of the cases reviewed, services were provided to the foster care provider to prevent placement disruption.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders in Berrien and Kent counties commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed differing opinions on placement stability. Stakeholders in Berrien County expressed the opinion that the county is effective in providing stable foster care placements for children. They noted that agency efforts to ensure appropriate matching prior to placement and the availability of dedicated foster parents contributed to placement stability in that county. Some Berrien County stakeholders also noted that DHS provides the necessary support services to foster families when there is a potential for placement disruption, including in-home counseling. However, while some Berrien County stakeholders indicated that respite care was available to foster parents, others indicated that this service was not always available.

Kent County stakeholders reported that in that county, the first placement for many children, particularly older children, is Kids First, which is a local shelter. The shelter also tends to be used when a child's placement disrupts. Although some stakeholders expressed the opinion that Kids First is an invaluable resource for the agency and the children in the community, other stakeholders reported that Kids First sometimes is overcrowded and children have had to sleep on mattresses on the floor and that the length of stay of a child in Kids First ranges from 1 night to 1 year.

A key Wayne County stakeholder reported that Wayne County has implemented the Children Placement Network, which is a child-centered, neighborhood-based automated system that has the capability to scan 1,500 potential placement resources at one time. The system provides a detail screen in order to identify additional information on families that enables caseworkers to find the best match possible for a child.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 7. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had established a permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and whether the most current permanency goal was appropriate. Reviewers also were to determine whether the agency had sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The results of the assessment of item 7 are presented in the table below.

Item 7 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	7	8	15	30	75
Area Needing Improvement	3	2	5	10	25
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	70%	80%	75%		

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 30 cases when reviewers determined that the child's permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and, if relevant, that the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.

Item 7 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child's permanency goal at the time of the onsite CFSR was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (four cases).
- The child's permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (six cases).
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, particularly with regard to documenting compelling reasons in the case file for not seeking TPR (four cases).

ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 78 percent of 23 applicable cases.

The following case goals were identified for the 40 foster care cases:

- Adoption only (16 cases)
- Reunification only (including reunification with relatives) (17 cases)
- Guardianship only (two cases)
- Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) only (five cases)

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements when relevant. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 7 was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods

The data below are presented to provide additional information about permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards were established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 3 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Michigan's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods was the following:

- C3.1: 27.6 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is greater than the national median of 25.0 percent but less than the 75th percentile of 29.1 percent.

- C3.2: 96.4 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is less than the national median of 96.8 percent.
- C3.3: 48.7 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is greater than the national median of 47.8 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, children in foster care and children served by the Bureau of Juvenile Justice must have a Federally-approved permanency planning goal documented in their service plan. The Statewide Assessment reports that an Initial Service Plan (ISP), which identifies the child's initial permanency planning goal, must be submitted to the court within 30 days of placement. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, case reading findings indicate that 81 percent of the children reviewed had a permanency goal with achievable timeframes consistent with the child's developmental needs. The Statewide Assessment related that legislation has passed allowing the State to implement concurrent planning and that it will begin implementation in September 2009.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The key issues addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether a goal was established in a timely manner and was appropriate to the needs of the child, whether concurrent planning was being used in the State, and whether a petition for TPR was filed in a timely manner.

The few stakeholders commenting on the appropriateness and timeliness of goals expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in establishing an appropriate permanency goal in a timely manner. A few stakeholders also noted that caseworkers are not sure if a permanency goal can be changed without the approval of the court.

With regard to concurrent planning, many stakeholders reported that the State is in the process of piloting the use of concurrent planning, although some counties have been using concurrent planning on an informal basis for some time. However, a few stakeholders expressed the opinion that when concurrent goals are established, they tend to be pursued sequentially rather than simultaneously.

Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State is effective in filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Some stakeholders reported that the agency will file for TPR even if there is not an identified adoptive resource for the child. A few stakeholders, however, reported that in some cases the court will not allow for a TPR petition to be filed or will delay the TPR petition.

Additional stakeholder information pertaining to TPR is provided under item 9 below and item 28 in the Systemic Factors section of this report.

Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 19 (47.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of the assessment of item 8 are presented in the table below.

Item 8 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	3	2	8	13	68
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	5	6	32
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	3	13	19	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	7	7	21	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	100%	67%	62%		

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in 13 cases when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in six cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner. Concerns identified included a lack of effort to engage the parent in services, late filing of guardianship petitions, delays in requesting a home study through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), and the court providing parents with ongoing opportunities (extensions) to continue to work toward reunification.

Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 68 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 8 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Pertaining to Timeliness Included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of reunification. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State’s performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Michigan's performance on the individual timeliness measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was the following:

- C1.1: 47.7 percent of the reunifications occurred in at least 8 days but less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 69.9 percent.
- C1.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification was 12.5 months. This length of stay is greater than the national median of 6.5 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C1.3: 24.4 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in more than 7 days but less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 39.4 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, when the goal is reunification, the caseworker must indicate the recommendation for placement and the permanency-planning goal based on the Reunification Assessment Planning Decision Guidelines. The supervising agency for children in foster care must attempt to achieve this goal for the child within 12 months after removal. However, if the parent has been working toward reunification and the supervising agency expects that reunification can occur within a particular defined period, reunification efforts may be extended beyond the 12 months. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, case reading findings indicate that 78 percent of the cases reviewed contained documented concerted efforts to finalize the permanency plan.

Focus group participants, including the court, DHS and private CPA staff and service providers, indicated that the appropriateness of a reunification goal becomes questionable when caseworkers have made efforts to engage the family without success or the family has not remained consistent in its involvement with the agency. Additionally, these focus group participants identified the following barriers to reunification:

- There is a belief that the foster care caseworker must give the parents 12 months to work toward reunification or the parents could appeal termination and win on the basis that a year was not afforded to them.
- Caseworkers do not increase visits as the parent successfully complies with the treatment plan.
- There is a lack of transportation and day care for parents participating in services.
- There is a lack of appropriate and timely services.
- Judges will not return the children home until there is an opening for Family Reunification or Families First services.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the Guardianship Assistance Program is a newly developed permanency option for Michigan that was designed specifically for children who would otherwise remain in foster care and who will remain with the guardian until adulthood. The State funded subsidized guardianship program was signed into law in July 2008 and became operational in July 2009. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, permanent guardianship with financial assistance provides permanence for foster children when reunification and adoption are not viable options.

The Statewide Assessment notes that in an effort to increase timely reunification, counties receive a bi-monthly report identifying all the children who have been in foster care for 200 to 300 days with reunification as the permanency goal. Additionally, status updates are monitored and shared with the court in order to focus attention on timely permanency. The Statewide Assessment indicates that as part of the child welfare reform effort, the State currently is engaged in a major effort to reduce the number of children who have been waiting for reunification for over 1 year. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, as of July 7, 2009, the State has closed 2,301 cases (45.5 percent) of children who were temporary court wards since September 30, 2008, by establishing permanency for these children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in providing reunification services to families primarily through the Family Reunification program. However, some stakeholders noted that Family Reunification Services sometimes are not available, are delayed, or have a waiting list which may delay reunification as some courts are hesitant to reunify if Family Reunification Services or similar services have not been implemented. Additionally, a few stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State usually achieves reunifications in a timely manner and that the State conducts formal reviews of the permanency goals of children in foster care in order to address the barriers to achieving permanency through reunification.

Item 9. Adoption

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 16 (40 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The results of the assessment of item 9 are presented in the table below.

Item 9 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	2	5	1	8	50
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	4	8	50
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	6	5	16	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	4	15	24	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	40%	83%	20%		

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in eight cases when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in eight cases when reviewers identified one or more of the following:

- Delays in filing for TPR (one case)
- Delays in completing the home study (one case)
- Delays in requesting adoption services (one case)
- Delays in finalizing adoptive placement (three cases)
- Delays in the identification of an adoptive home (three cases)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 16 children with a goal of adoption, 6 achieved the goal during the period under review.
- Of the six children who had a finalized adoption during the period under review, four had been in foster care for less than 24 months.
- Of the 10 children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, 4 had been in foster care for less than 24 months, with one child being in foster care for 96 months.

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 50 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 9 was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of adoptions. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 2 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Michigan's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions was the following:

- C2.1: 30.6 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national median of 26.8 percent but less than the 75th percentile of 36.6 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 29.5 months. This median length of stay is less than the national median of 32.4 months but greater than the 25th percentile of 27.3 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C2.3: 23.7 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the year. This percentage is greater than the 75th percentile of 22.7 percent.

- C2.4: 11.8 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is greater than the 75th percentile of 10.9 percent.
- C2.5: 33.5 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is less than the national median of 45.8 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, foster care caseworkers refer children for adoption services following the court's approval to change the permanency goal from reunification to adoption. DHS has developed a specialized delivery system with adoption staff in local DHS county offices and private adoption agencies through purchase of service (POS). DHS contracts with 56 private adoption agencies that currently supervise 75 percent of the adoption cases from foster care. The contracts with private agencies are performance based, with the focus on the timely placement of children in adoptive homes. The adoption caseworker serves as a secondary caseworker, with the foster care caseworker maintaining primary services and oversight. This allows the adoption staff to focus on a timely adoptive placement that meets the individual needs of the child. However, according to the Statewide Assessment, the supervising agency does not assign an adoption specialist to a case until after TPR. This creates delays in the completion of required processes to finalize an adoption for adoptive families who already have the child placed in their homes. Additionally, there also are critical time delays in beginning child-specific recruitment if there is not an identified adoptive family.

The Statewide Assessment reports that 45.9 percent of the adoption cases reviewed had an adoption finalized within 24 months of the latest removal. The Statewide Assessment also notes that as part of the child welfare reform effort, the State currently is engaged in a major effort to reduce the number of children who have been waiting for or adoption for over 1 year. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, as of July 7, 2009, 1,278 cases (30 percent) of the permanent State wards cases were closed statewide since September 30, 2008, by establishing permanency for these children.

In order to increase the number of children adopted in the State, the Michigan Supreme Court and the DHS initiated three adoption forums, held in March 2008, October 2008, and March 2009. The first two forums included the 13 counties with the highest number of children with the goal of adoption and an identified adoptive resource but who had been waiting over a year for the adoption to be finalized. The forums brought together county-level teams of public and private service providers, the courts, parents and youth to discuss issues and plan improvements. The third forum included the next 10 counties with the highest number of children with the goal of adoption who had been waiting over a year for the adoption to be finalized. The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) released a report on the results of the first forum showing that in the 13 original counties, there was an increase in adoptions.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that the State is in the process of reviewing cases to determine the barriers to achieving timely adoptions. Some stakeholders said that they were involved in the Adoption Forums and that, as a result of the Forums, finalized adoptions in Berrien and Wayne counties have increased. However, stakeholders in general

expressed different opinions regarding the State’s effectiveness in achieving timely adoptions. A few stakeholders said that the State has made improvements in achieving timely adoptions. Other stakeholders, however, identified the following barriers to the agency’s timeliness with regard to finalizing adoptions:

- The courts provide parents with opportunities to continue to work toward reunification instead of changing the child’s goal to adoption after the child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.
- Some judges will not grant TPR if there is not an adoptive resource for the child.
- Some judges take several months to decide on the TPR disposition.
- There are frequent appeals to TPR decisions by the biological parents (Wayne County only).
- There is a lack of adoptive resources for older children with multiple needs.
- There are delays in completing the required adoption paperwork and adoption subsidy paperwork.
- It can take several months to obtain the approval for the adoption from the Michigan Children’s Institute (MCI) superintendent.

Some stakeholders noted when a child refuses to be adopted, the caseworker and/or counselor generally continue to discuss adoption with the child in an attempt to resolve the issues with the child and establish permanency.

Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 5 (12.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. The results of the assessment of item 10 are presented in the table below.

Item 10 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	2	0	0	2	40
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	2	3	60
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	1	2	5	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	8	9	18	35	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	100%	0	0		

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in two cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and/or to provide the necessary service to prepare the child for independent living. Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency had not established a permanent placement for a 16-year-old youth (one case).

