

## October 2, 3, 4, 2007 Mini CFSR Report

### Douglas, Lusk and Torrington, Wheatland Department of Family Services (DFS) – D8R3

# S U M M A R Y

#### Three strongest review areas:

- **Douglas:**
  - **Safety 1 (S1)** - Children are protected when this DFS office becomes involved; this outcome has scored a 100% for all four rounds of reviews.
  - **Well Being 2 (WB2)** - All four rounds are consistently high scoring with this DFS office; DFS does a good job of advocating for children in the educational system; score this round is 81.8%.
  - Three way tie at 77.8%;
    - **Safety 2 (S2)** - Children are safely maintained at home when possible;
    - **Permanency 1 (P1)** - Children are safely maintained at home, and
    - **Permanency 2 (P2)** - Family relationships are preserved.
- **Lusk:**
  - **Permanency 2 (P2), Well Being 1 (WB1), Well Being 2 (WB2) and Well Being 3 (WB3)** all scored 100%
- **Torrington:**
  - **Safety 1 (S1)** - Children are protected when this DFS office becomes involved; safety is very consistent. (100%)
  - **Well Being 2 (WB2)** - All four (4) rounds are high scoring and consistent with this DFS office; DFS does a good job of advocating for children in the educational system. (100%)
  - **Well Being 3 (WB3)** - Consistent good work in this DFS office. (100%)
- **Wheatland:**
  - **Safety 2 (S2)** - Children are safely maintained at home when possible; consistent strength in this office; 100% in this category during all four rounds of Mini CFSRs.
  - **Educational Needs (WB2)** - 100% in this category during all four rounds of Mini CFSRs.
  - **Physical and Mental Health needs met (WB3)** - 100% in this category during all four rounds of Mini CFSRs.

#### Greatest strengths from stakeholder interviews:

- Wrap around services in Douglas allow children and families to receive services without leaving the community;
- Strong community collaboration and support of DFS in these communities' helps DFS provide effective services, and
- child protective team participation and consistency in Wheatland could be a model for other child protective teams in Wyoming for effective collaboration with DFS; it is also beneficial that participants from outlying areas such as Chugwater are a part of the team.

**Review challenge area(s):**

- **Douglas:**
  - Locating and involving non custodial parent, and
  - worker visits with the child.
- **Lusk:**
  - Case documentation, and
  - lacking independent living services.
- **Torrington:**
  - Case planning permanency goal;
  - inappropriate goal in one case, and
  - diligent search for absent parent.
- **Wheatland:**
  - Father was involved originally but was not kept involved in the case;
  - fourteen (14) year old child should have been involved in case planning, and
  - case planning practices; no new case plan when there was a significant change in the case.

**Issues for DFS administrative level consideration:**

- Staff turnover causes disruptions with case transition;
- the Wheatland DFS office is not physically conducive to worker security and client privacy; one small office has three people working in it;
- cases with a goal of guardianship cause financial hardships on the parents; it would be helpful if guardianship payments equaled foster care payments;
- a review team found discrepancies between what was reported as being done in a juvenile services case versus what the family reported was actually done; a review process by supervisory personnel to verify services provided may be necessary;
- Torrington juvenile services caseworker has a case load of 40; child protective services case worker case loads are averaging around 25;
- Budgeting based on workloads and needs of a community versus budgeting by FTEs.
- Wheatland juvenile services caseworker with a case load of 46;
- Wheatland DFS is in need of additional clerical support, and
- a caseworker with 40 cases, 15 of which are placement cases, and

**Issues requiring local DFS office attention:**

- Transfer of cases from one DFS office to another; ensure that the transition is smooth and followed up on;
- an increase in front line staff including family assistance workers is needed, and
- foster family collaborative efforts with DFS may be enhanced through a third party mediator which would establish a non threatening and productive channel of communication and reduce tensions in the Wheatland DFS foster program.

**Issues requiring WYCRP consideration:**

- Advocating for a state statute which allows and funds DFS to add additional case workers when existing case worker's case loads reach a predefined maximum based on clear and concise rules and regulations.

## Case Ratings:

**#D8422** - Foster Care/Douglas - Perfect scoring case. **Good use of consent decree;** (consent decree could last up to a year, but reviewers recommend that it end sooner).

