



Wyoming Citizen Review Panel

SAFETY • PERMANENCY • WELL BEING

**“Whenever the people are well-informed, they
can be trusted with their own government.”**

Thomas Jefferson – 1789

2007

Annual Report

Includes 2006
Wyoming Child Major
Injury and Fatality
Review Team Report

WYCRP 2007 Annual Report

**For the reporting period July 1, 2006 through
June 30, 2007 unless noted by specific section**

Pursuant to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, each citizen review panel established shall prepare and make available to the state and the public, on an annual basis, a report containing a summary of the activities of the citizen review panel and recommendations to improve the child protection services system at the state and local levels. Not later than six months after the date on which a report is submitted by the citizen review panel to the state, the appropriate state agency shall submit a written response to state and local child protection systems and the citizen review panel that describes whether or how the state will incorporate the recommendations (where appropriate) to make measurable progress in improving the state and local child protection system.

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June 30, 2007



Executive Summary

Each state in the nation is to involve citizenry in the review of child welfare procedures at the state and local level by having at least three citizen review panels; this federal mandate is pursuant to the *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act*¹. With a population of just over 500,000 inhabitants, Wyoming received an exception and functions with one citizen review panel.

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, Incorporated (WYCRP) is a private, nonprofit organization created to involve Wyoming citizens in reviewing child welfare practices. The organization gathers information to assess the effectiveness of Wyoming's child welfare system; the specific focus of the organization is to capture trends involving **child major injury, child fatalities, foster care services** and **child protective services**. Data collection efforts model federal efforts to evaluate child welfare information. In addition, the WYCRP goes one step further and collects juvenile services data as well, feeling that a majority of delinquency cases begin as a case where earlier intervention may help greatly to prevent further proceedings.

In reporting period July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007 the **Wyoming Child Major Injury and Fatality Review Team (WCMIFRT)** has undergone an amazing transformation with the WYCRP taking over the administration of the WCMIFRT in October of 2007 through a one year contract with the Department of Family Services (DFS). WCMIFRT accomplishments include new leadership and revised bylaws along with the development of policy and procedure to review child major injuries and fatalities.

In the 2006 WYCRP annual report, the WYCRP recommended that DFS work to establish a more effective and responsive **foster care** program in Wyoming; with the addition of foster care coordinators in a couple of DFS offices, a statewide foster care coordinator and a foster care campaign, the status of foster care in Wyoming is stronger. There are still issues to address, however, such as ensuring that foster parents are involved in case planning for their foster children and that foster parents are given timely notice of hearings.

Statistically, the three strongest areas of **child protective services** in this review period are: maintaining children safely in their homes when appropriate, providing for a continuity of relationships and connections when children are removed from their home and ensuring children's educational well being.

While the data shows improvement in these areas, the Wyoming child welfare system continues to be challenged in the following areas: Stability of foster care placements,

¹ The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act was most recently amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. This document can be viewed at <http://wycrp.org>.

assessing the needs of families and children and providing identified services to families.

Based on these findings, The WYCRP recommends the following:

Child major injuries and fatality review:

1. Refinement of the child protection teams in Wyoming;
2. establishment of a memorandum of understanding between the Wyoming Department of Health and WYCRP for the exchange and review of child major injury and child fatality information, and
3. legislation that creates an independent review panel for child major injuries and child fatalities².

Foster care:

1. Creation of a foster care coordinator in each DFS office;
2. clarification of support and supervision of foster care coordinators;
3. ensure foster parents are given notice of and included in all proceedings involving children placed in their home, and
4. case plans need to be clearly written, concise, and with appropriate input from children, family, and others involved in the case.

Child protective services (*the first two recommendations are not actually part of child protective services, but the WYCRP would like to see better coordination between DFS juvenile services and child protective services units and in order to facilitate that dynamic occurring, makes the juvenile service related recommendations*):

1. DFS juvenile services efforts should become more family centered;
2. improved communication between child protective services and juvenile services;
3. current DFS policy (both juvenile service and child protective services) should be written around the cornerstones of safety, permanency, and well being. WYCRP recommends DFS develop or clarify policy to address the following areas:
 - a. Define what constitutes a compelling reason³ not to pursue termination of parental rights;
 - b. guidance to determine when to “fast track” a case when there has been a previous termination of parental rights;
 - c. case guidance when the parent is unmotivated to make changes;
 - d. how long to keep an unsubstantiated case open in various situations;
 - e. definition and clear understanding among staff with regards to case designation and which unit it is assigned to;
 - f. handling of consumer complaints;
 - g. definition and consistent usage of social service terminology;
 - h. establishment of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in every intake proceeding;
 - i. search for and involvement of absent parents in cases;
 - j. case file standardization within DFS;
 - k. expunging cases in WYCAPS⁴;
 - l. case coding such as with youth and family services (YFS) cases;
 - m. investigations regarding children under six (6) years of age;

² This recommendation is made to the Wyoming Legislature for an interim study and drafting of an appropriate committee bill; the WYCRP would expect DFS and DOH to advocate for and support such an effort.

³ Compelling reason is a review standard in both the federal CFSR and Mini CFSR processes.

⁴ WYCAPS is the DFS case management computer system.

- n. when and how the child protective services unit is notified of a safety issue discovered in a juvenile services case, and
 - o. case follow through when a case is jointly being worked with another agency.
4. Thorough policy distribution and policy training for DFS staff;
 5. alignment of the juvenile services unit of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe with the child protective services unit of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe⁵;
 6. additional Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) law enforcement officers and investigators on the Wind River Indian Reservation⁶;
 7. video equipment installed in both tribal social services offices and connected to the DFS video network;
 8. educational credits transferring from juvenile treatment facilities to public education;
 9. misuse of child in need of supervision (CHINS) statutes, and
 10. DFS staffing.

While the WYCRP feels that the collaborative Mini CFSR process is the cornerstone of child welfare data collection in Wyoming, an online survey was created in early 2007. The results, which generally validate the findings of the Mini CFSR data, are included in this report.

The WYCRP is a collaborator, partner, and voice for children and families of Wyoming. Through this collaboration, services are better for children and families in the state. To document this, a listing of the recommendations from the previous year's annual report along with DFS responses is published in this report⁷.

An event that was a first in the United States occurred in Wyoming during this reporting period. The Northern Arapaho tribal social service program and the Eastern Shoshone tribal social service program invited DFS and the WYCRP to conduct assessments of their respective child protective programs. The results were impressive with the Eastern Shoshone excelling in administration of their programs and the Northern Arapaho excelling in out of home placement stability. Both tribal administrators felt that it was not enough to be evaluated; they wanted to create mini program improvement plans that were done at the conclusion of the reviews. These mini program improvement plans will be done at all DFS offices following assessments during the next round of reviews.

The WYCRP is proud to be a partner in the Wyoming child welfare system and hope that you find this report informative and useful; supporting information along with other useful information can be found at <http://wycrp.org> or by calling (307) 632-0032.

⁵ The WYCRP acknowledges that DFS cannot compel action on this recommendation but can advocate for the change with tribal leaders.

⁶ The WYCRP acknowledges that DFS cannot compel action on this recommendation but can advocate with federal officials for improvements.

⁷ A listing of the 2006 WYCRP recommendations and DFS responses can be found in Appendix A beginning on page 22.



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Letter from WYCRP Executive Committee Chairperson Lisa Gossert

Dear Wyoming Citizen:

In 2002, the Federal government completed Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs) in all 50 states, which measures the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well being for children served in the child welfare system. No state was found in to be in substantial compliance of federal standards. In response to Wyoming's failure of the CFSR, in 2003 the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WYCRP), in partnership with the state Department of Family Services (DFS) developed a process to replicate the federal CFSR on a smaller scale, known as the mini-CFSR. Mini-CFSRs are held throughout the entire state of Wyoming and three series of reviews have been completed. This process has allowed the citizens and DFS to work collaboratively to identify areas of strength, areas of concern, and systemic barriers impacting children and families in each community in Wyoming. The WYCRP is pleased to release the 2007 Annual Report representing three years of data collected from the mini-CFSRs completed in all DFS districts in Wyoming.

The WYCRP would like to acknowledge and thank DFS for their commitment to improving the lives of children and families in the State of Wyoming. The leadership of Wyoming DFS should be commended in creating and supporting transparency in an often complicated and bureaucratic system. Through the mini-CFSR process, Wyoming citizens have had the opportunity to partner with a state DFS caseworker and look at the Wyoming child welfare system from the inside out instead of the outside in, which gives the citizen a broader understanding of the multifaceted roles and responsibilities caseworkers must manage on a daily basis.

In 2007, the Northern Arapaho and the Eastern Shoshone Tribes on the Wind River Reservation invited the WYCRP to complete mini-CFSRs of the child welfare services provided on the Reservation. The WYCRP was honored to have this opportunity to work with both the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone people to complete the first review of this type. Through this experience, the WYCRP has added a component to the mini-CFSR process which provides an opportunity for local DFS offices to develop in real time, strategies to address areas identified as needing improvement specific to their office as a result of the mini-CFSR.

Data collected from the mini-CFSRs indicate outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system have improved overall. Since the 2002 Federal CFSR, the data indicates children are safer, more stable when in a foster home, more often placed with siblings and/or relatives when appropriate, visited monthly by their case worker, and more likely to have their mental health needs met. The child welfare system including DFS, education, mental health, and the courts continue to be challenged by providing appropriate services in the home to parents to prevent removal of a child, identifying and developing an appropriate permanency goal for a child, finalizing adoptions in a timely manner, and involving families in the development of case plans. The mini-CFSR process has shown how crucial it is for all systems involved in a child and family's life to work together to ensure positive outcomes for children. We are all responsible for the success of children and families in our community. Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

*Lisa Gossert, Chairperson
Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, Incorporated*



Letter from the WYCRP Executive Director Kelly Hamilton

Dear Wyoming Citizen;

Other states want to do what we are doing in Wyoming; create transparency and involve citizens in review of the child welfare system! Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to visit with, and present to, hundreds of people from around the nation; to a person they are amazed at our collaborative child and family review process which we know as the Mini CFsRs.

And we are just getting started: The Department of Family Services provides services and then asks the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel to recruit and train citizens and then review those services. But what is next? Would you be excited if I told you that we were in the process of incorporating mental health and substance abuse into our review process? Can you imagine the collaborative results for children and families in Wyoming with the Department of Health, Department of Family Services and the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel working together? What about inviting education into this citizen review process in the future? The possibilities are endless when we involve citizens in government with a focus of all doing the best we can for children and families.

You, the citizens of Wyoming are making all this happen and it is a pleasure to work with you. After working in government for 20 plus years before coming to the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, I never fully understood the importance of transparency, reflection and citizen involvement in government. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of something great.

A couple of times during the past year, I have heard the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel referred to as a "cheering section" for the Department of Family Services; thank you! We absolutely believe in everyone at the Department of Family Services and recognize and help celebrate their success. But if you look closely enough, you will also discover that we help create a reflection where they and the rest of the child welfare system can identify their opportunities for improvement. And through that process we are going to encourage everyone involved in the child welfare system across the state to step up to the plate, and do everything they can do to provide families and children with the best services possible.

Please take a moment and visit our website at <http://wycrp.org>. Consider becoming a citizen reviewer in the Mini CFsR process; it is an eye opening experience and a way to give Wyoming children in the child welfare system a voice. I would love to hear from you in person or by email; please feel free to call me at (307) 632-0032 or email me at khamilton@wycrp.org.

Sincerely,

*Kelly J. Hamilton, Executive Director
Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, Incorporated*



Thank you Brenda Oswald!

Brenda Oswald, one of the founding members of the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, has long been a cornerstone in the child welfare system. In 2007, Brenda's term as chairperson expired and a new chairperson filled the vacated position. Under Brenda's leadership, in 2003 the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel began the process of becoming an incorporated, private, non-profit agency. This status was officially granted to the organization in 2006.