- The agency had not provided adequate services to the youth to prepare for independent living (three cases). In two cases the youth were 15 years old and in the third case the youth was 16 years old.

The table below provides the ages of the children when the goal of OPPLA was established.

Age of Child When OPPLA Was Established	Number of Children
Older than 13 but younger than 16	2
16 or older	3
Total	5

Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 40 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 10 was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, OPPLA is appropriate for youth who are at least 14 years old and requires documented compelling reasons why the other permanency goals are not in the child’s best interests. Additionally, the court must concur that this is the optimum permanent placement for the child and continue to review the case as long as the child remains in the foster home. According to the Statewide Assessment, the State goal of another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) (E) (formerly emancipation) is appropriate for youth age 16 or older whose plans do not include a goal of leaving foster care and transitioning into the home of a permanent family. The goal incorporates two components. One component involves establishing a significant connection between a youth and an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child that may or may not involve the youth residing with the adult. A signed formal agreement between the youth and the supportive adult must be included in the file. The role of the supportive adult is to assist the youth in transitioning from foster care to self-sufficiency.

The other component involves the provision of services to youth that ensure adequate preparation for self-sufficiency. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, in State FY 2008, DHS developed a Youth Services Unit to focus on ensuring that resources and services are available to support the development of self-sufficiency skills in older youth. In addition, beginning at 14 years of age, the youth’s Treatment Plan and Service Agreement must describe the services provided and goals for future services that will help prepare the youth for independence. The following programs and services were identified in the Statewide Assessment as available for youth in foster care and youth aging out of foster care:

- Alternative independent living (IL) arrangements for youth age 16 and older who have been assessed as adequately prepared for independent living.
- Michigan Works! Programs, which provide employment-related services, mentoring, and internship opportunities for youth age 14 and older, including those who have already aged out of foster care

- Mentor Michigan and AmeriCorps programs, which provide mentoring services for youth in foster care and youth who have aged out of foster care
- The Education and Training Voucher Program, which provides funding for post-secondary education, including vocational education, for eligible youth
- The Foster Care Transitional Medicaid program, which provides up to 20 hours of mental health services to former foster youth
- The Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative (MYOI), which assists youth with educational and training supplies, completing applications for grants and scholarships, travel and transportation for youths, youth board meetings and stipends, and Opportunity Passports, a package of resources to help youth achieve self-sufficiency
- The Youth in Transition program, Michigan’s Chafee-funded program, which provides funding and services related to employment and training throughout the State

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, in focus groups that included foster parents, providers and DHS and private agency staff, concerns were expressed that child welfare staff might be deferring to the goal of OPPLA when children are older due to the perception that older children do not want to be adopted or are not adoptable. In addition, once the goal of OPPLA is identified, no continued follow up or efforts are made to reconsider alternative permanency goals. There was some indication, according to the Statewide Assessment, that OPPLA may be used for younger children who are part of a sibling group in which sibling connections are strong, rather than considering permanency through adoption for the younger children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions regarding the State’s effectiveness in providing IL services to youth. Some stakeholders indicated that the State makes concerted efforts to provide services to youth to assist them in making a successful transition from foster care to independence. Stakeholders identified the youth transition classes and the MYOI services as examples of effective self-sufficiency-related services. Other stakeholders, however, reported that services are not consistently provided and that the State lacks adequate services for youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported there are waiting lists for particular IL classes.

Permanency Outcome 2

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	7	6	16	29	72.5
Partially Achieved	3	4	4	11	27.5
Not Achieved	0	0	0	0	0
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	70%	60%	80%		

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 72.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:

- The State did not consistently place siblings together in foster care.
- The State did not consistently promote sufficient visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care.
- The State did not consistently seek and assess relatives as placement resources, particularly in instances when one relative was deemed unsuitable for placement.
- The State did not consistently make concerted efforts to support or strengthen the parent-child relationship.

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

- Developed and implemented strategies to increase the number of foster/relative placement resources
- Provided guidance to staff on licensing variances to facilitate placement of large sibling groups together
- Provided increased supervisory monitoring of sibling placements and parent and sibling visitation to facilitate a decrease in the number of siblings placed apart and increase parent and sibling visitation
- Collaborated with the SCAO in the development and implementation of the Absent Parent Protocol to search for and engage parents early in the case as well as identify relative resources
- Developed and disseminated relative resource guide and corresponding instructions to staff geared to increase identification of and placement with relatives
- Developed and implemented training to address parent/child visitation and how to strengthen the parent/child relationship

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

 X Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 26 (65 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if TPR was attained prior to the period under review, contact with parents was not considered to be in the child’s best interests, and/or parents were deceased or their whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child’s most current foster care setting was near the child’s parents or close relatives. The results of the assessment of item 11 are presented in the table below.

Item 11 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	6	6	13	25	96
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	0	1	4
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	7	13	26	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	3	7	14	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	100%	86%	100%		

Item 11 was rated as a Strength in 25 applicable cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed in the same community or county as the parents or in close proximity (17 cases). Of these 17 cases, 13 of the children were placed in the same community and 4 of the children were placed in the same county.
- Even though the child was placed out of his or her community, the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the permanency goal (eight cases).

Item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the child’s placement was not sufficiently close to the parents’ location and that potential resources closer to the parent were not thoroughly explored.

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 96 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed children in locations close to their parents or relatives when appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 11 also was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, supervising agencies must place children in their counties or within a 75-mile radius of their homes. If the child is placed outside of this radius, the county director and the director of Child Welfare Field Operations or Urban Field Operations must approve the placement. Additionally, the ISP and the USP must contain documentation on why being placed away from his/her community is in the child’s best interests. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, targeted foster care case readings indicate that 82.7 percent of children reside in close proximity to their home. During the stakeholder focus group process, caseworkers reported that children with special needs who require more intensive treatment often require placement in residential facilities that are not in close proximity to their communities.

For juvenile justice youth, the security level recommendation matrix in the ISP and USP determine the youth’s placement security level and placements with the appropriate level of security may not be available in close proximity to the child’s home.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in placing children in close proximity to their families.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 25 (62.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were currently, or had been, placed together, and if separated, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children. The results of the assessment of item 12 are presented in the table below.

Item 12 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	9	4	10	23	92
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	0	2	8
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	5	10	25	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	5	10	15	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	90%	80%	100%		

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed with siblings (nine cases), or that the separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs or because placement with siblings was not in the child’s best interests (14 cases). Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together. In one of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement, there were three siblings in two separate foster homes and in the other case there were five siblings placed in three separate foster homes.

Rating Determination

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 92 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that siblings be placed together in the same foster home and adoptive placement unless one of the siblings has needs that can be met only in a specialized program or facility, such placement is harmful to one or more of the siblings, or the size of the sibling group makes one placement impractical despite diligent efforts to place the siblings within the same home. The Statewide Assessment reports that all sibling separations require second-line supervisory approval and that a quarterly reassessment of the sibling separation and of efforts to place siblings together is required in the case plan.

As noted in the Statewide assessment, the foster care case readings data indicate the following:

- 40 percent of siblings in out-of-home care reside together.
- 88 percent of cases in which siblings are separated contain documented reasons for sibling separations.
- 78 percent of the cases in which siblings are separated contain documentation of the services that were provided to keep the siblings together.
- 49 percent of the cases involving siblings who are not placed together have the service plan signed by the second-line supervisor.

According to the Statewide Assessment, juvenile justice youths are placed with siblings if possible; however, their placement is normally determined by the assessed risk and safety level.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally makes concerted efforts to keep siblings together in foster care unless one of the children has specialized needs or it is not in the best interests of one of the siblings. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that placing siblings together is sometimes difficult due to the lack of placement resources for sibling groups. Additionally, a few stakeholders indicated that if siblings in a large group cannot be placed together, concerted efforts are made to place some of the siblings together.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 32 (80 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child's life or were deceased; or visitation with a parent was not considered in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate sufficient visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care, and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The results of the assessment of item 13 are presented in the table below.

Item 13 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	5	6	10	21	66
Area Needing Improvement	3	2	6	11	34
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	8	16	32	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	2	4	8	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	62.5%	75%	62.5%		

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 21 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 11 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the mother (six cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father (six cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings in foster care (four cases).

Additional information about visitation frequency is provided in the table below.

Typical Frequency of Child's Visits During the Period Under Review	With Mother	With Father	With Siblings in Foster Care
Visits occurred at least once a week	14 (56%)	6 (37.5%)	6 (37.5%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	4 (16%)	1 (6.25%)	0 (%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	1 (4%)	2 (12.5%)	4 (25%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	5 (20%)	1 (6.25%)	5 (31.25%)
There were no visits during the period under review	1 (4%)	6 (37.5%)	1 (6.25%)
Total Applicable Cases	25	16	16

The data indicate that at least 76 percent of children in foster care had at least monthly visits with their mothers compared to 56 percent having monthly visits with their fathers and 62.5 percent having monthly visits with their siblings.

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 66 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 13 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that families and children have reasonable opportunities for parenting time (visitation) and communication by telephone. Unless the court has ordered otherwise, Michigan provides parenting time for every parent with a legal right to the child, including incarcerated parents. Parenting time for parents and children occurs frequently prior to initial disposition and at least weekly thereafter. A visitation plan is developed with the parents and documented in the service plan. If visitations are not occurring or are considered harmful for the child, the reasons are documented in the service plan.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers arrange for or provide transportation to visits. The Statewide Assessment notes that as the parent progresses successfully through the case plan, the frequency of visitation increases. However, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, visitation with an incarcerated parent may be delayed until the parent's release because visits with incarcerated parents present a resource issue due to the time required for scheduling the visits, transportation distances, inconsistencies with facility visitation rules, and wait-time at the facility. The Statewide Assessment also reports that policy requires that reasonable efforts must be made to provide frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction between siblings and that sibling visits must occur at least monthly.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, targeted foster care case readings indicate the following:

- In 81 percent of the cases reviewed, parenting time was consistent with the permanency goal.
- In 70 percent of cases reviewed, parenting time was either occurring weekly or the reason for less frequent contact was documented in the case file.
- In 73 percent of the cases reviewed, there was a documented sibling visitation plan.
- In 60 percent of the cases reviewed, documentation supported that the sibling visitation was consistent with the plan.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that youth participating in focus groups said that they are not satisfied with the frequency of contact they have with their parents and siblings. It was noted that some youth expressed the opinion that caseworkers and foster parents support parental and sibling visitation and contact while other youth said that caseworkers and foster parents do not support visitation. Some youth expressed the desire to have more input into visitation with siblings and parents.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, family visits with juvenile justice wards residing in the State must occur at least monthly or more frequently as needed and as described in the service plan. If a juvenile justice ward resides in an out-of-State residential placement facility, policy requires quarterly parental visits with the child at the campus or other face-to-face visits between youth and parents/guardians. In addition, the caseworker must assist in arranging transportation, meals, and lodging for parents/guardians during quarterly onsite visits. When onsite visitation is not in the youth's best interests, the caseworker must document the rationale for this decision in the treatment plan.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State is effective in promoting visitation with parents and siblings in foster care. Some stakeholders reported that visitation with parents generally occurs weekly and visitation increases as the family progresses toward reunification. A few stakeholders, however, suggested that the frequency is not sufficient to meet the needs of the children and families and that the lack of transportation creates a challenge to visitation.

Item 14. Preserving connections

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 14 was applicable for 39 (97.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Item 14 was not applicable for one foster care case due to the transient lifestyle of the mother prior to child’s placement. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child’s connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 14 are presented in the table below.

Item 14 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	7	8	17	32	82
Area Needing Improvement	2	2	3	7	18
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	10	20	39	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	0	0	1	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	78%	80%	85%		

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 32 cases when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends. Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in seven cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain any connections for the child (four cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to extended family (two cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to community/neighborhood (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to school or friends (one case).

Reviewers determined that in three of the 39 applicable cases, sufficient inquiry with the parent, child, custodian, or other interested party to determine whether the child may be a member of, or eligible for membership in, an Indian Tribe did not occur.