**#D8423** - In Home Services/Douglas - Four areas needing improvement: Item 17 (17b<sup>1</sup>) - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating); Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning; Item 19 - Worker visits with child and Item 20 - Worker visits with parent(s). **Mom's willingness to work with DFS made the difference; then rapport built between DFS and mom was good.**

**#D8424** - In Home Services/Lusk - Perfect scoring case. **Youth Challenge Program helped the child succeed and feel good about himself; really empowered the child.**

**#D8425** - Foster Care/Lusk - Three areas needing improvement: Item 3 - Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal; Item 4 - Risk of harm to child(ren); Item 7 - Permanency goal for child. **Case worker got the biologic father involved early on in the case.**

**#D8426** - Foster Care/Wheatland - Two areas needing improvement: Item 9 - Adoption and Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning. **TPR and adoption cases needed to be expedited; not put on the regular court docket.**

**#D8427** - In Home Services/Wheatland - Perfect scoring case. **Case worker made this a great case for all involved.**

**#D8433** - Foster Care/Torrington - Six areas needing improvement: Item 6 - Stability of foster care placement; Item 7 - Permanency goal for child; Item 8 - Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives; Item 14 - Preserving connections; Item 15 - Relative placement and Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning. **Lack of actively pursuing concurrent permanency plan was a detriment to the case.**

**#D8434** - Foster Care/Torrington - One area needing improvement: Item 7 - Permanency goal for child.

**#D8435** - Foster Care/Torrington - Five areas needing improvement: Item 4 - Risk of harm to child(ren); Item 7 - Permanency goal for child; Item 8 - Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives; Item 17 (17b<sup>2</sup>) - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating) and Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning.

**#R3420** - Foster Care/Douglas - Thirteen areas needing improvement: Item 4 - Risk of harm to child(ren); Item 7 - Permanency goal for child; Item 8 - Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives; Item 13 - Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care; Item 16 - Relationship of child in care with parents; Item 17 (17a<sup>3</sup> and 17b<sup>4</sup>) - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating); Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning; Item 19 - Worker visits with child; Item 20 - Worker visits with parent(s); Item 21 - Educational needs of the child and Item 23 - Mental health of the child. **Quality assurance and supervisor reviews would help ensure the case is complete.**

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<sup>1</sup> 17b = Needs and services of parents rating

<sup>2</sup> 17b = Needs and services of parents rating

<sup>3</sup> 17a = Needs and services of child(ren) rating

<sup>4</sup> 17b = Needs and services of parents rating

**#R3421** - *In Home Services/Douglas* - Nine areas needing improvement: Item 3 - Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal; Item 4 - Risk of harm to child(ren); Item 17 (17a<sup>5</sup> and 17b<sup>6</sup>) - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating); Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning; Item 19 - Worker visits with child; Item 20 - Worker visits with parent(s) and Item 21 - Educational needs of the child. **The mother and sibling want to have continued services.**

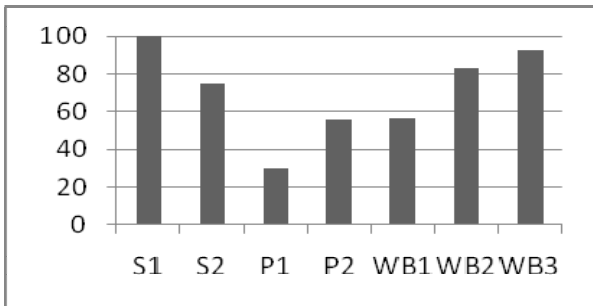
**#R3428** - *Foster Care/Wheatland* - Perfect scoring case. **Availability and case management helped make the case a success.**

**#R3429** - *Foster Care/Wheatland* - Five areas needing improvement: Item 13 - Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care; Item 16 - Relationship of child in care with parents; Item 17 (17b<sup>7</sup>) - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating); Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning and Item 20 - Worker visits with parent(s). **A lot of team work demonstrated in the case.**

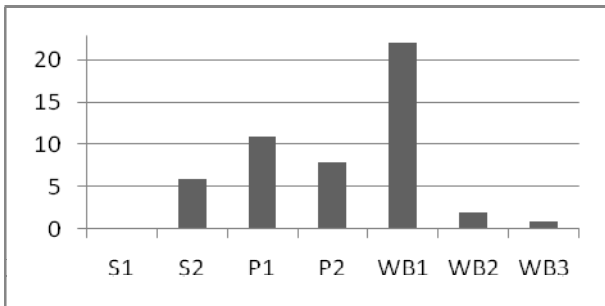
**#R3430** - *In Home/Torrington* - Three areas needing improvement: Item 17 (17b<sup>8</sup>) - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating); Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning and Item 20 - Worker visits with parent(s). **Positive relations were established among all involved.**