Brenda, an adoptive parent herself, has been a tireless advocate for children who are waiting for a permanent home. Brenda's voice can often be heard reminding Wyoming citizens that time to a child, waiting for a permanent home, can seem like forever.

Brenda is also a voice for ensuring the special needs of children with disabilities in the child welfare system are not ignored.

Brenda's unwavering determination to create a citizen's review panel in Wyoming that would actually review the foster care system and make recommendations to the child welfare system that would lead to improvement was a catalyst for change.

Although Brenda remains on the panel, the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel would like express their sincere appreciation for her commitment, dedication, and leadership to the during her term as chairperson.

Thank you Lee Ann Stephenson!

Lee Ann Stephenson contributed continuously for many years to the Wyoming Child Major Injury and Fatality Review Team before retiring from state government in mid 2007. Her sincere commitment was sustained through various roles with the team and several job changes. Through years of obstacles and change Lee Ann's commitment to trying to stem the growing rate of child major injuries and child deaths due to neglect and abuse never wavered.

For a period of time she was the only staff person at the Department of Family Services responsible for seeing that the team was sustained. This, in itself, is a challenge for the agency staff person who is typically assigned this task as an additional duty to their full time responsibilities.

As Lee Ann transitioned to new employment challenges, she managed to convince new agencies that the child injury and fatality review process was important enough to dedicate part of her time to the effort. The team has struggled to make progress but through slow times and leaps Lee Ann's commitment did not waver. Wyoming's children have a staunch advocate in Lee Ann.



2007 Annual Report

Wyoming citizens contributed 2,325 “volunteer hours” between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007 to help social service agencies insure that Wyoming children and families receive the best services possible in the areas of foster care and child protective services. In addition, many of these hours were spent creating a process for reviewing child fatalities and near fatalities to document and recommend systemic changes. These efforts were coordinated by the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WYCRP), Incorporated as directed by The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)⁸. This Federal legislation asks states to establish Citizen Review Panels to provide citizen input into child welfare social services and then annually report those findings.⁹

This annual report is produced in three sections to meet the criteria of CAPTA: The **Wyoming Child Major Injury and Fatality Review Team (WCMIFRT)** annual report with 2006 case review data, a section on the state of **foster care** in Wyoming, and **child protective services**. In addition, this report will comment on some aspects of juvenile services in Wyoming; the WYCRP supports their operation around a strength based, family centered focus with close coordination to child protective services.

child major injury and fatality review

The first area of review for the WYCRP is child major injury and fatality review. This section of the WYCRP 2007 annual report will also constitute the 2006 annual report with 2006 case review data for the WCMIFRT as required by the Children’s Justice Act (CJA).¹⁰ The WCMIFRT has changed during this reporting period. When asked by the Department of Family Services (DFS), the WYCRP took over the administration of the team in October of 2006 under a one-year contract.

Currently, the only child major injury and child fatality cases that are reviewed by the WCMIFRT are those involving a child who is connected with DFS in some way or those cases where abuse and/or neglect may be suspected or present. These cases are referred to the state team from the local DFS office, prepared and then reviewed by the full team. In some cases, a local child protection team will have reviewed the case prior to it being passed on to the state team; all cases reviewed by the WCMIFRT must be adjudicated prior to review if criminal charges are part of the case.

While the WCMIFRT has undergone major reorganization and restructuring in the past year, eventually the local child protection teams will have to be aligned with the

⁸ The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act was amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. This document can be viewed at <http://wycrp.org>.

⁹ Information regarding the WYCRP, a private, non-profit entity, is found at <http://wycrp.org> or by calling (307) 632-0032.

¹⁰ Information regarding the Children’s Justice Act can be obtained at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/state_tribal/justice_act.htm.

WCMIFRT in order to provide a thorough and consistent approach statewide. Currently, child protection teams (CPTs) in Wyoming operate with varying degrees of success and efficiency. Each county is required to have a CPT and some are very functional. The CPTs that are most functional have consistent participation and solid organization. However, there are counties across the state where the CPT is virtually nonexistent.

1. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP recommends DFS and the Wyoming legislature reviews the creation and composition of these teams and offer solutions to making them consistent and useful across the state. The WYCRP is willing to participate in the gathering of the necessary information to make solid decisions regarding these teams and their processes.*

In the past, this team has reviewed cases by requesting DFS case workers involved in the child major injury or child fatality appear before the WCMIFRT to present the case and to be questioned regarding the case. This practice was abandoned in December of 2006 as WCMIFRT members felt the need to focus on systemic trends, not reinvestigating the case or re-traumatizing those who work on social work's front lines.

In early 2007 the WCMIFRT began consulting with the National Center for Child Death Review¹¹ and entering Wyoming data into the national data repository for child fatalities and near fatalities. Currently, one person from DFS is trained on data entry and one person from the WYCRP is trained to enter data. Identifying information, of the child involved in the major injury or fatality, is not collected or entered into this database; information to determine trends in Wyoming and across the nation is entered and stored in this system. A variety of reports can be generated as the database grows.

The WCMIFRT is now striving to develop policy and procedure for a more objective review for systemic issues involved in cases of child major injury and/or child fatality. In the future, the team would like to create a "review instrument" that will enable the WCMIFRT to focus solely on systemic issues by consistently and thoroughly reviewing the case. Because reviewing these types of cases can be emotionally challenging for the review team, the WCMIFRT is developing a process to review the case as a team to identify trends, systemic barriers, and make recommendations that will reduce the number of child near fatalities and fatalities.

In addition to the redefinition and refinement of child major injury and child fatality case review policy by the WCMIFRT, several additional key milestones were achieved during this reporting period:

- a. Bylaws were redrafted and approved by the membership of the team clearly defining the terms of officers and meeting frequency;
- b. new officers were elected in December 2006 replacing dedicated individuals that had remained in office for many years;

¹¹ Information about the National Center for Child Death Review can be found at: <http://www.childdeathreview.org/>

- c. membership has been expanded on a continuous basis to comply with the membership requirements of the Children’s Justice Act (CJA)¹² and to allow for the representation of a broader spectrum of Wyoming citizen and social service professionals;
- d. a national representative was contacted from the National Center for Child Death Review to come to Wyoming and assist the WCMIFRT with:
 - a. Organizational development;
 - b. sustainability;
 - c. child major injury and fatality objective case review, and
 - d. reporting investigation findings;
 - e. creating realistic and achievable recommendations, and
 - f. adding direction and accountability to the WCMIFRT work.
- e. Policies and procedures are continuously being drafted and reviewed regarding how the WCMIFRT will review cases, report on their findings and follow through with making meaningful systemic recommendations to the people of Wyoming.

As in the past, the CJA grant for Wyoming was drafted and submitted; it is believed that the organization is in much greater compliance with the requirements of this grant application than in years past, particularly in compliance with memberships requirements for the WCMIFRT as defined in the CJA. The CJA is a federal program that provides grants to states for the development and operation of programs designed to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases, the handling of suspected maltreatment related fatalities, and the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.

In the 2007 legislative session, House of Representatives Bill 0255¹³ expired in committee after introduction. This bill would have moved the WCMIFRT to the Wyoming Department of Health (DOH) allowing for the review of all child fatalities and near fatalities in Wyoming. Currently, only those cases that have or may have suspected abuse and/or neglect can be reviewed. The WYCRP expects this legislation, or similar legislation, will be brought up again in a future legislative session. The 2008 Wyoming Legislative Session will be a budget session and a non-budget bill will require a majority affirmative vote for introduction; achieving support for legislation dealing with what agency the WCMIFRT resides in during the 2008 may be difficult but structural issues with the WCMIFRT must eventually be dealt with legislatively.

¹² Information regarding the Children’s Justice Act can be obtained at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/state_tribal/justice_act.htm.

¹³2007 drafted house bill 0255 can be viewed at: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/2007/Introduced/HB0255.pdf>.

2. **Recommendation(s):** *Pending a legislative solution, the WYCRP would encourage DFS and DOH to explore a formal memorandum of understanding that would allow for the exchange of information on all child fatalities and near fatalities resulting in a more comprehensive, systemic review process.*

The WYCRP, in accordance with CAPTA supports the review of all child major injuries and fatalities in Wyoming. Through their contract with DFS, it is and remains a goal of the WYCRP to ensure that whatever process allowed legislatively or in policy operates with citizen involvement and identifies systemic trends to promote the elimination of threats to Wyoming children. Subsequently, the child major injury and child fatality review may be better implemented from a neutral organization than within any state agency:

3. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP encourages the Wyoming legislature to draft and consider legislation that creates an independent review panel for child major injuries and child fatalities.*

The following child major injuries and child deaths were reviewed in calendar 2006; a very brief description of the case is given followed by recommendations from the review team.

1. 17 month old child left with his mother's boyfriend, being shaken by the boyfriend, and then taken into protective custody:
 - a. **Recommendations(s):** It appears that the system did what they could; shaken baby prevention efforts should continue in the state.
2. 16 month old child who presented at the hospital emergency room with two broken ribs and three different breaks in her arm from previous episodes described as non accidental trauma. Child was placed with her paternal grandparents and then returned to her biologic parents.
 - a. **Recommendations(s):** Training for law enforcement on how to interview parents more effectively in cases such as this would allow others to prosecute and deal with these cases more completely. Additionally, having a pediatric radiologist view x-rays of children more consistently may be useful.
3. 9 month old child who drowned in a bath tub; mother tested positive for methamphetamine.
 - a. **Recommendations(s):**
 - i. Training and education for prosecuting attorneys regarding the filing of charges; types of charges incorporating treatment options;
 - ii. support and continue methamphetamine awareness campaigns in the state and target those communities that have high methamphetamine usage;
 - iii. provide greater training for DFS field offices on the impacts of methamphetamine usage by parents on children, and
 - iv. a local review of this case could have been more timely.
4. 16 year old child who had involvement with DFS for several years. Both mother and grandmother have mental illness and father had relinquished his parental

rights. Youth had been seeking treatment for auto erotica; died at a treatment center and the death ruled accidental.

a. **Recommendations(s):**

- i. Cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) mask at treatment center could be more accessible;
- ii. cottages in treatment facility could have better markings for emergency services to locate easier, and
- iii. portable communication for each cottage at the treatment center would be a good safety enhancement.

5. 8 month old child taken to the hospital via ambulance after mother noticed he was not breathing properly; he was then transferred to Denver Children's Hospital; indicators of shaken baby were discovered. History of domestic violence and substance abuse by parents was noted. County attorney was not able to file charges, but neglect was filed with regards to the sibling.

a. **Recommendations(s):**

- i. Encourage families to use a certified day care provider;
- ii. encourage and support county attorney in the filing of neglect charges on the injured child;
- iii. training for prosecutors on the filing of abuse charges;
- iv. include all records in local and state major injury and fatality reviews, and
- v. continue the investigation and interview process with parents, separately.

6. 18 month old child who had a seizure at a daycare; child was taken by life-flight to Denver Children's Hospital where it was reported that he had a hematoma with unknown cause. The investigation in this matter took over four (4) months and the child was returned to parents, the matter referred to STRIDE and the case was closed as unfounded.

a. **Recommendations(s):**

- i. Encourage law enforcement to complete investigations of this nature as quickly and completely as possible.