Rating Determination

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 82 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family, culture, religion, community, and school. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 14 was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the supervising agency is responsible for preserving connections for children in out-of-home placements. In addition, foster parents are responsible for providing opportunities for religious education and attendance at religious services in accordance with the religious preference of the child and/or parents. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the TDM process focuses on maintaining connections with relatives, the child's community, and the child's cultural heritage.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, DHS contracts with the Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency (MICWA) and the Sault Sainte Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians' Binogii Placement Agency for foster care and adoption services for Native American children. The Statewide Assessment provided the following data from foster care and adoption case readings on cases involving Native American children:

- In 63.3 percent of the 20 foster care cases, the child was accurately coded as Native American and the Tribal affiliation was identified.
- In 40 percent of the cases, the caseworker maintained the child's Tribal traditions.
- In 51.7 percent of the 20 foster care cases, the caregiver supported the child's Tribal traditions.
- In 99 percent of the applicable adoption cases, the Native American search form was completed and sent to MICWA.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in preserving connections for children in foster care. Stakeholders indicated that Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) inquiries and Tribal notification have improved and that counties with Native American reservations generally are more consistent at making and documenting inquiries regarding Native American heritage and notifications to the Tribes than other counties. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that DHS caseworkers are better trained in ICWA compliance than private agency caseworkers. Some stakeholders identified concerns with a private agency due to the agency not understanding or implementing ICWA properly. In some instances, the State agency will be requested to provide casework services rather than referring the case to the private agency for services.

Stakeholders in Berrien County reported that the court inquires about ICWA during the initial hearing and that the county prosecutor makes the notification to the Tribe.

Item 15. Relative placement

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 33 (82.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 15 are presented in the table below.

Item 15 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	8	6	15	29	88
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	2	4	12
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	7	17	33	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	1	3	3	7	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	89%	86%	88%		

Item 15 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed with relatives (19 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable (10 cases).

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in four cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (two cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (three cases).
- Although the child was placed with a relative, the placement was not stable (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 88 percent of cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 15 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, foster care policy as of May 2009 requires that within 30 days of removal from a child's own home, the caseworker must exercise due diligence to identify all adult relatives and provide notice to them that the child is in foster

care. The Statewide Assessment notes that the use of TDM meetings, Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), and other family engagement strategies assist caseworkers in identifying relatives.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that within 90 days of the child’s removal, the caseworker must make a placement decision, document the reason for the decision, and notify the relatives who expressed interest in the child of the placement decision. If a child needs a change of placement, the previously identified relatives must be considered as placement resources provided that they meet the guidelines within the basic assessment process. For juvenile justice youths, relative placement can be considered at initial placement if the risk level is low and when a youth is returning from a residential treatment setting.

The following data from the case readings were provided in the Statewide Assessment:

- Relative care options were explored with the parents and child in 96 percent of the foster care targeted case readings.
- Adoptive placement with a relative was considered in 68 percent of adoption targeted case readings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally makes concerted efforts to search for relatives when children enter foster care and to place children with relatives whenever possible.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 26 (65 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child; a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child’s best interests throughout the period under review; or both parents were deceased. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of the assessment of item 16 are presented in the table below.

Item 16 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	3	2	9	14	54
Area Needing Improvement	3	5	4	12	46
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	7	13	26	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	3	7	14	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	50%	29%	69%		

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 14 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 12 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother (nine cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father (seven cases).

Specific findings pertaining to this item are shown in the table below.

Efforts Made	With Mother (Number of Cases)	With Father (Number of Cases)
Encouraging the parent’s participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	8	4
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments	5	1
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	11	7
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them	7	3
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	2	0
Total Applicable Cases	16	8

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 54 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 16 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that, unless involvement is harmful to the child, families and children have reasonable opportunities for involvement in life events such as educational planning meetings, medical and dental appointments, teacher conferences, and school and community events. Parents also are expected to participate in treatment services with their children when appropriate. Caseworkers are expected to arrange for transportation to assist parents in participating in these life events. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DHS provides parents with *A Parent’s Guide to Child Protective Processes: A Handbook for Parents with Children in Foster Care*, which includes information on maintaining the parents’ relationship with their child in foster care.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that caseworkers are expected to encourage foster parents to meet with birth parents and establish an ongoing exchange of information with them. To the extent possible and appropriate, the foster parent or relative caregiver

has telephone access to the parents and consults with the parents whenever major decisions or problems arise. The Statewide Assessment reports that in some counties, foster parents are asked to serve as mentors for the birth parents.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that although the State is effective in engaging mothers in the lives of their children, it does not do as well in engaging fathers. Additionally, the limited resources available for transportation and for caseworkers sometimes presents a challenge to facilitating parent and child interactions outside of visitation.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State is making concerted efforts to locate absent parents. A few of these stakeholders reported that the Absent Parent Protocol has contributed to improvements in this area.

A few Wayne County stakeholders reported that parents are involved in therapeutic activities and aftercare services with their children.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	9	8	13	30	46.2
Partially Achieved	1	6	10	17	26.2
Not Achieved	7	3	8	18	27.7
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	53%	47%	42%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 46.2 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 67.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 12 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 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 of sufficient quality or quantity to ensure the children's safety or well-being.

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

- Incorporated SDM tools into the SWSS and provided training to staff on the tools
- Revised the SDM CANS tools to include the developmental stages of children and provided training to staff on the tool
- Revised treatment plans to include foster parents' needs in relation to caring for the children placed in their homes
- Collaborated with the SCAO in the development and implementation of the Absent Parent Protocol to search for and engage parents early in the case
- Revised policy and provided training on the frequency and quality of caseworker contact
- Expanded the Family to Family program, as resources allowed, to a minimum of 30 sites

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents and provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of children's (but not parents') needs pertaining to education, physical health, and mental health. These areas are addressed in later items. The results of the assessment of item 17 are presented in the table below.

Item 17 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	9	9	13	31	48
Area Needing Improvement	8	8	18	34	52
Total Applicable Cases	17	17	31	65	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	53%	53%	42%		

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 67.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 16 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 31 cases when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met. Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 34 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was an inadequate assessment of children’s needs (10 in-home cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of mothers’ needs (4 foster care and 10 in-home cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of fathers’ needs (6 foster care and 20 in-home cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of foster parents’ needs (eight cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address children’s needs (2 foster care and 10 in-home cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address mothers’ needs (6 foster care and 11 in-home cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address fathers’ needs (6 foster care and 19 in-home cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address foster parents’ needs (seven cases).

Additional case review findings pertaining to needs assessments and service provisions are shown in the table below.

Target Person for Needs Assessment and Services	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable	Yes	Applicable
Mother’s needs assessed and met	19 (76%)	25	13 (54%)	24
Father’s needs assessed and met	9 (60%)	15	4 (17%)	24
Foster parents’ needs assessed and met	24 (73%)	33	NA	NA
Child’s needs assessed and met	38 (95%)	40	15 (60%)	25

The data indicate that the agency was more likely to assess and meet the needs of children and parents in the foster care cases than to assess and meet the needs of children in the in-home services cases. Additionally, the State was more likely to meet the needs of mothers than of fathers.

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 48 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 17 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, CPS and foster care caseworkers use the SDM FANS instrument to evaluate and identify the needs and strengths of each parent/caregiver in each household, including noncustodial parents and paramours. The results of the initial FANS are included in the ISP, and the caseworker uses the results to establish individualized goals and identify services needed in the PATP and Service Agreement. CPS and foster care caseworkers use the CANS to identify and prioritize the needs and strengths of each child in foster care or in a CPS case. The foster parent/relative caregiver must be included in the development of the plan for children in his or her care.

The individual activities required by the foster parent or relative caregiver to meet the specific individual needs of the child are included in the treatment plan and service agreement, and the caregiver's signature indicates that the caregiver acknowledges and agrees to the activities indicated in the plan. Additionally, the plan details the services and activities provided by the foster care caseworker to assist the caregiver in caring for the child. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the caseworker updates the CANS assessments prior to the development of the USP and each subsequent 90-day review of the PATP and Service Agreement or Permanent Ward Service Agreement.

Targeted case reading data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate the following:

- At the time of the foster care ISP, 83.2 percent of foster care cases had a FANS completed for each parent/caregiver.
- At the time of the foster care ISP, 91.9 percent of foster care cases had a CANS completed for each child.
- At the time of the foster care USP, 72.1 percent of foster care cases had a FANS completed for each parent/caregiver.
- At the time of the foster care USP, 90.6 percent of foster care cases had a CANS completed for each child.
- 84.4 percent of the CPS cases reviewed had FANS that were accurately scored with explanations for all needs and strengths.
- 87.1 percent of the CPS cases reviewed had a CANS that was accurately scored with explanations for each of the needs and strengths identified for the children.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, focus group participants, including service providers, Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) members, CASAs, and court staff indicated that the USP process is effective in assessing and identifying child and family needs. However, participants reported that providing services targeted to meet the identified needs, such as substance abuse treatment, often is a challenge because of a lack of service capacity. The Statewide Assessment also reports that budgetary cutbacks have reduced the availability of some flexible funds that were historically used to target services to families most in need.

The Statewide Assessment notes that an SDM process is used in juvenile justice cases to balance the needs of each youth and his/her family with the need for public safety.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed varying opinions on the State’s effectiveness in assessing and meeting the needs of children and parents. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State makes concerted efforts to match the services to the needs of the family. However, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that some assessments are incomplete and inaccurate, and consequently needed services are not provided. Several stakeholders also reported that providing appropriate services sometimes is difficult due to the lack of available services.

In addition, while some stakeholders indicated that caseworkers generally address the needs of foster parents, others expressed the opinion that caseworkers are not responsive to the needs of foster parents. A few stakeholders indicated that foster parents are not always provided with complete information about the children placed in their homes or about the services that are available for the children.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable for 61 (94 percent) of the 65 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, parents were not involved with the child in any way, and/or the child was too young or had cognitive delays or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (when appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process, and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child’s best interests. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. The results of the assessment of item 18 are presented in the table below.

Item 18 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	9	7	12	28	46
Area Needing Improvement	8	8	17	33	54
Total Applicable Cases	17	15	29	61	
Not Applicable Cases	0	2	2	4	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	53%	47%	41%		

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 69 percent of the 36 applicable foster care cases and 12 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process.

Specific information about involving mothers, fathers, and children in case planning is shown in the table below.

Person Involved in Case Planning	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable Cases	Yes	Applicable Cases
Mother involved in case planning?	18 (72%)	25	14 (58%)	24
Father involved in case planning?	11 (65%)	17	3 (12.5%)	24
Children involved in case planning?	20 (80%)	25	8 (50%)	16

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 46 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 18 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, parents and children 14 years and older are given the opportunity to provide input into the plan, both in its initial development and at the quarterly update. The parents’ and youths’ signatures are required to confirm their participation in plan development and their understanding of the plan. If participants are not available to participate or sign the plan, the caseworker is required to document the reasons for the absence of a required signature. Additionally, some areas of the State use TDMs to engage the family in the case planning process.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the FCRB reviews about 10 percent of the cases of children in foster care annually. The FCRB reviews in 2007 found that the parents’ signatures on the service plans were present in only 20 percent of the cases reviewed. Other data reported in the Statewide Assessment pertained to the targeted case readings and included the following:

- The mother was involved in the development of the ISP in 36.7 percent and the USP in 31.7 percent of the applicable foster care cases.
- The father was involved in the development of the ISP in 25.3 percent and in the USP in 24.3 percent of the applicable foster care cases.
- Youth ages 14 and older were involved in the development of their case plans in 26.8 percent of the applicable foster care cases.
- The mother was involved in the development of the service plan in 52.3 percent of applicable CPS cases.
- The father was involved in the development of the service plan in 36.5 percent of the applicable CPS cases.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in a focus group with youth, some reported they were actively involved in their service plan development and received a copy of the case plan. Other youth, however, indicated they had not seen their service plan nor had they been encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about case decisions. Some youth expressed the opinion that they were heard when they spoke in court, during TDM meetings, and at FCRB meetings, while others reported they felt caseworkers spoke for them or the team did not want to hear what they had to say.

