

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel's mission is to review our child welfare procedures throughout the system offering summaries and recommendations for improvements benefiting children and families.



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D1R3 August 2006 Mini CRSR Report
Cheyenne, WY

Case Ratings:

#D1208

- Five areas needing improvement: Item 2-Repeat maltreatment; item 7- Permanency goal for child; item 8-Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives; item 19-Worker visits with child; item 20-Worker visits with parents.

#D1209

- Three areas needing improvement: Item 9-Adoption; item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; Item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning.

#D1210

- Perfect scoring case.

#D1211

- One area needing improvement: Item 6-Stability of foster care placement.

#D1212

- One area needing improvement: Item 22-Physical health of the child.

#D1213

- One area needing improvement: Item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents.

#D1214

- Three areas needing improvement: Item 5-Foster care re-entries; item 15-Relative placement; item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents.

#D1215

- Three areas needing improvement: Item 7-Permanency goal for child; item 15-Relative placement; item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning.

#R3200

- Two areas needing improvement: Item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning. "Case load 45-50."

#R3201

- Two areas needing improvement: Item 6-Stability of foster care placement; item 10-Permanency goal of other planned living arrangement.

#R3202

- Perfect scoring case.

#R3203

- Two areas needing improvement: Item 16-Relationship of child in care with parents; item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning

#R3204

- One area needing improvement: Item 11-Proximity of foster care placement.

#R3205

- Five areas needing improvement: Item 11-Proximity of foster care placement; item 13-Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care; item 16-Relationship with child in care with parents; item 19-Worker visits with child; item 20-Worker visits with parents.

#R3206

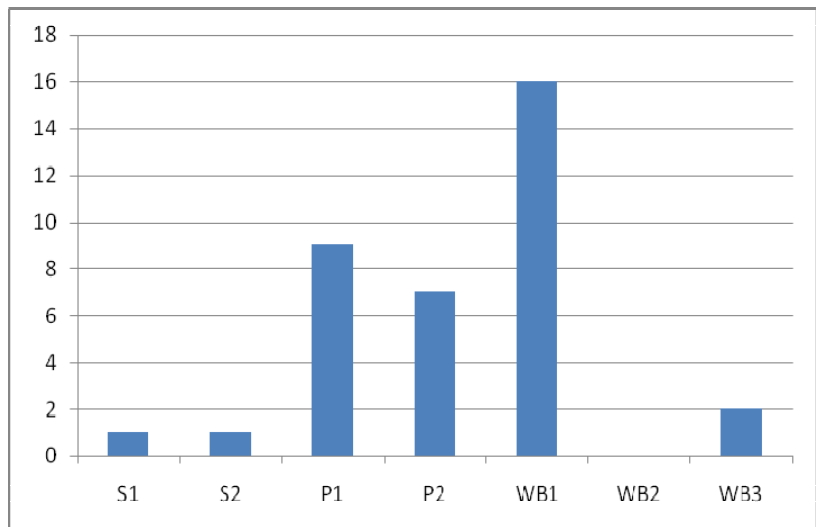
- Four areas needing improvement: Item 11-Proximity of foster care placement; item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning; item 20-Worker visits with parent(s)

#R3207

- Five areas needing improvement: Item 6-Stability of foster care placement; item 16-Relationship of child in care with parents; item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; item 21-Educational needs of the child; item 23-Mental health of the child.

Note: *This review of the Cheyenne DFS office included sixteen (16) case reviews; 8 child protective services cases and 8 juvenile services cases.*

The graph to the right shows the number of Mini CFSR instrument items rating as "areas needing improvement" in the broad outcome categories of safety, permanency and well-being.



Summary

Local DFS Office Issues:

- “Encourage the new district attorney (DA) to be involved with the trench workers; Carolyn Yeaman has been working with the new DA to see to it that he is involved with DFS and understands their plight”
- “Cheyenne has the highest family partnership numbers in child protective services (CPS); it is a goal in juvenile services (JS) to increase their family partnership numbers; CPS has a goal of even increasing their family partnership numbers”
- “Review the principles of practice for case planning and how various parties are involved and contacted”
- “Transitioning cases in juvenile services so that information and cases consistency is not lost”
- “Keep placement children in their community”

Issues Requiring DFS Administrative Level Attention:

- Issue of not enough staff:
 - “Roving workers; create a “MASH” unit of sorts”
 - “Overfilling positions”
 - “Speed up hiring process”
 - “Flexibility with personnel who want to job share or work part time”
 - “Mentorship program”
- “Early intervention on issues such as truancy; help family before they get the final letter and their child is filed against; diversion programs down to grade school levels”
- “CHINS legislation eliminated services to 17 year old”
- “Kids aging out without resources or services available; more flexible options; we need a LINK (former service provider that is not in business) that has more options; ie half way house”
- “Three case workers over life of case”
- “Cases have multiple case workers”
- “Three case workers in life of case; ie since 08/05 to 08/06”
- “Transferring of case workers at critical junctures and information not being put in the case file causes confusion about services being provided”
- “Juvenile Services case worker with 45-50 cases”
- “Case loads are too high”

Strengths

- Consistency:
 - “Supervisors and managers need to be commended for distributing the caseloads of their workers equally as much as possible”
 - “Case worker takes lessons learned from previous cases and apply that to current cases”
 - “Positive attitude demonstrated by management in the Cheyenne DFS office”
 - “Candor and honesty of the case worker was good”
- Documentation and adherence to procedure:
 - “Organized case file”

- “Good face to face visits”
- “Well organized file to work with during the review”
- Effective use of service array:
 - “Numerous assessments”
 - “Appropriate and thorough services provided to family”
 - “Lots of services provided to family”
 - “Good assessments”
- Engagement of the child:
 - “Caseworker did a wonderful job with the case; tough case as there was not a lot that could be done with the child’s attitude of not wanting to do anything; not a bad kid, just not motivated to do anything”
 - “GAL is very engaged and helpful in the case”
- Family involvement:
 - “Good visits and connections”
 - “Family would not have received services has it not have been for DFS as the family was intimidated by FEWAFB personnel”
- Collaboration and Organizational Relationships:
 - “DFS has great communication and cooperation with FEWAFB; also written MOU exists between the two entities”
 - “Good interaction with the Cheyenne Police Department”
 - “Good coordination between Cheyenne DFS office and other DFS offices; case worker visits at C-V in Wilson were great for the Cheyenne DFS office case indicating great communication and coordination between the two entities”
 - “Good working relationship between DFS and DOC; good coordination”
 - “Excellent coordination between Cheyenne DFS Office and Florida authorities”
 - “Appears to be a good working relationship between DFS and the Cheyenne Police Department”
 - “School resource officers (5) trained to work with DFS at the school when removal is necessary, an untrained patrol officer does not go in the school and do it”

Additional contributing factors

- “Lack of placement choices exist in Wyoming”
- “Juvenile services case worker with 45-50 cases”
- “GAL situation is improving”
- “Jon Forwood’s administration of the local DA’s office has been a tremendous detriment to the Cheyenne DFS office”
- “Three case workers, working with four siblings, caused some confusion as necessary information was only put in one child’s file; a family partnership would be very beneficial”
- “A great amount of confusion ensued during debriefings because case files were lacking in documentation”
- “Case worker was against TPR, but everyone else in the case was for TPR”
- “No services provided for relatives who had children living with them”
- “Services exist in the Cheyenne area that are very beneficial to plug into cases”

Opportunities for Improvement

- Case Planning:
 - “Need for case plans as child changes placements”
 - “More thorough documentation for key decisions”
 - “Need for case planning clarity and complete documentation to accurately reflect the child’s current and ultimate goal”
 - “Case opened and closed with no accompanying narrative; baby was thrown over the fence by mother to maternal grandmother. DFS reports that the matter was in fact investigated by law enforcement”
 - “Case plans are not current”
 - “Monthly reports need to be modified so that they incorporate comments”
 - “Case plans need to be current and done when there is a change in placement”
 - “Child and family told what was going to happen and given a choice between WBS and NSI, but were not involved in case planning”
 - “Foster parent not involved in the MDT”
- Collaboration:
 - “Responses for requests should follow same time frame both ways”
 - “When youth are in long term foster care, and they are getting ready to exit or graduate to IL, they might need to be given more latitude in making life decisions such as getting a tattoo”
- Preserving Connections:
 - “Biological parents were not notified”
 - “No effort to contact biological father”
 - “No effort to contact biological mother”
 - “No effort to contact biological mother”
 - “No effort to contact biological father”
 - “No effort to contact biological mother”
- Family Involvement:
 - “Grandmother does not feel as if she has been supported by DFS”
- Family Preservation
 - “Relative placements not considered”
 - “To get assistance, children were abandon on front door steps of DFS; allegedly told that by local DFS office; AG’s office advised that they would file abandonment charges if that happened. Point being, there is no emotional help or support for relatives that appear to take in family members”
- Communication:
 - “No notification of meetings”
 - “School feels that DFS does not share necessary information with school social workers”
 - “Could be better communication between school social workers and DFS”
- Documentation and adherence to procedure:
 - “Biological parents were not notified”
 - “Young adult needs to be more involved in case planning process”
 - “No follow-up”
 - “Poor case documentation”