7. 7 month old child with a broken arm, clavicle fracture, bruising on his back and head and a swollen head. This child had been seen in the emergency room the day before the presenting injuries and spent the night there. Child was placed in foster care for two (2) months but the subsequent investigation could not determine a perpetrator. Parents passed a polygraph and suspected the babysitter who reported the child as fussy.

a. **Recommendations(s):**

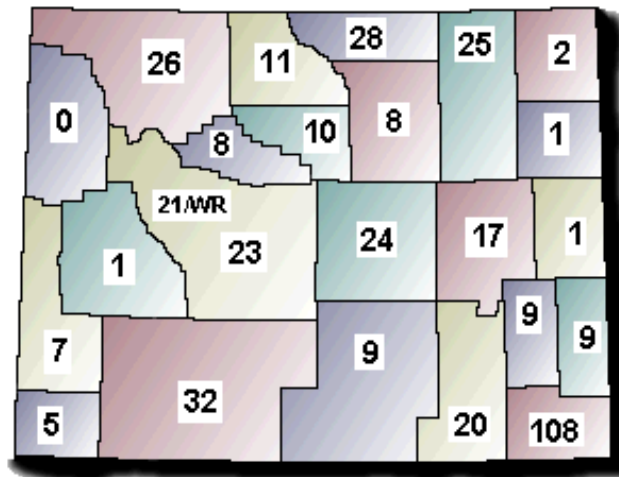
- i. Encourage law enforcement to complete investigations of this nature as quickly and completely as possible, and
- ii. work with the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy to expand child abuse training curriculum for the basic law enforcement training.

foster care

The second area of review for the WYCRP is foster care in Wyoming.

The WYCRP researches foster care efforts in Wyoming by collaborating with other organizations, hearing from foster care providers and stakeholders, and conducting the Wyoming Child and Family Services Reviews (Mini CFSTRs). Specific category results from the Mini CFSTRs will be detailed under the child protective services narrative, but a collective analysis of existing data from several sources has shown some positive trends in the area of foster care since the 2002 Federal Child and Family Services Review. Specifically the areas of stability of foster care placements, placements with siblings, proximity of foster care placements, preserving connections utilizing relative placements¹⁴ and insuring visits with parents and siblings in foster care have shown improvement.¹⁵

Recruiting and maintaining foster care families and homes in Wyoming is a challenge for DFS. In areas of high prosperity such as Teton County, foster families are not in abundance. Demographically, Teton County is a community where the population contains many second homes for people from out of state. In areas of the state with high volume energy extraction industries, which have a somewhat transient or rapid paced community, foster homes are not as abundant as often times needed. The following map shows the numbers of certified foster homes in Wyoming:



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During this reporting period, DFS has placed a greater emphasis on foster care recruitment and retention; this was a recommendation in the WYCRP 2006 annual report. One of the examples of this is the appointment of a statewide foster care coordinator by DFS resulting in greater consistency and stability among foster care providers and programs around the state.

¹⁴ For an example of good relative placement procedures, please see the Northern Arapaho debriefing report in Appendix E beginning on page 47.

¹⁵ See Appendix B on page 32 for a detailed analysis of positive trends and areas needing improvement since the 2002 Federal Child and Family Service Review.

¹⁶ Information for this map was accurate as of October, 2007 and obtained from DFS.

DFS offices now have foster care coordinators, with most foster care coordinator positions being shared among several DFS offices in a district. Laramie County and Natrona County, do not share their foster care coordinators with other offices. The results of having a fulltime foster care coordinator in each DFS office is demonstrated by the Laramie County DFS office; this person and her efforts have increased the number of foster homes/kinship homes and it appears that the retention rate of these homes is stable. This position recruits new homes, but also works diligently to provide ongoing support and consultation to foster families as needed. The benefits in numbers of foster care homes by county are validated by these efforts as Laramie County has a total of 108 certified foster homes.

1. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP recommends that DFS create a foster care coordinator position in each DFS office, not shared among offices in a region. This takes positions and funding and we ask that the state legislature recognize this need and act accordingly.*
2. *The WYCRP recommends, based on interviews with individual foster care coordinators, a more defined line of supervision to support their effort; preferably through the statewide foster care coordinator.*

One of the findings of the WYCRP is foster families in Wyoming often feel left out of case planning, multi disciplinary team meetings (MDTs), court hearings, and other important events that involve their foster children. This is concerning as foster parents often know more about what is occurring with the children in their care than anyone involved in the case. In addition, the federal CFSR process evaluates DFS on their interaction and support of foster families to the extent of considering foster families an extension of DFS for accountability purposes.

3. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP asks DFS and the legal system to ensure that foster care providers are included in proceedings such as MDTs, family partnership meetings and court decisions that are being made for and about children in foster care.¹⁷*

Several instances of foster care providers counter acting the efforts of DFS caseworkers and other reunification efforts in hopes of adopting their foster children have been noted

¹⁷ The Children's Justice Project (CJP) was also concerned about the issue of foster parent inclusion and advocated to the Supreme Court for a court rule to require the district courts to provide notice to foster parents of pending hearings. This rule became effective July 1, 2007 and reads as follows:

2B. Presence of Foster Parent. A foster parent or other out-of-home care provider is entitled to be heard at any hearing. However, the court may limit the presence of the foster parent or care provider to the time during which the person's testimony is being given if it is (1) in the best interest of the child; or (2) necessary to protect the privacy interests of the parties and will not be detrimental to the child.

2D. Notice to Foster parents, Pre-Adoptive Parents, or Relative Caregivers. Prior to each hearing held pursuant to the Child Protection Act, the county or district attorney, or another entity designated by the court, shall provide written notice of such hearing, including their right to be heard, to the child's foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, or relative caregivers. This provision shall not be construed to require foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, or relative caregivers to be made a party to the hearing or proceeding solely on the bases of such notice and opportunity to be heard.

by the WYCRP. That is not surprising since in decades past the child welfare system recruited foster families with the unwritten promise of the foster family probably being able to adopt the child, if the biological parents did not work towards reunification. However, that way of thinking has changed and the WYCRP encourages DFS to provide training for caseworkers to move past the old way of thinking to recruit, train and retain foster care providers. In addition to the above, DFS will also ensure compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).¹⁸

- 4. Recommendation(s):** *Case plans need to be clearly written and the goals need to be clearly defined and measurable so that there is no confusion on the goal in the case. In addition, concurrent case plans need to be created and worked as diligently as the current case plan. A concurrent case plan is not a backup plan; but rather a dynamic process that can immediately be turned to if the goals of the current case plan are not met. All appropriate parties to the case need to be involved in the planning process.*

As described in the next section, WYCRP and DFS partner to conduct Mini CFSRs in each DFS office. Through those reviews, there is a documented need¹⁹ for therapeutic foster homes in Wyoming. These homes and programs are vital to keeping children in their community when a standard foster care provider is not appropriate. In addition, step down services from residential treatment should also be a part of these programs. The lack of these services appears to be a casualty of a very large and rural state.

child protective services

The Mini CFSR process has become an important aspect of the quality assurance process within DFS. This process “mines data” about the entire child welfare system in Wyoming to create a reflection of those services so that the child welfare system can see, and provide enhanced child protective services. Modeled closely after the federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) process,²⁰ which is a collaborative federal-state effort designed to help ensure that quality services are provided to children and families based on best practices from around the nation, the Mini CFSR process is a collaborative effort between the state and citizenry of Wyoming.

Data is important, but the collaborative process that the WYCRP uses working in partnership with DFS to discover the data is equally important to understand and also produces informative results in addition to the statistical data. The Wyoming Mini CFSR process is designed to involve citizens in the review process. Each case reviewed has at least one citizen from the community in which the review is conducted and a DFS

¹⁸ ASFA can be viewed on the World Wide Web at:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/pi9802.htm.

¹⁹ Mini CFSR debriefing reports can be found at <http://wycrp.org>; many of these reports list the specific need for therapeutic foster care providers and step down treatment programs in Wyoming.

²⁰ More information about the federal Child and Family Review process can be found on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/index.htm>.

person from a different DFS office. This team is trained to go through the case file and interview those individuals who are identified as being significant to the case.

At least one parent and the child, when old enough and appropriate, are interviewed. At the conclusion of the interview the review is debriefed; this occurs with the case worker, supervisor and other stakeholders present to hear how the case scored on each of the 23 items in the three broad outcome categories of safety, permanency and well-being, as listed in the following paragraph. Not only are social workers hearing how the case scored, citizens are hearing how the case scored and gaining an understanding of the child welfare system. All citizen reviewers are cleared through the DFS central registry and all reviewers must honor a signed confidentiality agreement; no one can talk about the specifics of the case outside of the review. Through the mini-CFSR process citizens develop a deeper understanding of systemic barriers and have become advocates in their own communities to address issues after they have participated in a review. This is a great example of what the Mini CFSR collaborative process is all about; empowering citizens in their own communities to help social services providers offer the best services possible.

To understand how Wyoming did in this reporting period it is important to understand the areas of review. The federal CFSR and Mini CFSR process reviews three broad outcome areas (shown in bold below), seven sub outcome areas (shown in italics below) and twenty-three individual items shown below:

1. **Safety**

- *Safety Outcome 1*: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect:
 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment, and
 2. repeat maltreatment.
- *Safety Outcome 2*: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal, and
 4. risk of harm to child(ren).

2. **Permanency**

- *Permanency Outcome 1*: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations:
 5. Foster care re-entries;
 6. stability of foster care placement;
 7. permanency goal for child;
 8. reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives;
 9. adoption, and
 10. permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.
- *Permanency Outcome 2*: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children:
 11. Proximity of foster care placement;

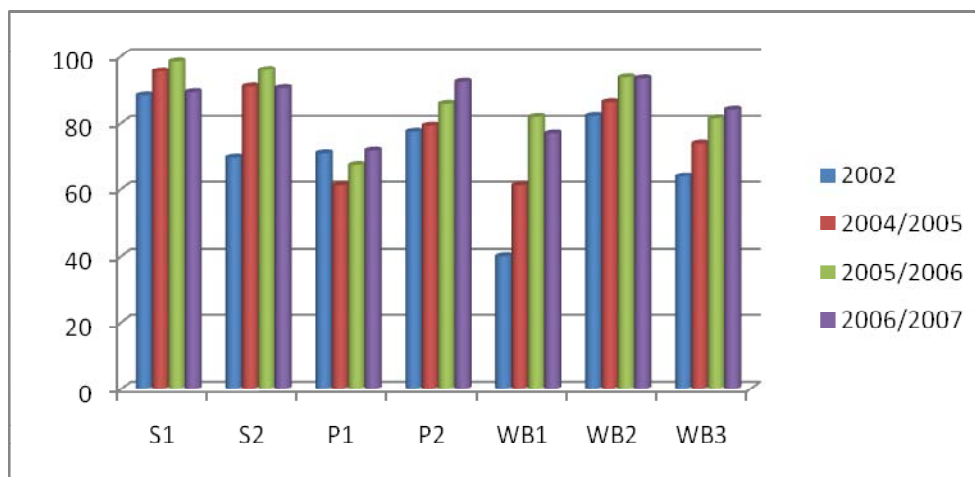
- 12. placement with siblings;
- 13. visiting with parents and siblings in foster care;
- 14. preserving connections;
- 15. relative placement, and
- 16. relationship of child in care with parents.

3. Child and Family Well-Being

- *Well Being Outcome 1:* Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs:
 - 17. Needs and services of child and parents;
 - 18. child and family involvement in case planning;
 - 19. worker visits with child, and
 - 20. worker visits with parent(s).
- *Well-Being Outcome 2:* Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs:
 - 21. Educational needs of the child.
- *Well Being Outcome 3:* Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs:
 - 22. Physical health of the child, and
 - 23. mental health of the child.

How did Wyoming do during the third round of Mini CFSTRs? The graph on the following page compares the 2002 federal CFSTR results with the three rounds²¹ of Mini CFSTR composite score results, in the seven broad outcome categories as defined in italics above.

By viewing the graph, the three strongest performing categories in the third round of Mini CFSTRs were Safety 2 (S2), Permanency 2 (P1) and Well Being 2 (WB2).



²¹ Blue indicates the Federal CFSTR results from 2002; red indicates the first round of Mini CFSTRs (2004/2005); green indicates the second round of Mini CFSTRs (2005/2006) and purple represents the third round of Mini CFSTRs (2006/2007).