Parents who were interviewed as part of the Child Welfare Improvement Task Force (CWITF) expressed the opinion that caseworkers do not give the parent any credit for knowing their children and do not work in partnership with the parents. Additionally, the parents indicated that the reunification plan and goals were created by the caseworker without consulting the family.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the agency’s effectiveness in engaging parents and children in case planning. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that TDMs facilitate meaningful engagement of parents and youth in case planning. However, other stakeholders questioned whether TDMs are effective in engaging families in case planning and some stakeholders reported that TDMs are not held in all cases.

Several stakeholders suggested that case plans often are developed with minimal or no involvement of parents and children, although this varies depending on the caseworker assigned to the case. According to some stakeholders case plans frequently are not signed by the parents or the children.

Item 19. Caseworker visits with child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 19 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the frequency of visits between the caseworkers and children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s safety and well-being, and whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. The results of the assessment of item 19 are presented in the table below.

Item 19 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	9	11	23	43	66
Area Needing Improvement	8	6	8	22	34
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	53%	65%	74%		

Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 44 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 43 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, and if visits did occur, they did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (15 cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits with children was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur, they were substantive (three cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (four cases).

Specific information regarding the frequency of visitation is provided in the table below.

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)	In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)
Visits occurred at least once a week	5 (12.5%)	2 (8%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	3 (7.5%)	2 (8%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	26 (65%)	8 (32%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	6 (15%)	11 (44%)
There were no visits during the period under review	0	2 (8%)
Total Cases	40	25

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 66 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 19 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the required frequency of caseworker contacts with children receiving in-home services is based on the assigned risk level. For children in the foster care cases, caseworkers are required to have two face-to face contacts with children during their first month in out-of-home placement and monthly face-to-face contacts thereafter. The visits must take place in the foster child’s residence at least every other month. After a child in foster care is returned home, the caseworker must have weekly face-to-face contact with the child during the first month of reunification. Children receiving juvenile justice services are required to be seen at least monthly by the caseworker. The Statewide Assessment notes that, if required contacts are not made, caseworkers must document the reason for not making the contacts in the case file.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the required visitation frequency is incorporated into the Family Reunification and Families First programs, with the caseworker in each program conducting the visitation. In addition, the foster care or CPS caseworker is required to have one contact per month with the caseworker from the Family Reunification or Families First program and must document this contact in the case service plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following findings for the targeted case readings:

- 53 percent of foster care cases had two face-to-face contacts during the first month of out-of-home care.
- 68 percent of foster care cases had documented monthly face-to-face contacts in subsequent months.
- 13 percent of cases documented weekly face-to-face contacts during the first month after reunification.
- 70 percent of youth who are living in an IL placement were visited monthly by a caseworker.
- The contact standard for the assigned risk level was met in 54.1 percent of the CPS cases.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, about 90 percent of youth participating in focus groups indicated that they have had monthly contact with their caseworker over the past 12 months. Some youth were highly complimentary of their caseworkers and the services provided by their caseworkers, while other youth reported insufficient contact with their caseworker or too much turnover in their caseworkers. Some youth stated that caseworker turnover and high caseworker caseloads affected the youth's ability to establish trusting and productive relationships with their caseworkers. Additionally, the Statewide Assessment reports that high caseloads affect the caseworker's ability to conduct quality visits with children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that caseworkers are having monthly contacts with children. However, stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the quality of the caseworker contacts. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that during visits with the children, caseworkers address issues pertinent to the case and spend individual time with the child in their home. In comparison, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that the quality of visits depends on the caseworker and that some visits are perfunctory and do not address issues relevant to the case. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that the quality and frequency of visitation is negatively affected by high caseloads.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 51 (78 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of their children. All cases that were not applicable are foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker's face-to-face contact with the children's mothers

and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and ensure the children’s safety and well-being. The results of the assessment of item 20 are presented in the table below.

Item 20 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	5	5	6	16	31
Area Needing Improvement	8	9	18	35	69
Total Applicable Cases	13	14	24	51	
Not Applicable Cases	4	3	7	14	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	38%	36%	25%		

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 50 percent of the 26 applicable foster care cases and 12 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 16 cases when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 35 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Visits with the mother were neither of sufficient frequency nor quality (13 cases).
- Visits with the father were neither of sufficient frequency nor quality (nine cases).
- Visits with the mother were of sufficient frequency but were not of sufficient quality (three cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency, although when they did occur they were of sufficient quality (two cases).
- There were no visits with mother (three cases).
- There were no visits with father (19 cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the table below. The data in the table indicate that in general, caseworkers were more likely to have at least monthly contact with mothers than they were with fathers. In addition, caseworkers were more likely to have no contact at all with fathers than they were with mothers.

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	2 (8%)	1 (7%)	3 (12.5%)	1 (4%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	4 (17%)	1 (7%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	9 (37.5%)	4 (27%)	6 (25%)	2 (8%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	9 (37.5%)	4 (27%)	11 (46%)	6 (25%)
There were no visits during the period under review	0	5 (33%)	3 (12.5%)	14 (58%)
Total Applicable Cases	24	15	24	24

Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 31 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child and promote attainment of case goals. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 20 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the required frequency of caseworker contacts with parents in the in-home services cases is based on the risk level assigned to the case. Foster care policy requires the caseworker to have at least two face-to-face contacts with the parents during the first month of the child's placement in foster care and a minimum of once a month face-to-face contact with parents thereafter, with at least one visit occurring each quarter taking place in the parents' home. Juvenile justice policy requires caseworkers to have at least monthly contact with the parents either via telephone or in person.

If the family is participating in the Family Reunification or Families First programs, those programs are responsible for complying with visitation requirements with the parents. The foster care or CPS caseworker is required to have one contact per month with the family reunification or Families First caseworker and to document this contact in the case service plan. According to the Statewide Assessment, caseload sizes affect the ability of caseworkers to visit with parents.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following findings of the targeted case readings:

- In 40 percent of foster care cases, there were documented visits with the parents per policy for the first month following initial removal.
- In 45 percent of foster care cases, there were documented monthly contacts with the parent in subsequent months.
- In 54.1 percent of CPS cases, the contact standard for the assigned risk level was met.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that caseworkers generally have face-to-face contact with parents and parents generally are seen at least monthly.

Well-Being Outcome 2

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	8	8	18	34	89.5
Not Achieved	3	1	0	4	10.5
Total Applicable Cases	11	9	18	38	
Not Applicable Cases	6	8	13	27	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	73%	89%	100%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 89.5 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 97 percent of the 34 applicable foster care cases and 25 percent of the 4 applicable in-home services cases. The State was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2002 CFSR was that the State did not consistently make concerted efforts to ensure that educational needs were assessed and appropriate services provided.

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

- Modified SDM CANS and provided training to staff on how to use the tools to identify educational needs
- Expanded the Family to Family program, as resources allowed to a minimum of 30 sites

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

Findings pertaining to the single item assessed under Well-Being Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 38 (58 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if either of the following applied: Children were not of school age, or children in the in-home services cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs. The results of the assessment of item 21 are presented in the table below.

Item 21 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	8	8	18	34	89
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	0	4	11
Total Applicable Cases	11	9	18	38	
Not Applicable	6	8	13	27	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	73%	89%	100%		

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 34 cases when reviewers determined that the child's educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in four cases when reviewers determined that the child's educational needs were not assessed or addressed.

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 89 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95-percent standard is established for this item because it is the only item assessed for this outcome. Item 21 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the supervising agency is responsible for ensuring that foster children's educational needs are met. CPS and foster care caseworkers use the CANS to identify and prioritize the educational needs and strengths of each child in a CPS or foster care case. The juvenile justice service plan includes an assessment of the youth's educational strengths and needs, which is then incorporated into the service plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the instrument used for the targeted case readings does not specifically address a child's educational needs and whether they are being met in the treatment plan. However, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, the targeted case readings found that current school records were in the case files in 54 percent of the foster care cases.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that DHS and private agency caseworkers participating in focus groups reported that they are involved in the development of the child's Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) when one is required. However, these participants reported that they do not always make efforts to involve the child's teacher in the development of the ISP and USP for the child when educational needs are present. These participants expressed the opinion that caseworker contacts with educational professionals occur most frequently when children have significant behavioral needs in school.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the Early On program provides a comprehensive approach to intervention for infants and toddlers with developmental delay(s) and/or disabilities and their families. Early On supports families through home visitation by health professionals who assess children's particular needs and assist parents in accessing a variety of developmental and therapeutic services as well as social interaction.

Additionally, DHS will pay for tutoring services to children in foster care, age 10 and older, if the school district is not required to provide tutoring under the Special Education Act. The tutoring must be for raising a failing grade in a class and recommended in writing by the child's teacher.

The Statewide Assessment notes that there are collaborative relationships among the agency and various colleges and universities to support foster youth entering college and that scholarships are available to foster children through six different programs.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions about the State's effectiveness in meeting children's educational needs. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that supervising agencies make concerted efforts to meet children's educational needs. In particular, stakeholders said that agencies attempt to maintain children in the same school by providing or arranging for transportation when children move out of the school district.

However, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that some school districts are not responsive to the needs of children in foster care which makes it difficult for agencies to ensure that children's educational needs are met. Stakeholders in Berrien and Wayne Counties reported that the school systems in those counties are slow to schedule IEPs for children. A few stakeholders reported that children lose credits when placement changes require the children to transfer schools.

Well-Being Outcome 3

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	9	12	21	42	72.4
Partially Achieved	1	1	2	4	6.9
Not Achieved	5	1	6	12	20.7
Total Applicable Cases	15	14	29	58	
Not Applicable Cases	2	3	2	7	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	60%	86%	72%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 72.4 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 85 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 44 percent of the 18 applicable in-home services cases. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2002 review was that the State was not consistently effective in meeting children's mental health needs.

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

- Revised SDM CANS to address children's mental health needs
- Convened a Medicaid workgroup to develop recommendations addressing assessment and access to mental health services
- Collaborated with the DCH to improve mental health services

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

Findings pertaining to the items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 3 are presented and discussed below.

Item 22. Physical health of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 49 (75 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of the assessment of item 22 are presented in the table below.

Item 22 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	10	10	20	40	82
Area Needing Improvement	3	2	4	9	18
Total Applicable Cases	13	12	24	49	
Not Applicable Cases	4	5	7	16	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	77%	83%	83%		

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 44 percent of the 9 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 40 cases when reviewers determined that children's medical and dental needs were routinely assessed and that necessary services were provided. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in nine cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child's physical health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (five cases).
- The child's dental health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (three cases).
- The child's physical health needs were assessed but were not adequately addressed (one case).
- The child's dental health needs were assessed but were not adequately addressed (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 82 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children's physical health needs. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, CPS and foster care caseworkers use the CANS to identify and prioritize the physical health needs and strengths of each child in foster care or in a CPS case. The juvenile justice service plans include an assessment of the youth's strengths and needs.

Current foster care and juvenile justice policies and licensing rules provide general health requirements for DHS and private CPAs to ensure that each child has the following:

- A physical examination within 30 days of initial foster care placement
- A physical examination every 14 months thereafter
- A dental exam within 90 days of placement if the child is 4 years old or older and annually thereafter, unless a greater frequency is needed
- Up-to-date immunizations

The Statewide Assessment reports that agencies are required to document medical and dental care received, including information regarding prescriptions. Caseworkers must complete a medical passport for each child in out-of-home placement and copies of the medical and dental examinations and medical passport must be provided to the foster parent or relative caregivers and to the legal parents. Parents with a legal right to their child are encouraged to be involved in the child's medical and dental care. If the child is supervised by a private CPA, the CPA also must send a copy of the medical passport to DHS. The Statewide Assessment notes that there is a limited number of providers who accept Medicaid and that this can present a barrier to obtaining dental exams and treatment for children served by the child welfare agencies, particularly in rural areas.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Michigan Care Improvement Registry, formally known as the Child Immunization Registry, is a statewide practice by the DCH to track the immunizations of all children in the State. Doctors and health departments are able to update the system as immunizations are given. Since March 2005, SWSS automatically downloads data from DCH to obtain up-to-date information on immunizations for foster children.