- “Ensure that all medical records and immunization records are in the case file”
- “Follow thru with cases; i.e. being released from foster care and then following through with case plans when the child goes back to school or home”
- “When reviewing one file, information was found about another child in the case file that was not involved”
- “TPR does not appear to have been considered when it might have been appropriate”
- “Better documentation needed in case file”
- “Documentation misplaced and not filed in the case file”
- “No physical health screening documentation in the case file”
- ““It is in the other case file;” four siblings: information about mother and other issues were only filed in one file. This would not pass a federal review if they pulled a file that did not have the information in it (R3203)”
- “Child placed on psychotropic medications, however no notes in the case file supporting the reasons”
- “There had been no activity in the case, however it was never closed”
- “Various efforts made by DFS need to be documented better in the case file”
- “Paternity has never been established”
- Use of service array:
 - “Psychological evaluation might have been useful for mom earlier in the case”
 - “Child sent to NSI when services may have been able to be built and provided in local community”
 - “First foster care placement did not work out; child began losing weight and had to be hospitalized”

Systemic barriers

- **Coordination and Communication:**
 - “Confusion about ICWA requirements at all levels”
 - “TFC caseworker refuses to work with DFS caseworker after DFS caseworker asked for an evaluation of placement home”
 - “TFC does not appear to work well with others”
 - “Health records did not follow child from Attention Home”
 - “Frontier Corrections undergoing transition is causing great confusion for children needing to transition to TLC (Transitional Living Center)”
 - “No Wyoming Medicaid approved providers in Colorado”
 - “Time delays with ICPC and Colorado”
 - “No help for relatives taking children in, i.e. transitional help, emotional help, etc.”
 - “Foster parents did not feel supported by services”
 - “Policy clarification on relative placement (face to face, etc.)”
 - “Reciprocal Medicaid issues (Medicaid for children out of state). Federal Government says that permanency is an issue, yet they create barriers and rules that actually drive the problem”
 - “High juvenile case loads and case worker turnover”

- “Community needs to look at the expansion of existing programs such as JEMS which is currently limited to municipal and circuit court”
- Legal System:
 - “GAL refused to let the child participate in a MDT (Juvenile services case)”
 - “It is not common for the Judge to ask the child how he or she is doing”
 - “Petition not filed with the court by district attorney’s office; court only became involved when there was a subsequent issue of domestic violence”
 - “Paternity test has not been administered in order for case to move forward to permanency”
 - “MDT process is only ½ a hour per DA’s office; has gone from 10 minutes to 20 minutes to 30 minutes (juvenile services cases; not the same issue in child protection services; however the volume for juvenile services is much greater)”
 - “GAL and DA are filing delinquencies to get kids in to group home placement whether needed or not”
 - “GAL made a decision that child was going to NSI and swayed the MDT; this is not the intent of how MDTs should work”
 - “Child was not allowed to attend MDT”
 - “TPR not completed within 24 months”
 - “Has taken over 3 ½ years for adoption to be close to happening”
 - “Took six (6) months to get an order to close the case”
 - “Extremely short MDT meetings”
 - “Community has had five and nine year old delinquents; inappropriate use of juvenile justice system; inappropriate court involvement of kids with behavior issues”
- Education:
 - “IEP did not follow child from Dildine Elementary to Attention Homes”
 - “IEP evaluation needed, but is slow in being done and the medication that child is on may influence whether she exhibits the need for one to be done”

Review process dynamics and comments:

- Citizen reviewers in this review represented the following entities:
 - Wyoming Supreme Court;
 - Legislative candidates;
 - Cheyenne Police Department;
 - Department of Family Services administrative personnel;
 - Department of Health;
 - Wyoming Youth Advocates;
 - Wyoming Kinship Advocacy;
 - Peak Wellness;
 - Attorney General’s Office-legal and domestic violence;
 - Community College Commission, and
 - Safe House.
- The period under review was July 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

- All cases were randomly selected and consent was given by the appropriate party for each case reviewed.
- Training was held for reviewers on September 20, 2006.
- The review instrument that is used looks at 23 specific items in the broad outcome areas of safety, permanency and well-being. The review instrument can be viewed and/or downloaded at <http://wycrp.org>
- Better beverages are needed for the reviews, IE coffee
- It would be helpful to print up the placement history