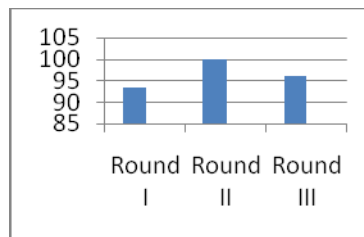
The three outcome areas scoring the lowest in this round of reviews are Permanency 1 (P1), Well Being 1 (WB1) and Well Being 3 (WB3).

Despite their strong ratings, further analysis shows that Safety 1 (S1) and Safety 2 (S2) declined slightly during this round of reviews. In addition, Well Being 1 (WB1) declined slightly. For specific reasons that may attribute to the decline in these three categories, please see the information in Appendix B²² of this report which lists the reason for the individual items ratings in that specific outcome area along with the review number and DFS office that the review occurred in.

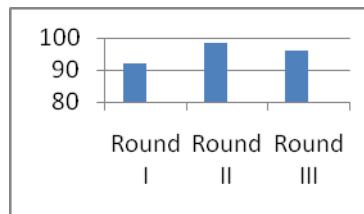
While showing a slight increase in the third round of reviews, Permanency 1 continues to score low in Wyoming; this is due in large part to the length of time that termination of parental rights take according to the data.²³ During this reporting period, DFS has taken a proactive step to achieve permanency for children by creating a permanency consultant position that assists social workers in striving for and achieving permanency for Wyoming youth. Moving youth to adoption, guardianship or reunification in a timely manner is the primary responsibilities of this position. The WYCRP looks forward to seeing the permanency rating improve in Wyoming as a result of this agency action.

The three strongest performing individual item²⁴ composite scores in round III are:

Item 1 - Timeliness of Investigations shown below and compared to round I and round II:



Item 11 - Proximity of foster care placements shown below and compared to round I and round II:

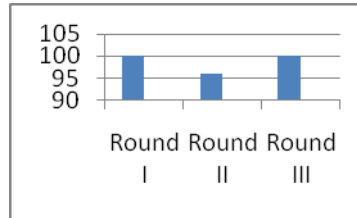


²² Appendix B, which contains the data that supports the graphs on this page, begins on page 32.

²³ Appendix B, which contains the data regarding the frequency of termination of parental rights in Wyoming, begins on page 32.

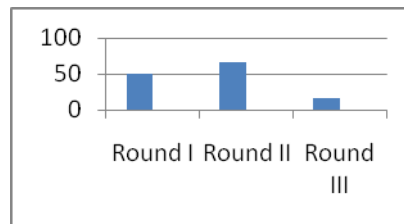
²⁴ When processed, individual item composite scores (of which there are 23) make up a category rating (of which there are 7); all are contained in the broad outcome area of safety, permanency and well being.

and, *Item 12 - Placement with siblings* shown below and compared to round I and round II²⁵:

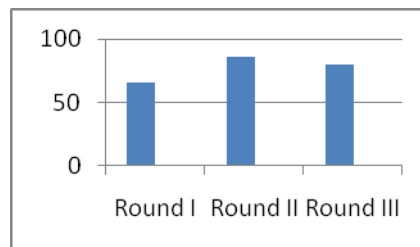


The federal standard for assessing Item 11 (proximity of foster care placements) is one hour of less. It is worthy to note that with Wyoming's 97,914 square miles and a resident population of just over 500,000 inhabitants the child welfare system was able to make timely investigations, place children with their siblings consistently and ensure that foster care placements are in proximity to their homes.

Where can improvements be made? The graph below indicates that *Item 9 – Adoption*, which directly affects the low rating in Permanency 1 as previous stated scored poorly during the third round of Mini CFSR reviews; this is in large part due to the length of time termination of parental rights cases take to adjudicate. The third round score is shown in comparison to round I and round II:



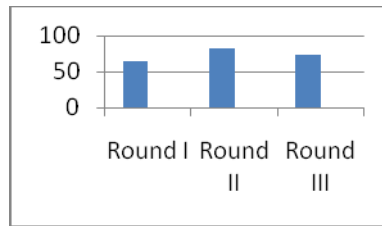
Item 17 – Needs and services of child(ren) and parents; lacking adequate assessments and provisions of services are part of the reason for this decline. The third round score is shown in comparison to round I and round II:



It is also worthy of note that item 17, in Round IV of reviews which will begin in August of 2007, will probably continue to score poorly. The evaluation bar will be raised and further detail will be evaluated in the fourth round of reviews on the assessments of children's needs, parent's needs and foster parents needs and then delivery/provision of services.

²⁵ Appendix C contains further data for individual item comparison and begins on page 36.

Item 18 – Child and family involvement in case planning declined due in large part to non-custodial parents not being sought and involved in the case. The third round score is shown in comparison to round I and round II:



For specific reasons that may attribute to the declines in these three categories, please see the tables in Appendix B²⁶ of this report which lists the reasons for the individual item ratings in that specific outcome area along with the review number and DFS office that the review occurred in.

Like all states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, reviewed by the federal CFSR in 2002, Wyoming was found to be substantially out of compliance. However, Wyoming has now met all of the negotiated program improvement plan items from that review; Wyoming's Mini CFSR individual item scores after the third round of Mini CFSRs, compared to the 2002 federal review results are included in this report.²⁷ In the 2002 federal CFSR, Wyoming scored high enough to meet compliance on only three items. In the third round of Mini CFSRs 12 of 23 items would have met compliance standards for a federal CFSR. Does that mean that Wyoming services will be found in substantial compliance in the next federal CFSR coming up in July of 2008? No. The bar has been raised for measuring services and it is important to remember that neither the federal CFSR or Mini CFSR process are pass/fail processes but rather a collaborative quality assurance tool.

While review of child protective services in a state is a charge of federal legislation for citizen review panels, the Wyoming Mini CFSR process goes further and also reviews randomly sampled juvenile services cases. In most juvenile service cases, the permanency section of the review instrument would not apply. Throughout this third round of Mini CFSR reviews, two significant juvenile services issues were brought to light; the need for juvenile services to take a more family centered approach to their work and the need for juvenile services and child protective services to collaborate and communicate more frequently.

1. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP encourages the juvenile services unit of DFS to become more family centered in their delivery of services. Mini CFSRs have discovered the need²⁸ for greater family involvement and family centered*

²⁶ Appendix B, which contains the data that supports the graph on this page, begins on page 32.

²⁷ Appendix C beginning on page 36 contains two comparison data tables and two comparison graphs including the 2002 Federal CFSR results and negotiated program improvement plan goals; all of which have been met.

²⁸ Mini CFSR debriefing reports documenting this need may be viewed or downloaded at <http://wycrp.org>.

services in case reviews; often times the child is simply the one “treated or punished” and placed back into a dysfunctional environment with little chance of success.

2. **Recommendation(s):** *Additionally, we believe that there is a substantial need for better communication and coordination between juvenile services and child protective services. It is not uncommon to discover one unit is aware of a policy change and the other unit is not aware of the same policy change.*

Not only is this collective data important to a children, families and the citizenry of Wyoming, it is important to DFS. During this last round of reviews, several DFS district managers and supervisors clearly placed emphasis on the results and findings of these reviews and adjusted their programs based on that data. Following their lead in striving to provide better services, a number of issues, that we feel DFS could address through policy, were identified.

3. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP would like to see current DFS policy rewritten around the cornerstones of safety, permanency and well-being. In addition, we would recommend that new policy is created in that manner as well. From round III of our Mini CFSR’s the WYCRP has documented the need for DFS to consider policy regarding the following issues:*
 - a. *Policy for compelling reasons why not to pursue termination of parental rights;*
 - b. *policy that explains when to “fast track a case” when there has been a previous termination of parental rights;*
 - c. *policy for case guidance when the parent is unmotivated to make changes to keep his or her child;*
 - d. *policy regarding how long an unsubstantiated case should remain open when the family is not cooperating, protective custody has not been taken and the county/district attorney’s offices has not filed charges;*
 - e. *policy to define criteria for why some cases are designated child protective services, for why some cases are juvenile services and how child in need of supervision (CHINS) cases should be classified;*
 - f. *policy on how consumer complaints are received at DFS and attended to;*
 - g. *policy defining terminology unique to social services and require the use of consistent terminology across the DFS enterprise;*

- h. *policy requiring the consistent establishment of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978²⁹ compliance upon every case intake;*
- i. *policy on the search for, and involvement of, absent parents in case planning;*
- j. *policy defining the necessary documentation that must be in both child protection and juvenile services case files along with better documentation from contract services providers;*
- k. *policy on the expunging of cases in WYCAPS³⁰ when so ordered by the court and when notification to young adults about the possibility of having their case expunged is given; currently there are concerns that these cases which are ordered expunged are ever completely removed from WYCAPS;*
- l. *policy regarding the use of coding; such as with youth and family services (YFS) cases; confusion exists even among local offices as how to code these type of cases;*
- m. *policy on investigations regarding children under six (6) years of age;*
- n. *policy on when the child protective services unit is notified of a safety issue discovered in a juvenile services case, and*
- o. *policy on case follow through responsibilities when jointly working a case with law enforcement.*

One of the interesting dynamics for an agency the size of DFS must be the challenge to create policy that is effective and implementable in all geographic regions of the state. In a previous paragraph, the WYCRP advocated how policy be created within DFS. Once created, policy can only be effective if disseminated uniformly and with appropriate education about the importance of the policy.

4. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP recommends that policy be delivered to DFS employees via a dynamic, web based, electronic system updated frequently. Additionally, reasons for the policy and relationships to corresponding Mini CFSSR items would further help to define consistent case practice. Currently, DFS policy is contained in large, white, three-ring notebooks; several WYCRP members have reviewed this notebook and while tabbed by section, the policy is disjointed and difficult to interpret.*

²⁹ Information regarding ICWA, as published by the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), can be found on the world wide web at: <http://www.nicwa.org/>.

³⁰ WYCAPS is DFS's case management software.

In April of this year, data was collected that was a first in the nation. The Eastern Shoshone Tribe and Northern Arapaho Tribe asked that Mini CFSTRs be done in their respective social services offices.

The results were impressive; the Eastern Shoshone tribal social services review documented a well-organized and managed child protective services office.³¹ One concern was noted with regards to the coordination between the juvenile services unit of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and the Child Protective Services Unit of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe. Interviews conducted for the Mini CFSTR review indicate that the two juvenile services workers for the Eastern Shoshone tribal juvenile services unit are dedicated and respected in their area; but they lack the coordination, funding and networking to operate as effectively as the Eastern Shoshone tribal child protective services unit.

5. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP recommends that juvenile services unit of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe be more closely aligned and coordinated with the child protective unit of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe or administered by the administrator of the child protective unit for consistency.*³²

The Northern Arapaho tribal review documented great results in achieving permanency for children.³³ However, the Northern Arapaho Mini CFSTR indicated, along with other Mini CFSTR reviews in proximity to the Wind River Indian Reservation that a lack of services specific for Native American children exists on the Wind River Indian Reservation. In addition, according to Northern Arapaho child protection workers, there are not enough Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) officers and criminal investigators to investigate abuse investigations in a timely manner; this can cause serious delays while children may remain in a dangerous environment.

6. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP recommends that the allotment of tribal law enforcement officers on the Wind River Indian Reservation be adjusted to provide for expeditious responses and investigations in abuse and neglect investigations.*³⁴

In addition, the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and Northern Arapaho Tribe were the first government social services offices in Wyoming to take the results of their Mini CFSTRs

³¹ Mini CFSTR debriefing reports for the Eastern Shoshone Tribe can be viewed in Appendix D of this report found on page 38.

³² The WYCRP acknowledges that there is little if anything that can be done by DFS with regards to this recommendation; however the WYCRP respectfully recommends that the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Council consider this issue.