**#R3431** - *Foster Care/Torrington* - Six areas needing improvement: Item 7 - Permanency goal for child; Item 13 - Visiting with parents and sibling in foster care; Item 16 - Relationship of child in care with parents; Item 17 (17b<sup>9</sup>) - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents (overall rating); Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning and Item 20 - Worker visits with parent(s). **Foster parent is the ideal placement.**

**#R3432** - *In Home/Torrington* - Perfect scoring case. **The experience with DFS has changed the family perception of DFS for the good; just the right amount of intervention.**



The graph above shows the percentage composite scores of this Mini CFSR review with the greatest strength being in the area of Safety 1; and the lowest area being in Well Being 1.



The graph above shows the number of Mini CFSR instrument items rating as "areas needing improvement" in the broad outcome categories of safety, permanency and well-being. A total of sixteen cases were reviewed.

<sup>5</sup> 17a = Needs and services of child(ren) rating  
<sup>6</sup> 17b = Needs and services of parents rating  
<sup>7</sup> 17b = Needs and services of parents rating  
<sup>8</sup> 17b = Needs and services of parents rating  
<sup>9</sup> 17b = Needs and services of parents rating

## Strengths:

- Education:
  - “School officials are involved in the case and supportive of the child.”
- Effective case planning and work:
  - “Children were removed immediately when a safety concern was found;”
  - “good risk assessment and reassessment done before children returned home;”
  - “children were only in one foster home;”
  - “good visitations by the case worker in various settings;”
  - “caseworker involved and knowledgeable about family;”
  - “good communication by caseworker;”
  - “permanency goal established within sixty (60) days;”
  - “child preserved connections by staying in same school and community while in foster care;”
  - “relatives on biological father side were looked at for placement;”
  - “both parents and child felt they had input into the case planning process;”
  - “timely transition from supervised to unsupervised visits;”
  - “caseworker returned calls in a timely fashion;”
  - “family assistance worker (FAW) was very useful in the case;”
  - “worker was able to establish a good relationship with mom;”
  - “caseworker made concerted efforts to establish contact through letters and leaving business cards on the door;”
  - “good communication between caseworker and alternate worker;”
  - “good ongoing assessments of needs;”
  - “caseworker got his hands dirty, literally helping to clean up the house;”
  - “goals in the case plan were clear and attainable;”
  - “good case planning;”
  - “all parties worked well with the case worker (expect mom);”
  - “everyone involved in the case knew what was going on; community works well together;”
  - “case is closed and case worker still checks on the child and emotionally supports him;”
  - “case worker had a good relationship with family;”
  - “good response by caseworker;”
  - “lot of efforts by DFS to try and reunify child with parents;”
  - “child placed in proximity of sibling;”
  - “kids could not be together, but were very close with frequent contact;”
  - “same foster/adopt home throughout the life of the case;”
  - “good face to face contacts between case worker and child;”
  - “good educational assessments; good continuing assessments;”
  - “everyone worked together for the best interest of the child; GAL was very impressed with MDT and the case worker;”
  - “caseworker was a real strength in this case; he went to the school and helped prepare for the child’s transition from Cathedral Home to school (child had previously been home schooled);”
  - “small town setting allows for greater collaboration;”
  - “case worker went to the school and prepared for the child to transition;”
  - “mother was hearing impaired; case worker used text messages to communicate;”
  - “caseworker availability was great;”
  - “good ongoing assessments;”
  - “case worker established a great bond with the caseworker;”
  - “case worker still keeps in touch with the family after the case has closed;”
  - “just the right amount of case work; caseworker assisted the mother and child through the system;”
  - “DFS requested that the law enforcement case be transferred to Wheatland;”