The Statewide Assessment notes that all foster children are Medicaid eligible, but a number of years ago Michigan made a decision to exempt this population from enrollment in managed care because of problems associated with the frequent moves of this population, e.g., enrolling and un-enrolling from various health plans when placement moves occur. If a child is on Medicaid prior to removal and enrolled in managed care, the registration and enrollment in straight Medicaid might mean a delay in getting Medicaid information to the placement caregiver. Without Medicaid information, foster parents and other caregivers are unable to schedule needed medical or dental appointments.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, Michigan created a Medical Advisory Committee in 1996 in response to CPS caseworkers needing consultation with medical professionals who specialize in child abuse and neglect examination, diagnosis, and treatment. The current contract provides services such as a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week statewide hotline for physicians and caseworkers seeking medical consultation on cases involving child abuse and neglect and physician training.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in routinely assessing and addressing the medical and dental needs of children. However, a few stakeholders indicated that it is difficult

to find dental care providers who accept Medicaid. A few stakeholders reported that foster parents are not always provided with medical information regarding children placed in their home at the time of placement.

Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 41 (63 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The results of the assessment of item 23 are presented in the table below.

Item 23 Ratings	Berrien	Kent	Wayne	Total	Percent
Strength	5	9	15	29	71
Area Needing Improvement	5	1	6	12	29
Total Applicable Cases	10	10	21	41	
Not Applicable Cases	7	7	10	24	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	50%	90%	71%		

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of the 26 applicable foster care cases and 40 percent of the 15 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 29 cases when reviewers determined that children’s mental health needs were appropriately assessed and the identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were neither assessed nor addressed (nine cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but services were not provided to address identified needs (three cases).

Rating Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 71 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 23 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan’s 2002 CF SR.

Statewide Assessment Information

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, DHS recognizes that abused and neglected children in child welfare are not receiving effective, comprehensive mental health services and supports to meet their needs. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the public mental health system does not have sufficient financial resources to serve the number of children needing mental health services.

Currently, by contract, Community Mental Health Services serves children diagnosed as seriously emotionally disturbed who meet the medical necessity criteria for the Medicaid specialty clinic and rehabilitation services and the specialty services for children who have more severe emotional and behavioral disorders. Children covered by Medicaid with mild to moderate mental health disorders are typically served by the HMO for up to 20 visits (outpatient).

However, this benefit is not currently available to children in foster care as they are dis-enrolled from HMO plans upon placement into foster care. The current practice for DHS-supervised CPS and foster care cases is to purchase counseling services or psychological assessments for identified mental health needs. However, private CPAs are required to provide all mental health treatment for children placed in their care. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, DHS and the DCH have collaborated to expand the use of home and community-based services to support children at risk of residential or institutional placement and to help achieve permanency for these children, by using the 1915 (c) Waiver for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SEDW). The SEDW program provides home and community-based services to children who meet eligibility for psychiatric hospitalization.

The Statewide Assessment reports that CPS and foster care caseworkers use the CANS to identify and prioritize the mental health needs and strengths of each child. The juvenile justice service plans include an assessment of risk and the youth's strengths and needs. When mental health issues are part of the CPS allegations or there are concerns about the child's mental health status, the CPS caseworker is required to refer the child for a psychological evaluation. If the evaluation determines that the child has ongoing mental health needs, the caseworker will refer the child for services.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, State statute and foster care policy requires a psychological assessment for MCI wards who have experienced sexual abuse or severe physical abuse, have a family history of mental illness, or are exhibiting behaviors that cause the caseworker to be concerned about their mental health. If the evaluation determines that the child has ongoing mental health needs, the caseworker is expected to refer the child for services. The Statewide Assessment notes that these services also are available to temporary court wards but are not required by State statute.

Juvenile justice youth requiring residential treatment often are ordered by the committing or referring court to receive mental health treatment. Additionally, during facility admission, youth receive behavioral health screenings for mental health and substance abuse issues using the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-Second Version. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and substance abuse consultants provide services as necessary.

Parents with a legal right to their child are encouraged to be involved in the child's mental health treatment. Additionally, parents must consent to certain types of mental health treatment and to the provision of psychotropic medication of children in out-of-home placement.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed different opinions on the effectiveness of the State meeting the mental health needs of children. While some stakeholders suggested that mental health services are available to children, other stakeholders indicated that

the appropriate services are not always readily accessible. Additionally, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that some foster children are overmedicated with psychotropic medications and are not receiving proper medication management.

SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the CFSR Final Report provides information regarding the State’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors examined during the CFSR. Information on the items included under each systemic factor comes from the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFSR. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. The overall rating for 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.

It should be noted that ratings for the items included in each systemic factor are not based on single comments from an individual stakeholder; however, these comments are included in the report when they provide important insights or clarification on the State’s performance on a particular systemic factor.

If a State is not in substantial conformity with a particular systemic factor, then that factor must be addressed in the State’s Program Improvement Plan. For each systemic factor, information is provided about the State’s performance in its first CFSR as well as in the current CFSR. If the systemic factor was part of the State’s Program Improvement Plan, the key concerns addressed in the Program Improvement Plan and the strategies for assessing those concerns are noted.

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Status of Statewide Information System

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Statewide Information System are presented and discussed below.

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 Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State cannot use its statewide information system—the SWSS—to readily identify the placement location of every child in foster care because information about placement changes is not always entered into the system in a timely manner. This item was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Michigan’s SWSS collects data pertaining to the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for each child in a CPS, foster care, and adoption case under the supervision of DHS, including children served by private CPAs. However, the Statewide Assessment also reports that one of the known deficiencies of SWSS is that the information in the system cannot be used to produce valid data reports. This is due to many caseworkers only updating case information in SWSS when it is necessary to complete an investigation report or a service plan.

Additionally, private CPA staff cannot input data into SWSS and therefore generally submit case information quarterly for input into SWSS. The Statewide Assessment notes that the lack of timely updating of information results in potential errors in information

pertaining to the child’s placement location and permanency goal, as well as other case-relevant information. In addition, because private agencies do not always notify DHS when a child’s placement has changed so that this information can be entered into the system, the location of a child at any given point in time cannot be assumed to be accurate.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions on the reliability of the information within SWSS. Some stakeholders reported that SWSS generally can identify the legal status, demographics, and goals of children in foster care. However, according to other stakeholders, the State currently cannot readily identify the placement location of children placed in private agency foster homes because the private agencies do not always inform the State about children’s placement changes in a timely manner.

Additionally, some stakeholders reported that information, including information about children’s placement location and goals, in SWSS is not always accurate at any given point in time due to case information not being entered into SWSS when case actions occur. Stakeholders noted that as a result of the data entry delays, the reports available from SWSS frequently contain unreliable data. Additionally, some stakeholders reported that SWSS is difficult to navigate and frequently shuts down while caseworkers are entering information causing a loss of data.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
		1	2X	3

Status of Case Review System

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2002 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2002 review:

- Parents were not consistently involved in the case planning process.
- Case plans were generic and not individualized to meet the needs of the family.
- Permanency hearings were not consistently held in a timely manner and did not consistently focus on advancing permanency.

- Notification of foster parents about hearings and reviews was not consistent nor were foster parents consistently provided an opportunity to have input into court hearings.

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

- Developed and implemented the Absent Parent Protocol to locate absent parents.
- Amended policy to require contacts with the noncustodial parent to ensure the involvement of both parents in case planning.
- Provided increased supervisory monitoring of case plan development through the case reading process to ensure involvement by parents and children.
- Amended USPs to include a place for parents' comments on their progress in achieving mutually agreed upon goals.
- Ensured court compliance with statutory requirements for a permanency planning hearing (PPH) through an administrative order issued by the SCAO
- Established a policy that requires supervising agencies to advise the court of the requirement for a PPH at the end of a review hearing and to generate a Notice of Court Hearing to caregivers.
- Used technical assistance to determine the State policies and procedures that could be streamlined to facilitate improvements.

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

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Case Review System are presented and discussed below.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate that the State is not consistently involving parents in case plan development. In addition, data from the 2009 onsite Federal CFSR indicate that mothers were involved in case planning in 65 percent of the 49 applicable cases and fathers were involved in 34 percent of the 41 applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the ISP for children in foster care and children being served by juvenile justice must be prepared within 30 calendar days of the date of the court order removing the child from the home (acceptance date). The USP must be completed within 120 calendar days of the acceptance date and every 90 days thereafter or more frequently, if necessary. A service agreement must be completed for all CPS cases opened as a Category I or II within 30 days of the referral. In addition to the ISP and

USP, the Parent Agency Treatment Plan (PATP) and Service Agreement, which provides information on services and the specific goals for the parents, children, foster parent's/relative caregivers, and the foster care caseworker, must be completed for families with children in foster care. The Permanent Ward Service Plan (PWSP) records the progress of services and ongoing planning for all permanent wards, MCI wards and permanent court wards. The PWSP identifies the approved permanency goal, contains a clear description of the actions to be taken and the services to be provided by the agency to achieve the goal, and timelines for achievement. The Statewide Assessment reports that ticklers in the SWSS alert caseworkers and supervisors regarding the due dates for the ISP and USP.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the child's parents, the child, and the foster parent and/or relative caregiver must be offered the opportunity to provide input into the required plan and their input must be documented in the plan. A father must establish legal paternity prior to participating in the service plan. The Statewide Assessment notes that if the caseworker cannot locate a parent, the caseworker must document in the service plan the steps taken to locate that parent as required by the Absent Parent Protocol and must continue to attempt to locate the parent throughout the life of the case.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following findings from targeted case reviews conducted from November 1, 2008, through February 28, 2009, regarding the timeliness of case plan development:

- An ISP was completed within required timeframes in 51 percent of the foster care cases reviewed
- A USP was completed within required timeframes in 66 percent of the foster care cases reviewed, 43.5 percent of the adoption cases reviewed, and 63.7 percent of the CPS cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment also provides the following case review data pertaining to the involvement of parents in case planning:

- Mothers were involved in developing the ISP in 51 percent of the cases reviewed and in developing the USP in 45 percent of cases reviewed.
- Fathers were involved in developing the ISP in 35 percent of the cases reviewed and in developing the USP in 34 percent of the cases reviewed.

Additionally, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, data from the SWSS regarding CPS cases indicate that in 2008, 57 percent of ISPs and 24 percent of USPs were completed in a timely manner.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the FCRB indicate the following:

- Only 20 percent of the cases reviewed had a parent's signature on the required services plans.
- Noncustodial fathers were rarely identified as being involved in the case planning process.
- Case plans were too generic with little specificity in goals and outcomes.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review addressed the issues of the timeliness of case plans and the involvement of parents in case planning. With regard to timeliness, many stakeholders expressed the opinion that case plans are routinely prepared in a timely manner and are updated at the required intervals. However, a few stakeholders raised a concern about the timeliness of case plans for cases managed by private agencies.

With regard to the involvement of parents in case planning, stakeholders expressed different opinions. Some stakeholders suggested that parents are routinely involved in case planning and several suggested that the TDM process facilitates parent involvement. However, other stakeholders maintained that case plans are developed with minimal or no involvement of parents and that frequently the case plans are not signed by the parents. A few stakeholders indicated that although a TDM can facilitate parent involvement, this process is not held in all cases.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that reviews are held in a timely manner and sometimes occur more frequently than required by Federal policy. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a Dispositional Review Hearing conducted by the judiciary is required every 182 days from the child's removal from the home and every 91 days thereafter for the first year. After the first year, a Dispositional Review Hearing must be conducted every 182 days. According to the Statewide Assessment, post-termination review (PTR) hearings must be conducted within 91 days from the date of the order terminating parental rights and at least every 91 days for the first year after termination and then every 182 days thereafter. If the child is residing with a relative or has a permanency plan of APPLA, the PTR hearing must be conducted every 182 days. The PTR hearing allows the court to review the progress made by the agency to achieve the permanency plan and to evaluate the safety, placement stability, and well-being of the child and caregivers.