³³ Mini CFSTR debriefing reports for the Northern Arapaho Tribe can be viewed in Appendix E of this report found on page 47.

³⁴ The WYCRP acknowledges that there is little if anything that can be done by DFS with regards to this recommendation; however the WYCRP respectfully recommends that the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Council and Northern Arapaho Tribal Council make this request of the proper federal authorities.

and create a mini program improvement plan (PIP).³⁵ Other DFS offices around the state will begin creating Mini PIPs in the fourth round of Mini CFSRs.

The WYCRP acknowledges and applauds the positive relationship that DFS and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and Northern Arapaho Tribe have forged during this review period. The administrators of both tribal programs have reached out and invited DFS to become involved in their social service programs. Much has been learned by both DFS and the tribal social service programs. This partnership has made a significant difference for children and families all across Wyoming, not just on the Wind River Indian Reservation. This collaborative partnership must now even go further in areas such as joint trainings and effective communication systems.

7. **Recommendation(s):** *To continue to facilitate communication, cooperation and to enhance training opportunities between both tribal programs and DFS, the WYCRP recommends that DFS purchase and install video conferencing equipment in both tribal social service offices, with the necessary training to operate the equipment, so that both tribal social services offices can be a part of the DFS video network.*

This report has mentioned a number of DFS specific items which we recommend attention be given to; but systemic issues also exist that require collective attention or working with DFS as a partner or collaborator. One of the most concerning systemic issues documented³⁶ during this reporting period is when a child is placed in treatment where he or she continues to receive education but those educational credits will not transfer back to the “main stream” education system. While this is certainly a bigger issue than just DFS; the educational item in the federal CFSR review specifically rates what DFS is doing to advocate for and remove the barriers to a child receiving an education and being successful in the endeavor.

8. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP recommends that DFS begin a collaborative process of working with all alternative education providers along with the Wyoming Department of Education to bring down the barriers of education credits received in a treatment facility not transferring into the Wyoming public educational system.*

Two additional systemic issues addressed in previous reports continue to be unresolved. Both of these issues affect numerous children around the state each year. The first issue is the misuse of child in need of supervision statutes (CHINS). Many CHINS petitions are filed in lieu of a child abuse/neglect action; children are having actions filed against them when they are the *victims* of abuse and/or neglect as opposed to the parents having an action filed against them.

³⁵ Mini PIPs, using the family partnership concept, are created by the local office social service staff and invite others in the community to the table to help create the program improvement plan. Mini PIPs for the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and Northern Arapahoe Tribe can be viewed in Appendix D and E of this report found on pages 38 and 47 respectively.

³⁶ Mini CFSR debriefing reports can be viewed and downloaded at <http://wycrp.org>.

Additionally, some children who may be better suited for a CHINS petition end up in delinquent action.

9. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP recommends that the Wyoming legislature study how CHINS are used in Wyoming an interim study, take public comment through interim committee meetings then address the misuse of these statutes in the 2009 legislature.*

The final systemic issue and associated recommendation is probably one of the largest and most concerning: DFS caseloads are too high for DFS caseworkers in parts of the state with energy extraction industries. In 2006, Wyoming ranked 7th in the nation in production of crude oil and 2nd in the nation for natural gas production in the lower 48 states.³⁷ Wyoming continues to rank 1st in the nation for coal production³⁸. With these sorts of energy extraction industries and associated revenue the Wyoming Legislature needs to properly fund DFS with positions and resources. It is not uncommon to discover caseworkers with 40-50 cases on their desks, with many of those being placement cases. These numbers are twice the national recommended number and lead to caseworkers performing “triage” with little or no time for “one on one” work with families.

10. **Recommendation(s):** *The WYCRP requests that DFS perform ongoing time studies in all DFS offices and then create appropriate staffing models for those offices. Then, the Wyoming Legislature needs to fund DFS to reduce caseloads in some areas of the state and maintain equalized case loads around the state. The ability for DFS to double fill positions and to statutorily be able to add positions when case loads reach a certain volume in a DFS office or reduce case workers through attrition when caseload volumes decline is desirable, based on clear criteria and current economic trends. The WYCRP finds it disturbing that while Wyoming enjoys the benefits of increased mineral royalties, it fails to realize the strains that these extraction industries place on the social service needs of a community.*

The WYCRP wants to reach as many people as possible in their efforts to gather information and understand child welfare trends in Wyoming. To do that, a web-based survey was designed and published on the organization’s website in January of 2007.³⁹ The survey asked general questions around the basics of safety, permanency and well-being; the results of this survey correlated with and validated the specific findings of the Mini CFSTRs. This survey was not advertised at Mini CFSTRs and participants visiting the WYCRP web page would come upon the survey while visiting the web site. The objective of the web survey is to collect information from any citizen, not just those who

³⁷ Information was taken from the 2007 “Facts and Figures” brochure published by the Petroleum Association of Wyoming.

³⁸ Information was obtained from the University of Wyoming Natural Sciences Program.

³⁹ The WYCRP web survey can be found at <http://wycrp.org>. Click on the “How are the Children in Wyoming Doing” link.

had been reviewers in the Mini CFSR process, as well as workers in the child welfare system.⁴⁰

The web survey is still available and we encourage you, the reader, to take the time to go to it and fill it out. In addition, a great deal of specific information that supports the trends and findings published in this report are available in their “raw data” form in the debriefing reports from the Mini CFSRs.

⁴⁰ Appendix F beginning on page 55 contains the results of the web based survey through June, 2007.



The next federal CFSR will be held in several DFS offices⁴¹ in Wyoming during June of 2008. This is not an event that should be feared or dreaded but rather embraced as it is an opportunity to gauge how much has been done since the last federal CFSR in 2002 and learn from a compilation of best practices from around the nation.

The WYCRP is helping DFS and other stakeholders prepare for this review; the period that will be reviewed began in April of 2007 and ends in September 2007. As mentioned previously, but important to reiterate, is the fact that it is quite likely that Wyoming will not do well in the federal CFSR in 2008; the review is not designed to “pass with flying colors.” ***Does that mean that services are not good?*** No, it does not; it means that the bar for excellence has been raised and as a state we will be held to an even higher standard than in 2002 (95% in all areas) this will be especially significant in the areas of finding absent parents and relatives, and assessing the needs of children, parents and foster parents. However, since the Mini CFSR process has already anticipated this higher standard, results may be better than in other states. It is important, however, to remember that both the federal CFSR, and Wyoming Mini CFSR process, is about quality improvement, quality assurance and collectively providing better services for children and families in Wyoming.

In this report, the WYCRP has made recommendations specific to DFS, and some that need the Wyoming legislature to take up, study in earnest, and take action to empower DFS to provide better services for children and families especially in the areas of caseloads. It is simply unrealistic to expect social workers with caseloads of 40 or more, with a number of those as placement cases, to be able to provide solid case management services.

The WYCRP admires DFS and others for their collaborative effort and emphasis on reflection and transparency; this cannot always be a comfortable position but it is one that helps children and families get what they need to provide for their families. The WYCRP also feels that the Mini CFSR process has and will continue to be a great tool for making services better for children and families in Wyoming.

The strongest areas in this review period are; the restructuring of the WCMIFRT, the attention given to foster care coordination by DFS, maintaining children safely in their homes when appropriate, providing for a continuity of relationships and connections when children are removed from their home and ensuring children’s educational well being.

Challenge areas during this reporting period are the stability of foster care placements, assessing the needs of families and children, providing for those needs, and well being concerns around medical services.

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel remains committed to being a partner with DFS and collaborator to identify and implement the best services possible for children and families in Wyoming.

⁴¹ Cheyenne, because it is the state capitol, will be one federal CFSR review site; the other sites have not been determined yet.



Appendix A

2006 Annual Report Recommendations and Department of Family Services Responses

STATE OF WYOMING

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES

Dave Freudenthal, Governor
Tony Lewis, Interim Director



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FAX (307)777-7747 INTERNET:TTASSE@STATE.WY.US

Memorandum

TO: The State of WYCRP
FROM: Marilyn Patton, Administrator, Protective Services Division
Chris Smith, Interim Administrator, Juvenile Services Division
DATE: February 2007
RE: Agency and Districts Response to Annual Report Recommendations
REF: MJP-07-010

The Department of Family Services (DFS) congratulates the WYCRP (WYCRP) for its 2006 report which is very comprehensive and provides DFS insight into the areas we need to address as the next Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) approaches. DFS appreciates the invitation to respond to the recommendations presented by the WYCRP. This response includes feedback from the District Managers and Juvenile Services Regional Managers.

1. Knowing the Child: Recommendation # 1

Table with 2 columns: Item number (1 A.) and Description (Preserving culture heritage - The WYCRP recommends that particular attention be given to recognizing, honoring, and preserving culture heritage from)

<p><i>intake through the life of the case. This would include assisting a child to do a genogram or family tree diagram; particularly in cases where family members are unavailable.</i> It is important that every child know where they came from especially in cases where immediate family may be unavailable for extended periods of time such as when their parents are in prison. Establishing the connections of the children's family and culture will help the children find and possess a sense of belonging. Caseworkers should then share cultural information with foster families in order to continue and preserve those connections. There are a number of resources available that the WYCRP recognizes as valuable tools in helping to identify and preserve cultural heritage.</p>
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DFS Response: DFS agrees that a child's cultural heritage is very significant in the normal development of identity and sense of belonging.

Family Centered Practice and Family Partnership policy supports caseworkers diligently determining the child's needs and providing services which would help in the normal development and understanding of their culture and heritage. Furthermore, Family Partnership policy requires that the family service plans include how child's a cultural heritage will be addressed and preserved. The DFS Consultant for Family Partnerships will continue to address this issue in training and provide technical assistance to the field offices. The Protective Services District Offices and Juvenile Services Regional Offices have been responsive to this recommendation. Each district has formulated plans to address this issue which begins at intake and will be addressed throughout the life of the case. Since preserving the cultural heritage requires that the caseworkers are knowledgeable about developing internal and external resources to work with children and youth, this area has been incorporated into the new caseworker training as well as foster parent training. DFS is collaborating with the Casey Family Programs, the faith community, schools, foster and birth parents and relatives to meet these needs. Staff and supervisors have been trained on "Knowing Who You Are", as part of the CORE training modules to help caseworkers understand cultural and racial issues. An example of the practice change is illustrated by the steps taken by a district office in response to WYCRP recommendation and Program Improvement Plan developed in response to CFSR:

The Juvenile Services Division will request that genograms be included as a requirement in future contracts with residential treatment providers and group homes.

Local District Responses:

1. Genograms are part of policy. Managers and Supervisors will reinforce the genogram use as it is clearly a means to recognize, honor and preserve culture heritage. A genogram will be completed within the first 30 days of the time of placement.

2. Caseworkers will provide all necessary knowledge of culture heritage at the time of a child's placement. This is already being done, but we need to reinforce the importance of culture heritage.
3. Laramie is a pilot community for the System of Care Grant named the Wyoming Sage Initiative. Albany County DFS is an integral part of this initiative. One of the core values of the initiative is cultural and linguistic competence. The initiative will use photovoice which is a participating action research strategy that provides individuals with the opportunity to identify, reflect, and convey their everyday lives and challenges through photographs that are culturally and contextually relevant. Photovoice uses photography and participant stories as a means to access themes associated with the lives of individuals and families from under-represented groups.