- “good agency collaboration including foster parents;”
- “formal and non formal assessments were used;”
- “MDTs and family partnerships were useful;”
- “perfect amount of intervention;”
- “child has only been in one placement;”
- “tons of educational material in the case file;”
- “stable, single placement;”
- “high number of relinquishments;”
- “good use of consent decrees,” and
- “referrals to parenting classes.”
- **Effective use of service array:**
  - “Successful Families program was used for services;”
  - “parents received a psychological evaluation;”
  - “drug and alcohol evaluations were done for parents with random follow up urinary analysis;”
  - “Solutions for Life (local mental health center) was used successfully;”
  - “parents involved in individual and family counseling;”
  - “family therapy was beneficial;”
  - “child benefited from individual counseling;”
  - “evaluations of dad and child were done;”
  - “Youth Challenge program was very beneficial for the child;”
  - “Youth Challenge educational credits transferred to main stream education;”
  - “family and individual counseling;”
  - “same counselor since 2004; minimal disruption to the children;”
  - “good medical services provided for child;”
  - “counselors in the case were consistent and provided good services;”
  - “good medical testing for genetic issues;”
  - “good services to address neglect;”
  - “good services such as in home budgeting, finance and parenting classes;”
  - “a lot of assessments in the case with mother and child;”
  - “parent feels good about the family therapy sessions in the case;”
  - “family therapy has been great for the child and his sibling relationships;”
  - “child will be able to keep the same psychiatrist even when he leaves St. Joes;”
  - “project SAFE was uses as a resource;”
  - “immediate services through CAP, DFS and law enforcement; needs immediately identified;”
  - “community was supportive and child remained in the community;”
  - “foster family adopted the child;”
  - “good used of after school program to get child’s grades up;”
  - “full gamut of mental health services provided,” and
  - “foster mother required foster child to develop independent living skills.”
- **Family Involvement and Support:**
  - “Mother was engaged and worked with DFS well;”
  - “parent followed through with medical and dental appointments for children;”
  - “bio father and stepfather are very honest and open with child in an appropriate fashion;”
  - “mother felt that child going to St. Joes was the best thing that could have happened for her child and her in order to get her life in order;”
  - “mother did what she needed to do and worked well with DFS; she asked: “What do I need to do to keep my child safe?” And then followed through,” and
  - “child can go see his mother every day after school even though he is in foster care; it has been a normal life for the child.”
- **Legal:**
  - “Mother was court ordered into parenting classes which was very helpful;”

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- “GAL took the kids to the court hearing for mother;”
- “Court gave the child the choice between the Wyoming Boys School or the Youth Challenge Program;”
- “same GAL throughout the case helped create consistency;”
- “court order did a good job of outlining why biologic father was not appropriate for involvement in case;”
- “MDT’s were conducted effectively;”
- “county attorney felt that DFS was the one to provide the needed services even though it was not really a “serious” case,” and
- “family is included in all the MDTs and meetings.”
- Medical:
  - “Child had a “box full” of medical needs that were met through a variety of providers.”

**Opportunities for improvement:**

- Case planning and work:
  - “No documentation exists that DFS tried to contact the father in the case (caseworker confirmed that she did not); yet children were seeing the father;”
  - “status and location of dad needed to be determined;”
  - “no records in the case file from services provided by Solutions for Life;”
  - “interview the child sooner to understand child’s needs and desires;”
  - “case plan was not developed until five months after placement;”
  - “develop case plan within sixty (60) days;”
  - “develop a safety plan;”
  - “case documentation could have been better especially for the risk assessment; caseworker can verbalize it but it is not documented in the case record;”
  - “no contact for two (2) months with sibling one in assessment case and no contact with second sibling in the home for the life of the case; second sibling had the same risk factors as sibling one;”
  - “educational needs were not addressed for the second sibling in the home;”
  - “no documentation in the case file why father was not involved;”
  - “policy needs to be followed;”
  - “no ongoing assessments;”
  - “no concerted efforts by worker to involve father;”
  - “inconsistent visits between case worker and child, and case worker and parents;”
  - “court system had address for father but no efforts to involve father by caseworker;”
  - “when child was returned, there was no follow up by caseworker;”
  - “no formal case plan was done;”
  - “child was on an IEP, but no documentation in the file of any school records and no follow up by caseworker;”
  - “child said he felt that he was not involved in the case planning process;”
  - “no case plan was done when child transitioned from WBI to Cathedral Home;”
  - “child needs to understand what is in his case plan;”
  - “case plan not done for seven (7) months;”
  - “timely case plan goals need to be established;”
  - “father needed to be contacted to be involved in the case;”
  - “better case file documentation; nothing in the school section;”
  - “ICWA needed to be established and followed up on;”
  - “non custodial parents were identified but not pursued;”
  - “foster parents felt they were not involved in case planning;”
  - “no family partnership;”
  - “case plan was not timely;”