The following data relevant to review hearings were reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- FCRB data from 2007 indicate that there were timely periodic reviews in 94 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Targeted case reading data indicate that there were timely periodic reviews in 92 percent of the cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State ensures that a periodic review of the status of each child is held at least every 6 months or more frequently. However, stakeholders expressed different opinions on the quality of the periodic reviews and whether the reviews expedite permanency for the child. Although many stakeholders indicated that the judicial reviews are helpful and are useful in moving children toward permanency, a few stakeholders expressed the opinion that the quality of the review depends on the judge or referee assigned to the case.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that permanency hearings are held in a timely manner. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a PPH is required within 12 months of a child’s removal from the home and then at a minimum of every 12 months thereafter. The hearing, according to the Statewide Assessment, may be held concurrently with a review hearing or a PTR. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, Michigan statute does not require a PPH for juvenile justice youth; however, some courts do conduct a permanency hearing for these youth.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following data relevant to the timeliness of permanency hearings:

- Data from the 2007 FCRB report indicate that permanency hearings were timely in 96 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Data from the targeted case readings indicate that permanency hearings were timely in 84 percent of the cases reviewed.

The above data reflect the time from date of removal as required by State policy.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are generally held timely and that the hearings are effective and focus on permanency. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported that permanency hearings are combined with review hearings and are conducted every 90 days to ensure timeliness of the hearings. Some stakeholders reported that permanency hearings are conducted for juvenile justice youth who are dual wards (e.g., a ward of both the foster care and delinquency systems).

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate that TPR is not being filed in a timely manner and the findings of the Onsite Review indicate that ASFA requirements for filing TPR were met in 78 percent of the 23 applicable cases. This item was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State requires that a petition to TPR must be filed for an abandoned infant, a child assaulted by a parent, a child whose parent killed or assaulted another child, and a child in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, unless a compelling reason exists not to file for TPR. SWSS data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that TPR was filed within 15 months of the child's removal from home in 63.7 percent of the foster care cases open as of June 2009.

Stakeholder Interview Information

A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that in some cases the court will not allow for a TPR petition to be filed or will delay the TPR petition in order to allow the parents to continue with their reunification efforts. Additionally, some courts will not grant TPR if there is not an identified adoptive resource for the child. However, many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State is effective in filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Some stakeholders reported that the agency will file for TPR if there is not an identified adoptive resource for the child.

Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that when DHS or the private agency does not file for TPR, compelling reasons usually are documented and presented to the court. Various stakeholders identified the following as frequent reasons for not filing for TPR:

- The child is placed with a relative.
- The child has a relationship with the biological family and does not wish to be adopted.
- The parents are diligently working toward reunification but will not complete the case plan within the required time frame.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that the State has not been consistent in providing notification of hearings to caregivers. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the foster care caseworker is required to provide notification of all hearings to foster parents, relative caregivers, and pre-adoptive parents. The Notice of Hearing must be sent to the foster/adoptive care provider no later than 7 calendar days prior to the hearing. Additionally, court rules indicate that the court is to consider any information provided by these care providers.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, targeted case reading results indicate that a Notice of Hearing was provided to the foster parent or relative caregiver in only 36 percent of the 1,221 cases reviewed. Additionally, many caseworkers participating in focus groups conducted as part of the Statewide Assessment reported that high caseloads are a barrier to providing notification and that notification is an area needing improvement. However, foster parents participating in focus groups said that they generally receive notification of reviews and hearings regarding the children in their care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite CFSR expressed different opinions on whether care providers are notified of upcoming hearings. Some stakeholders suggested that DHS and/or the court generally ensure that care providers receive written notice of hearings involving children in their care. However, other stakeholders indicated that care providers are not routinely notified about hearings.

Stakeholders also expressed different opinions about whether care providers have the opportunity to be heard in court reviews. Although some stakeholders said that care providers are given the opportunity to be heard in court hearings, other stakeholders said that the opportunity to be heard depends on the judge. A few stakeholders reported that if care providers are unable to attend review hearings, they are invited to submit a written statement regarding the child in their care.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
		1	2X	3

Status of Quality Assurance System

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance (QA) System. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under QA System are presented and discussed below.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as a Strength. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care provided services that protect the safety and health of children. This item was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Child Welfare Contract Compliance Unit staff review each private CPA and residential foster care agency under contract with DHS at least once a year. During each onsite evaluation, a random sample of children's files and certification (foster home licensing) files are reviewed. Additionally, investigations of the agency may be conducted if there is an alleged contract violation or an alleged violation of the licensing rules.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the Bureau of Child and Adult Licensing (BCAL) reviews reports of child abuse and neglect that occur in all regulated programs or in a foster home and BCAL and Contract Compliance Unit staff take appropriate complaint investigation action when necessary. According to the Statewide Assessment, licensing rules require that CPAs develop a behavior management plan for each child based on the child's needs, stage of development, and behavior. The licensing rules prohibit physical force, excessive restraint, or any kind of punishment inflicted on the body, including spanking.

Additionally, the State has an "absent without legal permission procedure" in place to address locating children who are on runaway status and the court's oversight in ensuring the concerted efforts to locate child are made. Licensing rules for foster family homes and foster family group homes for children require foster parents to notify the supervising agency immediately in the event of the following incidents:

- The death of a foster child
- The removal or attempted removal of a foster child from a foster home by any person not authorized by the supervising agency

Additionally, a foster parent is to notify the supervising agency within 24 hours of the following incidents:

- Determining that a foster child is missing
- Any illness that results in inpatient hospitalization of a foster child
- Any accident or injury of a foster child that requires medical treatment by a licensed or registered health-care person
- A foster child's involvement with law enforcement authorities

The Statewide Assessment notes that the DHS POS caseworker monitors DHS policy and contract compliance of the private CPAs and child caring institutions for individual foster care cases. The POS caseworker ensures that the required service plans and treatment plans are completed and approves or disapproves the service plan accordingly. The Statewide Assessment also notes that caseworkers are required to complete safety assessments on each child in foster care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions about the State's standards. Many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State has standards in place to address the quality of services provided to families and children. Some stakeholders suggested that standards regarding quality of care are applied to contracted services and are monitored by DHS staff through annual evaluations and utilization reviews. A few stakeholders noted that when there are safety concerns in a home, the agency will move the children in the home to ensure their safety. However, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that some private agencies do not provide high-quality services and lack consistency in service provision.

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 Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although there are some State and local QA efforts, subsequent to the end of the Round I CFSR Program Improvement Plan period, the State no longer was implementing a comprehensive QA process. Since then, the State has developed a comprehensive process, but has not fully implemented a centralized comprehensive QA system to monitor outcomes across all DHS programs. This item was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, since the end of the CFSR Program Improvement Plan period, DHS has not had a comprehensive QA process. However, according to the Statewide Assessment, in December 2008, DHS established the QA Unit within the Child Welfare Improvement Bureau (CWIB). This unit's primary objective is to implement a Children's Services continuous quality improvement program in the State. The unit is responsible for monitoring performance expectations internally and with contracted service providers using performance indicators. The QA Unit, in conjunction with the Data Management Unit, is now compiling a comprehensive statewide data profile that will define a baseline for ongoing qualitative and quantitative measurement of program outcomes. The QA Unit and local supervisors use forms for case reviews that were revised in 2008 to collect additional CFSR and policy compliance information.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, oversight of the children's services programs in local offices is the responsibility of Field Operations staff. Field Operations staff monitor the quality of services by reviewing available information in electronic reports and

direct reports from the local offices and facilitate the development of corrective action plans when problems are identified. The Statewide Assessment notes that currently, local DHS supervisors conduct three case readings per caseworker on a quarterly basis. Summaries of the case readings are submitted to the Field Office for review.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the FCRB conducts independent reviews of a random case sampling of children in the foster care system to monitor and evaluate the court, DHS, and private CPA efforts to address the safety, timely permanency, and child and family well-being. Cases, once selected, are reviewed every 6 months until permanency is achieved. The FCRB provides written findings and recommendations for each case reviewed to the local court, supervising agency, and DHS.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that although there are some QA processes in place and some pilot programs across the State, a comprehensive QA system is still in the process of development. Although there is not a statewide comprehensive QA process, various stakeholders identified the following QA processes:

- Targeted case readings and supervisor conferences are conducted at the local level to examine the quality and effectiveness of casework, and caseworkers receive feedback on the findings of these readings.
- The results of targeted case readings are compiled into a report at the local level and submitted quarterly to the Central Office.
- There are second level case reviews at the management level of local offices.
- Special reviews are conducted on certain populations of children placed outside the home under the jurisdiction of DHS, including children who have had three or more placements, who have been in residential care for 12 months or longer, children who have been the subject of an allegation of abuse or neglect in a foster home or residential care setting, and children with TPR.
- The FCRB reviews a random sample of cases of children in foster care, provides a written report on each case reviewed, and completes an annual comprehensive report on their review findings.

IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3X	4

Status of Staff and Provider Training

Michigan is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Staff and Provider Training are presented and discussed below.

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 **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 32 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has implemented a competency-based child welfare training to new DHS and private CPA caseworkers, ensures that caseworkers are trained on relevant issues, and requires caseworkers to pass a competency-based performance evaluation as of April 2009 and complete initial training before assuming more than a three-case training caseload as of August 2009. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS and private CPA caseworkers hired for CPS, foster care, or adoption programs must have a bachelor's degree in social work or a related human services field and are required to successfully complete an initial training program that includes 270 hours of competency-based classroom and field training. The Statewide Assessment reports that initial training for all staff is administered through the Child Welfare Training Institute (CWTI).

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the pre-service institute (PSI) is a training program that was enhanced in January 2009 and that incorporates a 9-week training program for new CPS and foster care caseworkers and an 8-week training program for new adoption caseworkers. Three weeks of the PSI are spent in the field with a local DHS office or private agency. During that time, the trainee may be assigned specific tasks or activities in connection with a case that is the primary responsibility of an experienced caseworker or may be assigned a small caseload with a maximum of three cases.

The Statewide Assessment notes that at the conclusion of training, each trainee receives a competency-based performance evaluation, which includes classroom work, written assignments, supervisor assessment, in-class tests, and a written examination related to the specific competencies and materials taught in the PSI. The new caseworker must pass the performance evaluation before assuming an increased caseload. The Statewide Assessment reports that CWTI uses the JJOLT/Omni Track Plus to track and report training data. The system allows CWTI staff to track an individual trainee's registration, attendance, performance, and completion of all CWTI training. Additionally, a child welfare caseworker transferring between program areas is required to take Program Specific Transfer Training as preparation for the new position.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that initial training for DHS juvenile justice case managers is 10 days. The State also provides specialized initial training for the following staff who work within the child welfare system:

- Foster care home certification supervisors and caseworkers
- Permanency planning assistants and permanency planning specialist staff
- Child welfare funding specialists
- Family preservation contract employees

In addition to new caseworker training, the Statewide Assessment indicates that a 40-hour child welfare supervisor training is required for all new DHS and private agency supervisors. The training consists of 2 days of general supervisor training and 3 days of program-specific training. Supervisors must pass a competency-based performance evaluation within 3 months of assuming the supervisory position. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, a standard evaluation is administered to the trainees on the final day of every course offered by the CWTI to assess trainee perceptions of the training and the results of this evaluation indicate a high level of satisfaction by trainees.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review offered various opinions on the quality of pre-service training for new caseworkers. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the training for new caseworkers provides a good foundation for child welfare practice. Various stakeholders identified the following strengths of the State's pre-service training program:

- The CWTI provides the training.
- DHS and private agency caseworkers are required to attend the same training.
- The training combines classroom and field training.
- New caseworkers are mentored by tenured caseworkers as part of the training process.
- New caseworkers generally assume only a training caseload until the successful completion of pre-service training.
- Caseworkers must pass the competency-based examination at the conclusion of training.