1 B.	<p>Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) – The <i>WYCRP</i> recommends that all DFS caseworkers receive training on ICWA and establish ICWA eligibility during intake in every appropriate case. Through the Mini CFSR process, the <i>WYCRP</i> has recorded several instances of ICWA not being established by DFS caseworkers. The <i>WYCRP</i> is concerned that caseworkers often look at the appearance of a child and if the child has blonde hair and blue eyes for example, they assume that child has no Indian connections or Indian heritage and do not ask about ICWA. In addition to ICWA being a federal requirement, no children should be treated as “unknown” with regards to their ethnicity and their culture. This only leads the child to believe that “unknown” means “don’t care.”</p>
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DFS Response: The identification of native children begins at intake. New intake policy, forms were developed to address this issue, which requires the caseworker to ask questions regarding the child's heritage. Training has been provided to all caseworkers by the attorney general's office regarding the mandates of ICWA. Training has also been provided to the judges and GALs by the Children's Justice Project and the Tribal Court Judges. The intake form specifically asks the questions about the child's race, Tribe, and ethnicity. Although there have been cases where DFS did not adequately assess the child's ethnicity, on going supervision is required to assure that once child's ethnicity is established, DFS informs the Tribal Social Services and works closely with the Tribe to place the child in tribal custody. Additionally, training was provided to caseworkers on ICWA at Social Services Summit in August 2006. DFS has a close working relationship with the Tribes as well as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), DFS will continue to collaborate with Tribes to provide training and technical assistance to the caseworkers on ICWA and related issues. All districts and regional offices have plans to train the new caseworkers through CORE training as well as sending caseworkers to ICWA training. In addition, the quality assurance process requires caseworkers to identify Native American children in all cases where they have used “unknown” as a part of case review policy.

1 C.	<p>Searching for biological parents – The <i>WYCRP</i> recommends that DFS caseworkers do a diligent search in every appropriate case for biological parents</p>
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	<p><i>which are not immediately identified, especially in instances where the parents are estranged.</i> The WYCRP has documented instances during the Mini CFSSR process where thorough searches for biological parents were not completed by DFS caseworkers. In several of those documented instances, the missing biological parent, usually the father, might have been able to clarify a situation, be a placement option, provide other valuable assistance, or be included in multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs), and case planning. The delay caused by not actively searching for biological parents can delay the child's permanency plan from moving forward.</p>
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DFS Response: DFS agrees that there should be diligent search for both parents and extended relatives who can provide care for the child instead of being placed in out-of-home care. Programs such as the Father Factor focus on locating the father to become a resource for the child when the child's safety will not be compromised. Policy exists that requires that a diligent search should be conducted, starting at intake where the caseworker should get the information about all significant people in child's life who can be a resource for placement. If the caretakers refuse to provide the information, the caseworkers should petition the judge at the shelter care hearing to order the caretakers to provide this information. This is also an issue where the supervisor should take an active role, working with the caseworker to investigate and locate relatives and others who can care for the child. Before making any placement with relatives DFS must make sure that child's safety is not compromised. Districts and Juvenile Services Regions are utilizing the following practices:

Local District Responses: Diligent searches are mandated on all placement cases. In Laramie County, we have contracted for diligent searches when immediate family members are not close in proximity.

The SS-62 is a required DFS form (for diligent search) – completed.

Contracting diligent searches in difficult cases where caseloads are high should be allowed as a practice. This allows for expedited kinship searches and children can remain with family and preserve culture heritage.

DFS Training Unit and consultant staff will be working with the field offices to provide training regarding finding families. We will also collaborate with Child Support Enforcement Division to locate absent parents.

2. Closing the distance gap in Wyoming for families visiting their children: Recommendation # 2

2.	<p><i>The WYCRP recommends that DFS do a study to determine the geographic origin of students in the Wyoming Boy's School (WBS) and Wyoming Girl's School (WGS) and if justified, create long term goals of making some of those services offered at the WBS and WGS available in other parts of the state.</i></p>
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	<p>During the 2005 and 2006 round of Mini CFSRs the WYCRP heard in the debriefing process that the distance of the WBS and WGS, from some parts of the state, creates a hardship for parents to visit their children who are placed in facilities. In fact, with high fuel costs and other factors, some parents simply cannot afford to make the trip. The WYCRP recognizes the significant financial investment in the WBS and WGS and in the interim, the WYCRP asks that DFS implement innovative ways of “closing the distance gap” by establishing video networks that allow parents to visit their children in placement without traveling. Ultimately, the WYCRP envisions a time when children and families do not have to be displaced from their community to receive the services they need.</p>
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DFS Response: DFS has installed video technology in most of the field offices which has allowed the children in placement to “visit” with their parents via television using the video technology. Through use of the Family Partnership Conferences, some of the families have been able to work with their support team to visit children who are placed in communities away from where they live. DFS can also provide transportation if it is part of the case plan. A position of Re-entry Coordinator has been established to assist the children and parents reunite. Several residential treatment programs have developed policies which allow children to visit their parents and in some cases pay for the parents’ cost of traveling to visit their children. DFS is making strong efforts to keep children in their own communities while providing the children treatment to meet their needs. Treatment models such as Multi Systemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy and Homebuilders Program are being considered for implementation which would provide intensive services which would allow the child remain in the community while receiving treatment. Wrap around services can be put in place to support the family and reduce the chances of removal from the home and community. New family service plan policy includes making provisions for family-child visits.

Distance continues to be a challenge when children are placed outside of their community or when family members live elsewhere. Some practices implemented have included:

Local District Response:

1. Work with facilities around the state to encourage family participation in the child’s treatment and communicate the need to not restrict parent contact as a punishment or consequence for the child.
2. Social workers often take parents to see their child. This allows the social worker to see the child and facilitates contact between the child and family.
3. Reimbursement for parents traveling to see their child has been made possible.
4. In situations where possible placement with a family member outside of the community or Wyoming is feasible, arrangements have been made to take the child to the family for a visit or bring the family to the child.
5. Foster parents have been willing to take children to go see their parents if the parent is in treatment in another community.

3. DFS staffing distribution: Recommendation # 3

3.	<p><i>The WYCRP recommends that DFS create and implement innovative ways to adequately staff child protection units and juvenile service units and balance the workload in DFS offices throughout the state.</i> The data collected through the Mini CFSR process during the 2005 and 2006 second round of Mini CFSRs indicated that cases generally did better with caseworkers with reasonable numbers of cases. During the time spent in DFS offices doing Mini CFSRs, reviewers also had ample opportunity to observe the day-to-day workings of these units; we feel that caseworkers with 40-70 cases is not acceptable, exceeds the national and recommended average and does not lend itself to providing meaningful services to children and families in spite of any amount of tireless dedication demonstrated by the caseworker. Additionally, we have heard from child protection services unit workers that additional support staff in those units is needed. The WYCRP understands that DFS is hindered by the state government budget and position approval process; however, we recommend searching for other innovative ways to “balance the load.”</p>
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DFS Response: One of the challenging tasks for the district manager is recruiting and retaining caseworkers to fill all of the available positions in the field offices. At any given time there are openings in field offices which are difficult to fill. All efforts are made to keep the case load within the national norm. However, in order to continue the child protection work with the available staff, often the caseworkers have to carry high case loads. Information from the field indicates that implementation of Family Partnership Conferences and the family services plans, reduces the work load as the case progresses. However, this information is anecdotal, although the data is being compiled to allow DFS to analyze the impact on work load. DFS is currently collaborating with the University of Wyoming to provide students with IV-E stipends who are planning to get BSW or MSW degree, with an understanding that after graduation the students will have to work for a certain period of time with DFS. DFS has also approached the community colleges to allow social work students to do their internship at the field offices. In addition, the state has taken on a retention study for CPS workers and hope the learning from this study will increase staff retention and will reduce turnovers resulting in high caseloads.

Juvenile Services has been examining staffing patterns on a monthly basis and attempting to move staff when needed through attrition. A vacant position was recently moved from Sheridan to Gillette. Caseloads in Gillette were much higher. Juvenile Services is currently in the process of reclassifying a state office position to a juvenile probation officer for Laramie County. The Division has experienced very little turnover during the last few years, so this process is slow. It has been suggested that staffing patterns be examined by DFS as a whole, and not just by Division. When a vacancy occurs, the position would go where the need is the greatest, whether it is with Protective Services or Juvenile Services. The Division has also been examining duties that can possibly be completed by contracting for the services, which would reduce the workload to the juvenile probation officers.

Local District Response:

1. Currently as a district, we are averaging just fewer than 22 cases per caseworker. Some individual offices are higher, and some are lower. Buffalo is showing 38 cases per caseworker. However due to some position shifts, many of these cases are ready for closure. Careful attention is given when an opening occurs, giving consideration to shifting positions. Fortunately, the district was just allocated one full time position for Social Services Aide (SSA), and given another SSA position from another district. This has helped considerably.
2. Recently, a manager position for Sheridan/Buffalo was re-classified to a front line supervisor position to help provide more direct supervision to CPS staff.

Most of the districts struggle with this issue, in District 7 (Carbon and Natrona Counties) “This has been a huge obstacle. Carbon has remained relatively stable for the past 2 years, with one recent social worker resignation and unable to fill an FAW position. That was a 30 hour FAW position, and it was moved to Casper and filled recently. A new 40 Hour FAW position in Rawlins and has been successfully filled. The increased pay with guaranteed 40 hours may be the ticket to keeping this position filled in Rawlins. The vacancy for Social Worker Position was filled.”

Natrona County has experienced 100% turnover (14 staff total) in the last 2 years in its Family Based Services Unit, including supervisory staff. Both supervisors were replaced in that time frame due to retirements. All 12 family based line staff turned over, some more than one time, in the 2 year period. Currently, we have 4 FBS workers with more than 1-3 years of experience and 8 with less than 6 months of experience. This turnover has made it extremely difficult to ensure good practice and good outcomes in all cases. However, even with the turnover, Natrona did well in its CFSR last year, improving in many areas. This is a testament to the staff remaining during the high turnover times. We believe the majority of the non-retirement turnover was due to high volume of intakes (average over 125 each month) and cases accepted. The difficulty of cases in Natrona is another factor, making even moderate caseload numbers difficult to manage.

Meth has had the most impact on caseloads, overall intake volume, and placement rates. We now have all the FBS positions filled and our hope is to keep them on and working. We also believe that full staffing will enhance and increase our use of family partnerships which should assist permanency outcomes”.

4. Foster care parent issues: Recommendation # 4

4.	<i>The WYCRP recommends that DFS begin using more assessments of foster parent’s needs as many foster parents encountered during the Mini CFSR process expressed a need for greater assessment of their needs and longer support and involvement by DFS when serving as a foster parent. Some foster parents were hesitant to agree to permanency from fear of losing DFS support services. In addition, the WYCRP would like to see consistent use of the monthly report that foster parents document the activities of their foster children on as well as seeing that document consistently filed in the case file.</i>
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DFS Response: During the 2006 legislative session, the foster care rates were raised for the first time in 20 years. Although the higher stipends help the foster parents, there are other needs to be addressed. During the past two years, DFS have created foster care coordinator positions in each district, who are available to the foster parents to discuss and address their need while raising foster care children. Additionally, statutes are now in place which requires that foster parents are invited to MDT meeting on behalf of the foster child/children placed in their home. This allows the foster parents to discuss the permanency issues; their input provides significant insight into how the case would proceed. New monthly report forms have been developed for the foster parents and RTCs to provide information to the caseworkers the progress that is being made by the foster children in their home. These forms are required each month before the monthly reimbursement for expense can be made to the foster parents. As required by the federal laws, the caseworker must visit the foster family and children in their home to assess the well being of the foster children and determine the needs that the foster parents may have. It is the expectation of DFS that this information be shared with the supervisors in case staffing. All districts are responsive to the needs of the foster parent. One district has made following changes to meet the foster parents needs:

Local District Response: Thirty-one (31) permanency cases became a top priority for DFS, and we are collaborating with the Children’s Justice Project and our local offices to increase permanency. “We are now using the Casey Foster Applicant Inventory as well as the related CHAP measures. These tools will allow foster care coordinators to assess foster parent needs. We would also recommend that adding a section to the foster parent monthly report, “What do you specifically need from our DFS caseworker during the next month in regard to this child?” With the specialization of foster care coordinators and foster care consultant, we are in a great movement forward in assisting our state foster care program. Cheyenne has 89 certified foster homes at present; Laramie has 18 certified foster homes. We have been increasing in both areas consistently due to excellent foster care coordinator efforts in both Cheyenne and Laramie”.