- “permanency goal has changed a number of times;”
- “confusion exists what the child’s most recent permanency goal is after the MDT; case plan goal needs to be reduced to writing;”
- “timely case plan,” and
- “concerted effort to find absent parent.”
- Family involvement and support:
  - “Mother’s perception is that the case was closed and she didn’t know what was going to happen;”
  - “mother needed transportation in order to be more involved;”
  - “father was ordered into services but did not follow through and was disruptive;”
  - “child needed better supervision by mother,” and
  - “child said his dad was an alcoholic and abusive of his mother.”
- Legal:
  - “County attorney wants an easier way for municipal citations to move to DFS probation system rather than dismissing and refilling in other system;”
  - “case worker felt that mother needed a psychological evaluation but the county attorney would not pursue it;”
  - “termination filed at month sixteen (16); kids ended up being in foster care for four (4) years and eight (8) months;”
  - “legal process took a long time; court docket issues;”
  - “court delayed in appointing mother an attorney;”
  - “supreme court appeal on TPR took a year;”
  - “continuances granted by the court at the mother’s attorney request;”
  - “initial death of attorney delayed appointment;”
  - “delays in court system caused permanency issues for children;”
  - “reunification of a child as part of a plea bargain for the male parent to admit to sexual abuse;”
  - “a representative of the legal system defining what permanency goal is as opposed to putting a greater emphasis on DFS input;”
  - “no MDT was done in this case;”
  - “no attorney was ever appointed for dad;”
  - “mother felt that the court does not follow up on their own court orders in a divorce case;”
  - “county attorney requested more frequent MDT meetings;”
  - “termination cases need to be expedited rather than just going on the regular court docket;”
  - “child had numerous mental health issues and other needs; why was it a probation case? Mental health kids have no access to services without CHINS;”
  - “the initial GAL was communicative then a change in GALs occurred; the child said he did not know who is GAL was;”
  - “sometimes kids make a mistake; we need some other mechanism rather than throwing them into the legal system and labeling them a delinquent to deal with these types of cases, according to a GAL;”
  - “law enforcement refused to investigate which may be from a lack of education and training in child abuse and neglect cases;”
  - “adoption cases are put on the regular court docket; they need to be fast tracked;”
  - “there is little consistency among the courts with regards to MDTs being conducted in accordance with state statute;”
  - “sometimes the court will receive assessments and not share them with DFS,” and
  - “after the MDT, great confusion existed as to what the long term goal for the child would end up being.”

## **Systemic Barriers:**

- Education:

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- “Cathedral Home took sixty (60) days to get the educational assessments delivered to school.”
- **Financial:**
  - “Mother would have liked more counseling but lacked the personal funds to accomplish that,” and
  - “child’s medications were expensive and mother is worried when custody is transferred back to her that he will lose his eligibility for having his medication paid for; she cannot afford them.”
- **Regional Issues:**
  - “A strained relationship exists between DFS and Peak Wellness;”
  - “A youth diversion for Wheatland and Douglas would be useful as DFS is getting first offender minor in possession cases,” and
  - “Lusk does not have an independent living program which is needed.”

**Additional contributing factors:**

- “Converse County has some great intervention strategies as a community;”
- “the lone Lusk caseworker is a testimony to how effective it can be for one caseworker to have child protective services cases and juvenile services cases,” and
- “mental health provider was such a strong advocate for father that it was an interference in the case and could have jeopardized the child’s safety.”

**Review process dynamics and considerations:**

- Citizen reviewers in this review consisted of:
  - Public health nurse;
  - Douglas Chief of Police;
  - Eastern Shoshone social service administrator;
  - foster parent;
  - foster parent and CASA representative;
  - director of Youth Development Services;
  - foster mother;
  - retired insurance professional;
  - school counselor;
  - provide service provider;
- The period under review was October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007.