Despite these strengths, many stakeholders expressed concern that, particularly prior to the implementation of the new training process, new caseworkers have had to wait a few months before attending pre-service training because of the lack of availability of training sessions. Because of the wait, some caseworkers, primarily private agency caseworkers, are required to carry caseloads prior to attending and/or completing training.

Additionally, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that pre-service training is too broad and does not adequately prepare new caseworkers for their job responsibilities nor do new caseworker received adequate mentoring from veteran caseworkers. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that more skill-based training is needed for new caseworkers. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that the training is redundant for new staff who hold a bachelor's or master's degree in social work.

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

 X **Strength** **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 33 is rated as a Strength. The State requires ongoing training for all DHS and private agency caseworkers and supervisors. Ongoing training is provided by various community and State resources. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the required number of hours of ongoing training is 16 hours for CPS caseworkers and 24 hours for foster care and adoption caseworkers. This number of hours is expected to increase to 40 hours in the near future as part of the DHS reform efforts. The Statewide Assessment indicated that the Governor’s Task Force on Children’s Justice identified a need for assistance with travel costs and approved the use of Children’s Justice Act funds to allow DHS, private CPA, and Tribal caseworkers to attend task force-funded and -endorsed training. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that due to the current budget restraints, travel funds for ongoing training continue to be limited, which limits ongoing training opportunities.

The Statewide Assessment identified the following resources that provide ongoing, in-service training opportunities:

- The MSW program at Michigan universities
- The CWTI
- The Court Improvement Project (CIP)
- The Child Welfare Services division of SCAO
- The Governor’s Task Force on Children’s Justice
- The Office of Professional Development

The Statewide Assessment reports that DHS county offices and private providers are required to track the hours of in-service training and submit data to confirm the completion of in-service training requirements for all staff.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, evaluations of training indicate a high level of satisfaction of “special topics” training by trainees.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that staff are completing the current required ongoing training hours and a few noted that completion of training is tracked by the local agencies.

However, several stakeholders expressed different opinions about the availability of ongoing training for caseworkers and supervisors. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that there are multiple, relevant training opportunities through CWTI, in-house, and other

community and State resources for all caseworkers and supervisors. However, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that training opportunities are limited due to travel and budget constraints and caseload responsibilities. Additionally, some stakeholders indicated that it is difficult to locate ongoing training relevant to job responsibilities.

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

 X Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State provides initial and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents and has training requirements for private CPA foster homes and child caring institution (CCI) staff. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS and private agency foster parents must receive the required pre-service training and in-service training to obtain and maintain their foster parent license. For pre-service training the State offers the Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) training. Foster parents must complete 12 hours of training focusing on specific required sessions before a child can be placed with them and the remainder of the sessions must be completed by the anniversary of the foster parent being licensed. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, DHS staff, private CPA staff, and Michigan State University trainers deliver the PRIDE training.

The Statewide Assessment reports that foster parents are required to complete 12 hours of in-service training during the 2 years following the original licensing period and 6 hours of in-service training annually thereafter. Foster parents receive in-service training through community forums; the statewide foster parent association; the Michigan Association of Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents’ annual statewide training conference; online training; and resource library materials in local DHS offices. Additionally, local offices collaborate with private CPAs to provide advanced foster parent training.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, treatment foster parents must complete the 12-hour required aspects of PRIDE training and an additional 30 hours of pre-service training prior to child placement. CCI staff receive 50 hours of initial training at the start of their employment and are required to complete 25 hours of in-service training every year thereafter. BCAL monitors the training requirements during its annual reviews of all CPAs, including DHS.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that adoptive parents must attend the first 12 hours of PRIDE training for approval to adopt. Although licensing rules do not require ongoing training for adoptive parents, the State provides training opportunities if adoptive parents wish to participate.

During a focus group conducted in preparation of the Statewide Assessment, foster parents indicated that the initial training included the basic skills and knowledge necessary for being a foster parent and that ongoing training is beneficial. However, foster parents would like to see training offered during non-traditional hours.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State provides initial training for foster and adoptive parents through the PRIDE curriculum. Some stakeholders indicated that DHS and private CPAs vary on the required hours needed prior to placement of a child. A few of these stakeholders reported that some private CPAs require that foster parents complete the entire PRIDE curriculum prior to the placement of a child in their home.

Many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the information provided in the initial training is beneficial. However, some stakeholders noted that the availability and accessibility of PRIDE training varies across the State and that PRIDE training is offered on weekends and evenings only in some areas of the State.

Most stakeholders commenting on ongoing training for foster parents also expressed the opinion that ongoing training generally is beneficial and readily available to foster parents through various forums. A few stakeholders noted that foster parents who do not complete the required number of ongoing training hours are unable to have new placements until the required training hours are completed.

V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Status of Service Array and Resource Development

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Service Array and Resource Development are presented and discussed below.

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 **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 35 is rated as a Strength because information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Michigan has an array of services that addresses the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of children and families, although, as noted under item 36, this array is not consistently accessible to children and families across the State. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS delivers a variety of services directly or through contracts managed by DHS. Most services are contracted at the local level and funded through various State appropriations. However, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, the budgetary shortfalls in the State have resulted in reduced capacity to fund existing services and service contracts across the State.

However, the Statewide Assessment identifies the following services as existing in all counties:

- Michigan Family First Program
- Family preservation
- Adoption subsidies
- In-home care
- State Emergency Relief Services (SER)
- Substance use disorder
- ZERO TO THREE
- Flexible funding

Service gaps occurring in some areas of the State that were identified in the Statewide Assessment are identified under item 36.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed different opinions about the array of services available to assess and address the needs of children and families in the State. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that services are available but accessibility is sometimes a problem.

Other stakeholders expressed the opinion that services to meet the needs of families and children are not available, including the following:

- Transportation
- Mental health
- Substance abuse treatment, particularly in-patient treatment
- Preventive services

Some of these stakeholders indicated that services and contracts to purchase services have been reduced due to budget cuts resulting from the current economic situation which has affected service delivery to families and children for both in-home and foster care cases as well as prevention cases.

Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that there are many key services that are not accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions and there are waiting lists for children and families to access critical health and behavioral health related services. This item was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State’s system of local service delivery allows the counties to determine the appropriate services to meet a local community’s needs. There are 80 county-based multiple purpose collaborative bodies that include all 83 Michigan counties. Each community collaborative, in partnership with the local DHS, formally and informally assesses local resources, needs, service availability, and service gaps. The collaborative develops a plan for improving results for at-risk children and families and commits to the development, implementation, and oversight of the county services plan.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that in April of 2008, the DHS director established the Michigan CWITF to assess the State’s child welfare policies and programs and to recommend outcomes and actions to drive future reforms. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, CWITF identified an inadequate array of services in many areas to support children, youth, and families in their own communities, to minimize the use of out-of-home placements, and to support children and youth returning home.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following key services as insufficient to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare system:

- Transportation assistance
- Psychiatry
- Wraparound
- Health
- Mental health

- Counseling
- Family reunification assistance
- Youth transitioning out of foster care
- Flexible funding

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the accessibility of services varies by county and depends on the local collaboration and coordination of services. Some stakeholders noted that families living in rural areas frequently have to drive long distances to access needed services and that lack of transportation can restrict access to services. A few stakeholders noted that even when services are court-ordered, it can be difficult to access the services due to the location of the providers and the family's lack of transportation. Some stakeholders also indicated that accessibility and regularity of services varies depending on whether families are Medicaid eligible. They noted that it is difficult for families without Medicaid to obtain mental health services.

Various stakeholders across the three sites indicated that the following services are insufficient to meet needs and have waiting lists:

- Mental health treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Parenting classes
- Michigan Family First program
- Psychiatry
- IEPs
- Early On
- Family reunification assistance

In addition to the services indicated in the Statewide Assessment, stakeholders identified the following services as insufficient to meet needs:

- Foster homes, including homes for children with special needs
- Domestic violence assistance
- Affordable housing assistance
- Day care providers
- Post-adoption assistance
- Health-care and dental providers who accept Medicaid
- Homemaker assistance
- Youth aging out of foster care
- Inpatient substance abuse treatment

- Prevention, including services to address behavioral issues in older youth

Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency

 Strength **X** **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 37 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the services and supports to families that are available in the State cannot always be tailored to meet the unique needs of children and families. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS’s assessment tool, policies, and use of FGDM encourage and promote the individualization of services and help plan for effective intervention. However, the Statewide Assessment also reports that the case plan format in SWSS can inhibit individualizing services because it provides a checklist of prescribed services rather than encouraging caseworkers to develop a unique case plan based on the needs of children and families. Additionally, according to the Statewide Assessment, budget cuts have affected the ability of the State to provide certain services.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following findings from focus groups held with a range of stakeholders including caseworkers, service providers, FCRB members, advocates, CASAs, and court staff.

- Services tend to be “cookie-cutter” rather than individualized due to a lack of capacity to meet specific service needs, such as the need for substance abuse treatment.
- Current parenting classes are designed for parents who have minimal parenting concerns and not for DHS clients who often are low-functioning and need parenting coaches who can model good parenting choices.

Despite these concerns, the Statewide Assessment identifies the following strengths with regard to individualizing services:

- Flexible funds are available for emergency and reunification services, although these funds have decreased due to recent budget cuts.
- Local agencies and hospitals are required to give priority to parents needing substance abuse services if their child has been removed from the home or is at risk of being removed due to a substance abuse disorder.
- DHS makes interpreter services available to caseworkers when needed and has a contract for over-the-phone interpreter services and document translation services.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed varying opinions on the State’s effectiveness in individualizing services to meet the needs of children and families. Some stakeholders suggested that the State makes concerted efforts to match services to the needs of the family and a few noted that the State makes concerted efforts to ensure that families receive the needed services. However, other stakeholders indicated that the effectiveness of individualizing services varies by

caseworker and can be challenging because needed services are not always available or accessible. A few stakeholders expressed concern about the decrease in flexible funding. Some stakeholders expressed concern that families without Medicaid are restricted in

the kinds of services they receive. Additionally, a few stakeholders indicated that even when families are Medicaid eligible, mental health and substance abuse treatment services are limited. Some stakeholders also noted that there is a need for more culturally competent services to meet the needs, including the linguistic needs, of some of the State’s families, particularly Hispanic and Arabic populations.

VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4X

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Michigan is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Agency Responsiveness to the Community are presented and discussed below.

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

 X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and from stakeholder interviews indicates that the Michigan CFSP is developed in consultation with DHS stakeholders and child welfare partners. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CFSR/CFSP Unit of the Federal Compliance Office within the DHS CWIB develops the CFSP in consultation with DHS stakeholders and child welfare partners. The Governor’s Task Force on Children’s Justice, which is

the State's standing and extended stakeholder group for the CFSR and CFSP, are stakeholders in the collaboration, as are the director of the Office of Native American Affairs, DHS and private agency field staff and managers, private CPA managers, SCAO, FCRB members, court staff, service providers, parents, Tribal agency representatives, Citizen Review Panel (CRP) members, CWTI, and the Michigan Advisory Committee on the Over Representation of Children of Color in Child Welfare.

Additionally, between FYs 2007 and 2009, focus groups were held in communities throughout the State to gather information for the CFSP and CFSR. Other relationships and collaborations among the State and external stakeholders include the following:

- Adoption Oversight Committee
- CPS Advisory Committee
- Office of the Children's Ombudsman
- Multi-Purpose Collaborative Bodies
- Youth panels
- Michigan Association for Foster, Adoptive and Kinship parents
- Bureau of Juvenile Justice (BJJ)

According to the Statewide Assessment, the DHS Settlement Agreement was a major factor in the development of the CFSP as the settlement specifically addressed caseload size, children in foster care for long periods of time, data collection and management, and QA issues.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DHS seeks input from the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice, CWITF, other agencies, and private providers in the identification of strategies to address key problems. Some stakeholders, however, expressed concern that although the State convenes meetings with Tribal representatives and discusses child welfare issues with them, there has not been sufficient focus in the agency on ICWA compliance or on Tribal consultation.

Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports delivered pursuant to the CFSP

 X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that the Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR) is completed with input from various stakeholders. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Federal Compliance Office within the CWIB is responsible for the development of the APSR. CWIB staff collaborates with internal and external stakeholders to develop the APSR. Additionally, statutorily created advisory bodies provide feedback to DHS for the APSR and ongoing meetings with the CRPs monitor DHS's compliance with the CFSP.

Stakeholder Interview Information

During the onsite CFSR, there were insufficient substantive comments from stakeholders regarding this item.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State coordinates services with other Federal and Federally-assisted programs. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS established a Federal Compliance Office to oversee Michigan's coordination of Federal programs and to ensure continuity across the State. The office managed the title IV-E State plan, title IV-B State plan, CFSP, APSR, CFSR, and Program Improvement Plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports that DHS collaborates both internally and externally with other departments and agencies to coordinate services provided by Federally-funded programs. DHS administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, State Disability Assistance and Refugee Assistance programs, Child Care Development Fund Block Grant, Food Assistance Program, SER, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Adult Community Placement and Adult Protective Services programs, and the title IV-D program. Additionally, DHS determines eligibility for Medicaid, although the DCH is the administering agency. According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS collaborates with a number of programs that serve the same populations including, but not limited to, the Department of Education, CIP, the Homeless Children and Youth program, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Foster Care Transitional Medicaid, BJJ, and mental health programs.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, DHS and the DCH have collaborated to expand the use of home and community-based services to support children at risk of residential or institutional placement and to help achieve permanency for these children, by using the 1915 (c) SEDW, a program that provides home and community-based services to children who meet eligibility for psychiatric hospitalization. The services provided are enhancements or additions to Medicaid State Plan coverage for children up to age 18 with

serious emotional disturbance. DCH operates the SEDW as a fee-for-service program through contracts with the Community Mental Health Services Programs, which work in partnership with other community agencies.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in coordinating the services of Federal and Federally-assisted programs for children and families. A few stakeholders reported that coordination of services has improved since the DHS Settlement Agreement and that the reduction in funding for services has required greater collaboration across agencies.

Some stakeholders in Wayne and Kent counties reported that the local DHS meets quarterly with the court, other agencies, and private providers to discuss child welfare outcomes and that these discussions focus on issues such as timeliness of reunification, adoption, and TPR as well as other outcomes.

Some State-level stakeholders commenting on coordination of services provided information about the SEDW program consistent with the information in the Statewide Assessment. Additionally, a few of these stakeholders reported that the SEDW program is currently being piloted in five counties.

VII. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3X	4

Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Michigan is in substantial conformity with this systemic factor. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2002 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention are presented and discussed below.

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 **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 41 is rated as a Strength. According to information provided in the Statewide Assessment and by stakeholders, the State has standards for foster family homes, group homes, and child care institutions. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State has established standards for child care institutions and foster family homes that are in accord with national standards. With regard to child care institutions, the Statewide Assessment notes that the BCAL issues the licenses and conducts the initial licensing evaluations and annual reviews. During each onsite evaluation of child care institutions a random sample of children’s files are reviewed. The initial license is a provisional license that is valid for 6 months. After 6 months, BCAL issues a regular license that is valid for 2 years.

With regard to family foster homes, the Statewide Assessment reports that either DHS or private CPA licensing staff certifies a home for foster care licensure. The licensing caseworker evaluates compliance with foster home licensing rules and makes a recommendation to BCAL regarding licensing actions. The Statewide Assessment notes that all foster homes are assessed with a standardized evaluation format that documents the licensing worker’s assessment of the applicant’s ability to parent and provide a stable home for children. The home study process must include visits at the residence of the foster home applicants for observations of, and interviews with, each member of the household. The CPA is responsible for making the minimally required annual onsite evaluation of rule compliance and for investigation of allegations of rule violations.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, if rule violations are identified, BCAL may issue a rule violation provisional license up to four consecutive times. The foster home will be on a corrective action plan and the CPA will monitor the home for at least 6 months. The decision to revoke a license is made at the State level by the BCAL Disciplinary Action Unit. If the decision is appealed by the licensee or applicant, an administrative law judge will make the final decision.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State has established adequate licensing standards.

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 **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 42 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State applies standards equally to all licensed foster family homes and CCIs. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan’s 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, BCAL applies the requirements of the Child Care Organizations Act and the licensing rules to all foster homes and CCIs. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that licensing variances can be granted but only for non-safety-related issues, such as the number of children that can be in the home and the number of bedrooms necessary. The Statewide Assessment reports that when a variance is requested, the licensing caseworker must submit a written request to BCAL for a licensing variance and that request must be evaluated by a central office child welfare licensing consultant who preliminarily approves or denies the request. The BCAL bureau director has the final approval. The duration of the variance depends on the nature of the request.

The Statewide Assessment reports that children may be placed in the home of a relative without the relative being licensed, however, other than a court appointed legal custodian, children cannot be placed in an unlicensed non-relative home. Relatives that choose to be licensed are licensed in the same manner as any other licensee and once approved are issued a foster home license. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, foster care and licensing caseworkers make concerted efforts to encourage relative caregivers to become a licensed foster family home. When it is determined to be in the child’s best interests to be placed or remain with an unlicensed relative caregiver, a waiver to forgo licensure must be requested and approved.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the BCAL system downloads licensing data every day to the DHS payment system and then to SWSS. If the license expires, SWSS prevents title IV-E payments to the foster home, CPA, or child care institution. Furthermore, if a foster home or a child caring institution is on a rule violation provisional license, SWSS prevents title IV-E payments to the provider.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State’s standards for foster and adoptive placements are generally applied equally. Some stakeholders reported that variances only occur to keep siblings together and cannot be related to safety. A few stakeholders noted that as a result of the DHS settlement agreement all relative placements must now be licensed. If a relative does not want to be licensed, an approval process is required.

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 Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength. According to information provided in the Statewide Assessment, and information from stakeholders, the State provides for background checks and fingerprinting as a component for all licensed foster and adoptive placements, including relatives. This item was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Michigan requires a criminal background check from both the Michigan State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and a CPS Central Registry check for all licensed foster and adoptive parents and other adult household members. Fingerprint checks are completed for all licensed foster parents and adoptive parents. The Statewide Assessment reports that BCAL will not issue a foster home license and the adoption caseworker cannot authorize an adoptive placement until the checks are completed. BCAL conducts annual inspections of DHS and each private CPA to ensure compliance with criminal background checks. Additionally, pursuant to the Adam Walsh legislation, licensing caseworkers must conduct a check for substantiated child abuse or neglect in every State where the applicant or any adult household member has lived in the 5 years preceding the application for licensing.

According to the Statewide Assessment, when an organization applies for a CCI license, the facility must comply with all licensing rules for child caring institutions for an original license to be issued. The Child Care Organizations Act requires a CPS Central Registry check on all employees or volunteers who have unsupervised contact with children. Additionally, the statute requires the CCI to post whether or not they complete criminal record checks on employees but currently does not require criminal record checks on staff or volunteers. The rules do require that the facility ask about convictions and assess any information they have. According to the Statewide Assessment, most facilities complete employee criminal clearances through the Internet Criminal History Access Tool. BCAL is required to complete an annual onsite inspection of every CCI. All personnel files are reviewed for anyone hired since the previous review and a sample of personnel files for current staff are reviewed.

According to the Statewide Assessment, once the applicant for a foster or adoptive parent submits fingerprints, the fingerprints become part of a "RAP back" process, which notifies BCAL if a person is charged with a criminal offense subsequent to the initial fingerprinting. This process then mandates that the local DHS office complete a subsequent safety check on children placed with the family.

Additionally, BCAL receives an automated list of all individuals who are licensed foster parents or are adults living in a licensed home, whose names were placed on the CPS Central Registry the preceding week as confirmed perpetrators of child abuse or neglect. BCAL notifies the certifying CPA and advises DHS or the private CPA director that a foster home complaint investigation must be opened immediately and that being named as a perpetrator of child abuse or neglect requires a recommendation of license revocation. According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS also has an automated process that matches the unlicensed relative caregivers in SWSS against the CPS Central Registry and criminal history records.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State requires background checks and fingerprints for all foster and adoptive parents, including relatives. A key State-level stakeholder reported that DHS or other CPA will receive notification through the rap back system if a foster parent is arrested after the initial fingerprint inquiry.

Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that recruitment is left up to the local counties and CPAs, and that there is no Statewide directive to recruit foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care. In addition, the Statewide Assessment does not provide data about the racial/ethnic diversity of children in foster care and whether this diversity is matched in the foster parent population. This item was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

.Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, all CPAs must have a licensing, recruitment, and retention plan to ensure that there is an adequate number of suitable and qualified foster homes to meet the needs of children served by the agencies.

The Statewide Assessment reports that recruitment occurs through a variety of venues including reaching out to the faith-based communities, targeting recruitment efforts in the communities from which the children are being removed, providing information about children in booths at the mall, and making presentations to community groups. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchanges (MARE) system and **AdoptUsKids** are used to recruit adoptive homes for children. In addition, over 36 county courts participate in the annual Adoption Day in Michigan during which time courts have luncheons and invite State dignitaries to participate in adoption finalizations.

Participants in focus group conducted in preparation for the Statewide Assessment expressed the following opinions:

- DHS should hire a professional person with marketing skills and experience to conduct recruitment activities.
- Current DHS staff must be trained in marketing skills.
- DHS should develop a specialized unit to conduct recruitment activities.
- DHS should create professional public service announcements, newspaper articles, meet with the public, etc.
- The foster home approval process takes too long.
- Foster parents are aging out of the system.
- High caseloads affect the caseworker ability to focus on foster/adoptive parents' recruitment.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that each county and CPA must maintain a recruitment plan and that a number of counties and CPAs reach out to the faith-based community as a source for foster and adoptive parents. According to some stakeholders, although there are some recruitment efforts targeting families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care, this is not a widespread practice, and there is a need for more foster homes for African American and Native American children. Additionally, many stakeholders reported that the State needs foster homes for older youth, sibling groups, and children with high end special needs.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength. The State has a process in place for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate adoptions including the ICPC and adoption exchanges such as MARE and **AdoptUsKids**. This item also was rated as a Strength in Michigan's 2002 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Michigan's Interstate Compact Unit is located within the DHS Bureau of Juvenile Justice and acts as the liaison between the DHS county offices and other States to ensure that home studies are conducted in a timely manner, that placements are appropriate before allowing children to be placed, that proper jurisdiction continues, that States receive reports in a timely manner, and that youth have access to appropriate services.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Interstate Compact Unit regularly follows up with other States to avoid delays in receiving home studies for which Michigan is waiting. The unit runs a daily report of overdue home studies from other States and follows up after 60 days. They continue to follow up every 30 days thereafter until they receive the home study. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, Michigan completed over 79 percent (385 of 485) of the home study requests received from other States in FY 2008 within the required 60 days.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that if an adoption resource has not been identified for a child prior to TPR, the child must be registered for photo listing on the MARE system, **AdoptUsKids**, and other national exchanges within seven working days of TPR. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, of the 492 children listed on MARE in FY 2008, 129 were adopted. Other events targeting recruitment of adoptive homes include the Heart Gallery Project, Regional Match Party events such as the annual Kinship Adoption Festival, and support of media efforts to recruit for waiting youth. In addition, MARE has an ongoing billboard display at the Detroit Metro Airport terminal featuring waiting children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in its use of cross-jurisdictional resources on behalf of children awaiting permanency. Some stakeholders reported that the State uses the ICPC to facilitate out-of-State placements, primarily with relatives. Additionally, stakeholders noted that the State uses MARE, **AdoptUsKids**, Wendy's Wonderful Kids, and the Heart Gallery to locate cross-jurisdictional placements for children who are free for adoption.