5: Children need permanency: Recommendation # 5

5.	<i>The WYCRP recommends that DFS analyze the low Mini CFSR item ratings in the permanency 1 outcome category, review their internal practices in field offices, and make practice and policy modifications to better achieve permanency for children.</i>
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DFS Response: DFS agrees that diligent efforts must be made for children to achieve permanency. Efforts have been made at several levels to expedite the permanency and not allow children to linger in out-of-home care.

1. The attorney general’s office have added two attorneys and a paralegal to their Permanency Unit to work statewide on cases requiring termination of parental rights (TPR) or other issues which hinder permanency achievement.

2. The director's unit, district managers and region managers have personally met with judges around the state to emphasize the need of timely hearings and consideration of children's need for permanency. We request the WYCRP to work jointly with DFS to keep this issue in the forefront and advocated for earliest possible resolution of the cases with decisions which are in the best interest of children.

3. Permanency has become a top priority for DFS, we are collaborating with the Children's Justice Project and our local offices to increase permanency for children in out-of-home care. One district indicated:

4. The vast majority of youth supervised by the Division of Juvenile Services achieved permanency by returning home. Attention is being focused around achieving permanency in a timely manner and preventing these youth from returning to placement.

Local District Response: Helping children achieve permanency requires a collaborative effort. Often MDT's do not agree on when and what permanency should be. In addition, Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is not always done timely due to the demands of the county attorney's (CA) offices. As a result, the following measures are or have been implemented:

1. DFS offices are asking TPR to be filed by the AG's office, this alleviates having to work around the schedules of the district attorneys, currently in District 6, there are only 3 children waiting for adoption.
2. The CARD data base monthly report is a tremendous help in monitoring progress toward permanency".

6. Amendments to the recommendations contained in the WYCRP 2005 Annual Report:

Recommendation #6

6. A.	<i>The WYCRP recommends that DFS continue to implement their family centered practice model and require it to be used with more frequency and consistency. The WYCRP also recommends that DFS expand their family centered practice training to include foster parents.</i>
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DFS Response: DFS remains committed to family centered practice. DFS continues to emphasize the importance of using this model, whenever possible, in juvenile justice and protective services case work.

This Family Partnership training became a part of the CORE training for the Protective and Juvenile Services divisions in 2006. Prior to that training occurred in all regions and districts of the state. Training for Wind River Indian Reservation protective services caseworkers and their community partners was held in April, 2006.

Family Partnership training opportunities have also been extended to agencies and organizations outside of DFS including residential treatment centers and the Wyoming Girls' School and the Wyoming Boys' School. By implementing the model across agencies and organizations, families can benefit from a more coordinated support effort to address the issues that brought them to the state's attention thereby increasing the family's opportunity for success. The Family Partnership meetings are an excellent forum for empowering families to coordinate and prioritize treatment plans and requirements that best match their strengths or access to community services.

DFS is also recognizing the importance of implementing a strategy to track the outcomes of Family Partnership. Wyoming Children's Assistance and Protection System (WYCAPS), DFS' child welfare Information Technology (IT) system, will track if Family Partnerships are used in a case. DFS is studying how families are healthier as a result of the coordinated effort. A survey conducted by the Family Partnership Coordinator at the state office indicates that 1,570 Family Partnership conferences were held throughout the state. DFS agrees that implementation is uneven and is committed to a continuation of this way of working with families. The state office is fully committed to working with the offices to provide support and training as needed.

6.B.	<i>The WYCRP still encourages that DFS strive to use a consistent case file format; however, we would like to amend that recommendation to include a picture of the child as the very first page of a case file. In addition, the WYCRP would like to recommend that DFS case plans be concise, and created with a greater emphasis on "readability" so that all involved in the case can understand what is required.</i>
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DFS Response: DFS understands the importance of consistent case file format. Even if a caseworker has been very effective and successful with a family, it is hard for reviewers to make that determination if they have to work hard to locate the necessary information. In April 2005, policy was issued to the field to provide guidance to caseworkers on case file organization and content. Both divisions are developing processes where files will be reviewed to ensure compliance with policy. If files are not maintained according to policy, managers have been instructed to work with staff to increase compliance and ensure standardization. This issue also impacts DFS when federal reviews are conducted. DFS will consider including a photograph of the child in the first page of the case file.

Appendix B

The 23 items in the Wyoming Mini CFSR instrument are grouped into seven outcomes: Safety 1 (S1), Safety 2 (S2), Permanency 1 (P1), Permanency 2 (P2), Well Being 1 (WB1), Well Being 2 (WB2), and Well Being 3 (WB3). In the following, a comparison of items in the three broader outcomes of safety, permanency and well being will be detailed.

In the 2002 Federal CFSR, Wyoming scored high enough to meet compliance on only three items. In the most recent Mini CFSR (round III) 12 of 23 items would have met compliance standards. After researching trends, it is our belief that implementation of the Mini CFSR process has helped to improve performance in the following items:

- Safety 1 (S1) –
 - Item 1 Timeliness of investigation
 - Item 2 Repeat maltreatment
- Safety 2 (S2) –
 - Item 4 Risk of harm to child(ren)
- Permanency 1 (P1) –
 - Item 6 Stability of foster care placement
- Permanency 2 (P2) –
 - Item 12 Placement with siblings
 - Item 11 Proximity of foster care placement
 - Item 15 Relative placement
 - Item 13 Visiting w/parents and siblings in foster care
 - Item 14 Preserving connection
- Well Being 1 (WB1) –
 - Item 19 Worker visits with child
- Well Being 2 (WB2) –
 - Item 21 Educational needs of the child
- Well Being 3 (WB3) –
 - Item 23 Mental health of the child

The highest performance areas for round III include:

- S1 –
 - Item 1 Timeliness of investigation
- S2 –
 - Item 4 Risk of harm to child(ren)
- P1 –
 - Item 6 Stability of foster care placement
- P2 –
 - Item 12 Placement with siblings
 - Item 11 Proximity of foster care placement
 - Item 15 Relative placement
- WB2 –
 - Item 21 Educational needs of the child

The five items of greatest improvement in round III include:

- WB1 –
 - Item 19 Worker visits w/child; 38.3% increase
 - Item 20 Worker visits w/parent(s); 32% increase
 - Items 17 Needs/services; 23.6% increase
- P1 –
 - Item 10 Other planned permanent living; 31.2% increase
- S2 –
 - Item 4 Risk of harm to child(ren); 22.4% increase

Working with our partners at DFS, an in depth analysis was done for the individual items that resulted in areas needing improvement for items 2, 3, 9, 17 and 18. The following five tables will identify the outcome area, the item with a short description followed by the Mini CFSR instrument number, DFS office location and the reason given by the Mini CFSR review team.

Outcome area: Safety one (S1)

Item #2: Repeat maltreatment

#	Location	Reason
208	Cheyenne	Second substantiation under an un-supervised visit
236	Casper	Case was dismissed, new intakes within five months
262	Casper	Previous report three months prior
267	Casper	Previous incident six months prior, insufficient response
270	Casper	Additional reports six months prior
273	Newcastle	Previous report, insufficient response
278	Gillette	Three reports under period under review; insufficient response

Outcome area: Safety two (S2)

Item #3: Services in home to prevent removal

#	Location	Reason
236	Lander	Court dismissed case; parents did not follow-up with services
249	Laramie	Services were not offered
262	Casper	Previous report and no services offered, insufficient response
273	Newcastle	Services not offered
278	Gillette	Insufficient services offered
283	Sheridan	No services provided

Outcome area: Permanency 1 (P1) Children are stable in placement

Item #9: Adoption

#	Location	Reason
209	Cheyenne	Delay in filing of termination of parental rights (TPR)
237	Lander	No diligent search for relative care givers
260	Casper	Court delay in termination of parental rights (TPR)
279	Gillette	Relinquishment filed after 14 months and then stalled due to out of state parents
290	Evanston	Complicated diligent search for relatives delayed adoption

Outcome area: Well Being 1 (WB1) Families can provide for their children's needs
Item #17: Services

200	Cheyenne	Lack of services for child
206	Cheyenne	Lack of services for parent
207	Cheyenne	Lack of services for grandmother, child and newborn
209	Cheyenne	Lack of resources for relative care-givers
214	Cheyenne	No assessments on mother and stepfather
230	Wheatland	Lack of services for child and biologic father
231	Torrington	Lack of assessments and services for biologic father
241	Greybull	Services were not provided for mother
253	Rawlins	Lack of assessments and services for mother
256	Casper	Parents needs were not met because juvenile services mirrors child protective services; concurrent case confusion
258	Casper	Lack of services for siblings and mother
260	Casper	Lack of services for parents
270	Casper	Services were not provided for parents
273	Newcastle	Services were not provided for relative care givers, mother, father and child
274	Gillette	Needs not addressed for father, mother and child
278	Gillette	Needs not identified for mother
281	Buffalo	Services not provided for mother, CASA and/or GAL not timely for child
283	Sheridan	Services not provided for family
284	Sheridan	Services and assessments not offered for second child
285	Sheridan	Parents' needs not assessed
300	Rock Springs	Child and parents needs were not addressed, services not offered

Outcome area: Well Being 1 (WB1) Families can provide for their children's needs
Item #18: Child and family involvement in planning

#	Location	Reason
200	Cheyenne	Late case plan; biologic father not included
203	Cheyenne	Mother wasn't involved in case planning
206	Cheyenne	Mother and child were not involved in case planning
209	Cheyenne	Relative caregivers and father not involved
215	Cheyenne	No documentation of child involvement
218	Torrington	Mother is disabled and was not allowed to be involved
228	Wheatland	No involvement of biologic father
231	Torrington	No case plan because juvenile service policy needs adjudication first; child languished in Casper detention facility
233	Riverton	Mother and father not involved
237	Lander	Lack of current case planning
245	Cody	Mother did not feel involved