**Youth in care from all around the state report the need to have honest, open and safe communications with those that make decisions about their lives. Often times, their lives are disrupted when they are put in foster care even though someone else in their home has disrupted the family structure; they are hesitant to talk for fear of what might happen to them when the return to their homes. From this review, the need for a Youth Council in Wyoming for young adults in care was again revived and the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel supports this notion.**

Douglas:



- Strong community collaboration;
- lack of turf issues;
- confidence in DFS staff; truly increased in the last four years/some citizens have more confidence making a referral to DFS than law enforcement;
- District Court places a great deal of confidence in DFS;
- Solutions for Life (Successful Families) program;
- group home with great programs;
- good at relinquishments versus TPRs;
- significant efforts at family rehabilitation;
- if siblings are separated; they are going to their bio father, and
- dedication of the people makes things successful for children and families.



- Trickle down from court;
- questionable sustainability of grant projects;
- system does a good job getting a diagnosis but might fail on the treatment;
- how to be safe if you report what is really going on if you are a youth;
- why can't the offender/parent be removed;
- case plan form is universally not liked in this area;
- timelines for permanency unrealistic and one timeline doesn't fit all families, and
- the decision by Justice Golden regarding TPR raises the level of precision and evidence to the equivalent of a death penalty case.



Torrington:

- Workers are interchangeable according to the foster parent; no matter who she talks to she gets good consistent information;
- great deal of confidence in the DFS staff;
- county attorney is confident in DFS's ability;
- judge is confident in DFS;
- joint day and half training for court, county attorney, parents, GAL, DFS staff was beneficial; could it be repeated (Mini Barriers Training)?



- Adding new providers is a problem;
- problem getting schools to accept children with special needs;
- difficult to work with Peak Wellness;
- no one checking on kids after school; need more services;

- children's comments (*all comments were from children at St. Joe's which are children placed outside their community; the following are more systemic and applicable state wide*):
  - call me and come and see me;
  - listen to me;
  - let us go see our family, and
  - if we can't see our parents, tell us how we are doing.
- Independent living service training provider gets stretched; more training services could be useful.



## Wheatland:

- There is a direct correlation between interest in the job and job performance;
- innovative thinking in community;
- good child protection team;
- DFS keeps kids safe, but overloaded where they can't do a lot of one on one work, and
- schools are positive about DFS.



- Hard to fill a DFS position and retain it in Wheatland;
- need for crisis care and short term placement in region;
- foster parents perceive they are not being supported in Wheatland;
- foster parents in Wheatland don't get notice of meetings, and
- not an effort in Wheatland to find father.



# Program Improvement Plans

*Please see footnote<sup>i</sup>*

## **Douglas:**

### **1. Office determined strengths:**

- a. Leadership sets the direction;
- b. relinquishments are phenomenal here;
- c. experience; personnel work up through the system and stay in the office;
- d. consistent work despite high caseloads;
- e. commitments to family both in social services and in benefits;
- f. social services and benefits units collaborate well;
- g. family assessments and listening to family needs;
- h. good community partners and strong collaboration;
- i. social services is active with APS program;
- j. good coordination over a large geographic area;
- k. generic approach;
- l. team approach among workers for consistent coverage;
- m. not territorial;
- n. team approach with others such as law enforcement so that safety is insured;
- o. good coordination and communication with law enforcement;
- p. visitation room is comforting and non threatening;
- q. good community support including legal system;
- r. good coordination with Solutions for Life;
- s. GAL sees children;
- t. luncheons and staffing with GAL and county attorney;
- u. open communication with county attorney;
- v. hall way staffing occur frequentl and then official staff meetings monthly;
- w. excellent self education and relationship building by inviting others in to hear about their programs in the community;
- x. county manager is accessible;
- y. family assistance worker does a number of things for workers and families;
- z. do good work despite an increasing amount of work;
- aa. have fun together;
- bb. Douglas staff becomes involved in the recruitment of foster parents;
- cc. foster care coordinator, shared among other offices, does a good job coordinating with foster parents;
- dd. providing education to the community and are being asked to speak more in the community; during these sessions, benefit specialists are involved;
- ee. benefits specialists provide a wealth of information to social service caseworkers, and
- ff. recognize the benefit of community collaboration.

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**2. Office determined needs and concerns:**

- a. Focus on absent parents:
  - i. Internal plan in monthly meetings;
- b. Balancing contact with people versus keeping paperwork up:
  - i. Case planning is complicated in WYCAPS;
  - ii. tracking documents for a case file is difficult with the current system;
  - iii. “adding” one more requirement for a case may not be perceived to be a “big deal” at the administrative level but it is a “huge deal” at the worker level;
  - iv. case planning documents are point in time when working with families, and
  - v. repetitiveness of case work documentation is discouraging.
- c. Meeting timelines for paperwork, and
- d. creating a conflict resolution in team decision making.

**3. Office determined Program Improvement Plan for the upcoming year (PIP):**

- a. Meet and determine how to better coordinate with support staff;
- b. Meet and come up with a plan on how to contact absent parents more effectively;
- c. insure time lines are met for paperwork especially that which involved other agencies, and
- d. use family partnership concept for team building and resolving conflict in team decisions.

*Created December 19, 2007*

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**Torrington:**

**1. Office determined strengths:**

- a. Reduction of placements;
- b. adoptions and relinquishments have increased;
- c. local attorneys are willing to work within DFS fee guidelines;
- d. proactive work;
- e. expertise of supervisor, manager and workers;
- f. good place to work; good support;
- g. communication between workers is good;
- h. teamwork;
- i. follow-through with families;
- j. each worker has talents and uses them effectively, and
- k. relationship with community is good.

**2. Office determined needs and concerns:**

- a. Case plans:
  - i. Identifying who to involve in the initial case plan while we wait for the first MDT;
  - ii. how to involve incarcerated parents (legal restraints);
  - iii. case plan form:
    - 1. Scanners sometimes work and sometimes don't.
  - iv. Concurrent case planning;
- b. gap exists between juvenile services and child protective services; worker feels is worked better before the separation between the two units:
  - i. Juvenile Services caseload size;
  - ii. isolation of one worker;
- c. relationship with school district;

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- d. relationship with Peak Wellness, and
  - e. more focused in home services; limited specific services; aftercare and transitional services; getting the families ready for reunification.
3. **Office determined Program Improvement Plan for the upcoming year (PIP):**
- a. Case plans:
    - i. Timeliness:
      - 1. Pay closer attention to alerts, and
      - 2. Teresa will meet more regularly with case workers; minimum of once a month.
    - ii. Involve foster parents in the case planning process;
    - iii. give feedback to Debra Hibbard on case plan form ([dhibba@state.wy.us](mailto:dhibba@state.wy.us)).

Created November 26, 2007

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## Wheatland:

- 1. **Office determined strengths:**
  - a. Dedicated staff; they do what it takes to take care of families even after hours and on weekends;
  - b. good relationship with community and service providers;
  - c. good team work and help each other out;
  - d. foster care coordinator;
  - e. support, knowledge and experience of manager;
  - f. understanding of policy and commitment to adhere to policy;
  - g. communication relationships of a small town;
  - h. excellent foster parents;
  - i. good communication skills amongst caseworkers;
  - j. commitment to excellence;
  - k. creative county attorney with juveniles;
  - l. keeping children safe, and
  - m. strong relationship with schools.
- 2. **Office determined needs and concerns:**
  - a. Employee recruitment and retention policies need to be modified as they are not working; office has gone through five registries before they were able to fill the position;
  - b. Levels of redundancy leads to "feeding the computer" versus spending time with clients:
    - i. Assessments, and
    - ii. expectations.
  - c. Lack of clerical staff in the Wheatland office;
  - d. foster parent relationships:
    - i. communication/connection;
    - ii. foster care coordinator spread thin;
    - iii. meeting with parents and foster parents in 72 hours;
    - iv. ground work with parents and foster parents;
    - v. list for foster parents at shelter care;
    - vi. training for foster parents, and
    - vii. family partnership between office and foster parents.
- 3. **Office determined Program Improvement Plan for the upcoming year (PIP):**
  - a. Terry McDowell and Holly Lebsack meet one on one with the foster parents starting by January 30, 2008.
    - i. Terry McDowell and Holly Lebsack meet with Richard and decide what next to do with regards to foster parent relationships.
  - b. Ensure that kids sign the case plans when appropriate.

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<sup>i</sup> For development of these three program improvement plans, child protective services were strongly represented; juvenile services were not able to be represented in the development of the program improvement plans. With regards to the Douglas Mini CFSR, scoring of juvenile services cases negatively influenced the cumulative scores; CPS scoring was very high when considered alone in Converse County.