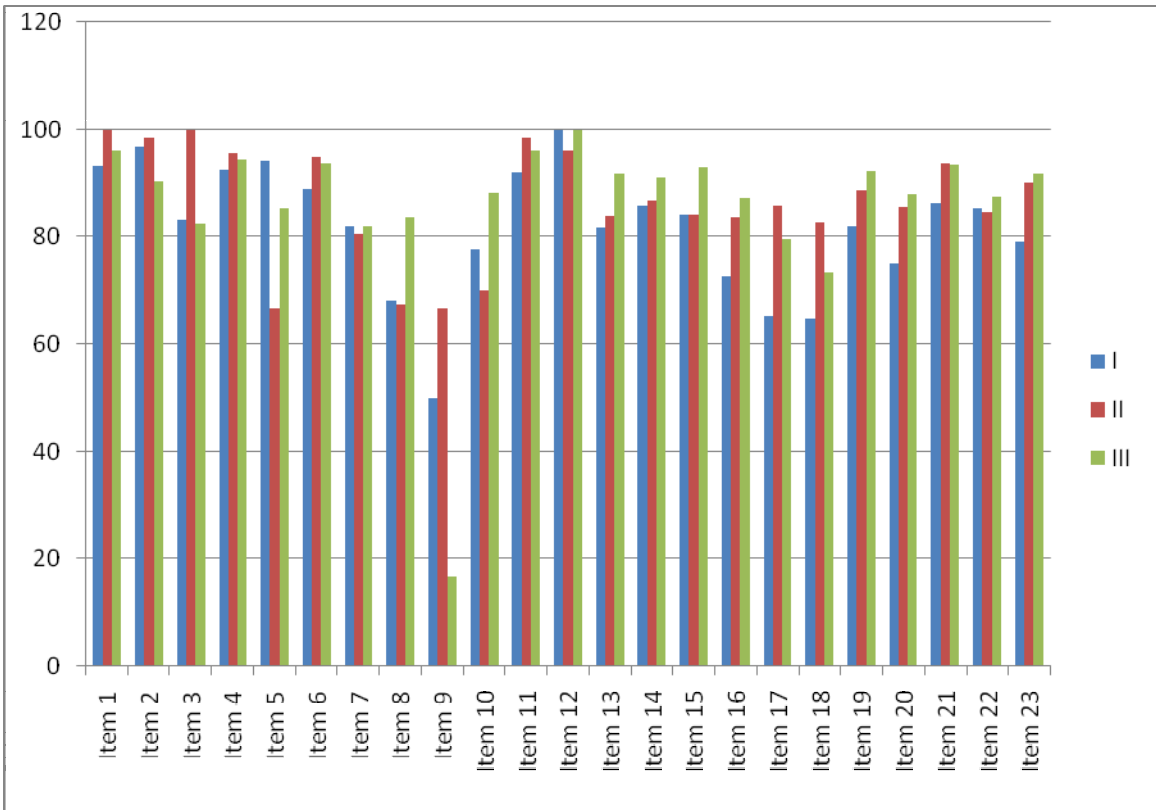
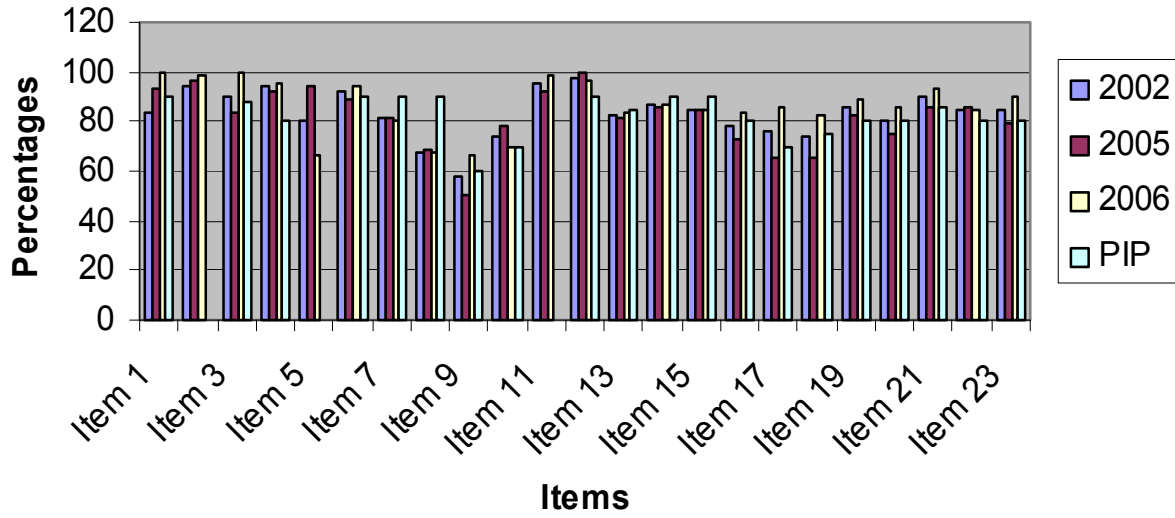
254	Rawlins	No current case plan
259	Casper	Father was not located or involved in case planning
260	Casper	No parent involvement
261	Casper	No case plan for four months
262	Casper	Grandmother was not involved; no current case plan
264	Casper	Late case plan; no updates
269	Casper	Mother and child were not involved in case planning
272	Sundance	Parents and child were not involved
273	Newcastle	No case plan
278	Gillette	No case plan
281	Buffalo	Child and mother not involved
283	Sheridan	No case plan
290	Evanston	No case plan; pre-adoptive parents not involved
292	Kemmerer	Mother was not involved
293	Afton	No case plan
298	Rock Springs	Late case plan; child was not involved

Appendix C

	2002	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
S1:	88.2	95.5	98.3	89.2
S2:	69.7	90.9	95.92	90.4
P1:	71	61.1	67.5	71.8
P2:	77.4	79.2	85.7	92.3
WB1	40	61.1	81.8	76.9
WB2	82.1	86.2	93.6	93.3
WB3	63.8	73.9	81.4	84.0

	Category	2002	PIP	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Item 1	S1	84	90	93.3	100	96.0
Item 2	S1	94		96.9	98.4	90.4
Item 3	S2	90.5	88	83.3	100	82.4
Item 4	S2	94	80	92.5	95.7	94.4
Item 5	P1	80		94.1	66.7	85.3
Item 6	P1	91.9	90	88.9	94.8	93.6
Item 7	P1	81.2	90	81.9	80.5	82.1
Item 8	P1	67.7	90	68.2	67.3	83.6
Item 9	P1	57.6	60	50	66.7	16.7
Item 10	P1	73.7	70	77.8	70	88.2
Item 11	P2	95.4		92.1	98.5	96.0
Item 12	P2	97.7	90	100	96	100.0
Item 13	P2	82.8	85	81.7	83.8	91.8
Item 14	P2	86.4	90	85.92	86.8	91.0
Item 15	P2	84.2	90	84.2	84.2	93.1
Item 16	P2	78.3	80	72.6	83.6	87.3
Item 17	WB1	75.8	70	65.3	85.9	79.6
Item 18	WB1	74	75	64.9	82.7	73.5
Item 19	WB1	85.5	80	82.1	88.8	92.3
Item 20	WB1	80.4	80	75	85.6	88.0
Item 21	WB2	90.1	86	86.2	93.6	93.5
Item 22	WB3	85	80	85.4	84.7	87.6
Item 23	WB3	85	80	79.2	90	91.9

Mini CFSR Item Comparison 2002, 2005, 2006, PIP



Kelly J. Hamilton
Executive Director



Executive Committee
Lisa Gossert, *Chairperson*
Rose Kor, *Vice Chairperson*
Carla Thurin, *Treasurer*
Tara Ackerman, *Secretary*
Vacant, *Member at Large*
Brenda Oswald, *Ex Officio*

April 24 & 25 (4 cases) and 26 & 27 (4 cases), 2007 Mini CFSR Report Eastern Shoshone Tribal Review

Case Ratings:

#ES310 (child protection case)

- Six areas needing improvement: Item 14-Preserving connections; Item 16-Relationship of child in care with parents; Item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; Item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning; Item 19-Worker visits with child and Item 20-Workers visits with parents. “Child is in a good placement and getting needed services”

#ES311 (child protection case)

- Two areas needing improvement: Item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning and Item 22-Physical health of the child. “Great coordination between three social service agencies”

#ES312 (child protection case)

- Perfect scoring case. “Extended family and case worker involvement ensured the safety of the children”

#ES313 (juvenile services case)

- Four areas needing improvement: Item 4-Risk of harm to child(ren); Item 5-Foster care re-entries; Item 6-Stability of foster care placement and Item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning. “Communication between the Tribes caused concern”

#ES314 (child protection case)

- One area needing improvement: Item 6-Stability of foster care placement. “Agency has identified and achieved appropriate placements for all children and all children are thriving”

#ES315 (child protection case)

- Two areas needing improvement: Item 8-Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives and Item 22-Physical health of the child. “Family was offered services and had a good start towards reunification”

#ES316 (child protection case)

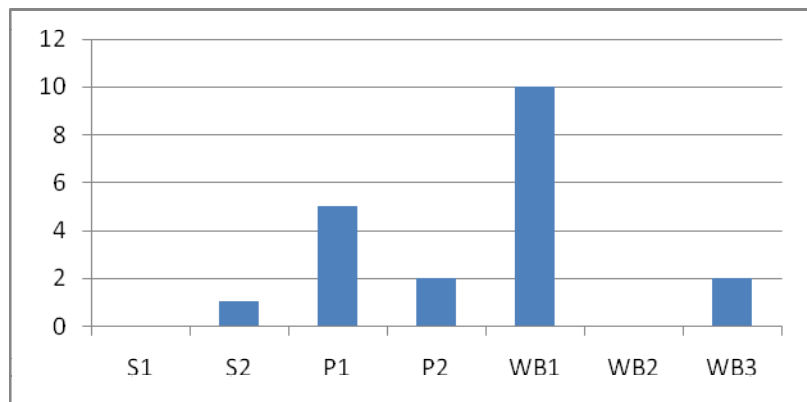
- Perfect scoring case. “Phenomenal relative involvement in the case”

#ES317 (juvenile services case)

- Five areas needing improvement: Item 5-Foster care reentries; Item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; Item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning; Item 19-Worker visits with child(ren) and Item 20-Worker visits with parent(s) “The Mini CFSR process helped the worker understand the need for family centered approach in case work”

Lack of foster care and a move away from traditional values have influenced outcomes.

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.



Italic font indicates juvenile service review comments; standard font indicates child protection review comments.

Issues requiring administrative level/Tribal Council attention:

- Residential treatment facility specifically for tribal youth on the Wind River Indian Reservation
- Video conferencing capability for out of community placements to allow for:
 - Worker contact;
 - staffing;
 - family counseling;
 - case planning, and
 - family contact.
- Workers have little or no ability to use WYCAPS due to poor computer access and infrastructure issues; without proper information exchange via WYCAPS this is a serious safety issue which must be resolved
- *Juvenile services issues:*
 - *Law enforcement officers involvement in court proceedings;*
 - *connection to some existing program, and*
 - *inclusion in DFS juvenile services training*
- *Tribal programs do not receive the statpac; may be useful for them*
- Availability of Indian Health Services (IHS) funds to support therapeutic foster care
- IHS social work position available to help with case management of children's mental health needs

Issues requiring local social service office attention:

- Policy regarding preschool screening for early intervention
- Worker turnover; four case workers in one year for example
- Communication between tribal programs and other agencies
- Case planning practices need to be more deliberate and include concurrent planning
- *Family centered practice would be useful in juvenile services work*
- Better documentation to include case plans, school and medical records

Overarching issues which the WYCRP can advocate for and support resolution of:

- Jurisdictional issues between the courts and law enforcement on and off the reservation (court orders not being honored)
- Transitional services need from drug court as well as residential treatment
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) confusion and consistency currently exists between districts; this should not be subjective and IEPs should transfer between school districts
- Nothing in tribal code to allow intervention with newborns test positive for methamphetamine
- Unique challenges in foster care recruitment:
 - State's requirements for certification are unrealistic on the reservation;
 - perceived invasion of privacy;
 - only negative publicity regarding foster parents, and
 - families view foster parents as adversarial when they accept children

Strengths:

- Advocacy:
 - "Two tribal agencies and one state agency collaborated well for the child and family"

- “Agency has left the case open to continue to provide services even though the court case is closed”
- Collaboration:
 - *“Good collaboration between members of the community for the child’s best interests”*
- Communication:
 - “Handling of multi-jurisdictional issues was performed well”
- Consistency:
 - “Consistent, bi-monthly worker visits were made”
- Documentation and adherence to procedure (case planning):
 - *“Documentation in case file was good”*
 - “Good case management practices were done by the case worker”
 - “Good case planning procedures”
 - “Good family centered case work”
 - “Child protection teams used effectively”
 - “Organized, structured and deliberate office operations”
 - “Case planning was good”
 - “Child’s immunizations were up to date as reflected in the case file”
 - “Permanency planning was good with grandmother”
 - “Case management was outstanding”
- Effective use of service array:
 - *“Child has received many counseling opportunities and residential placements”*
 - “Child’s physical and mental health needs were addressed”
 - “Effective placements for the child were used; child is receiving the services needed”
 - “Drug treatment services were provided”
 - “Parenting classes were provided for the child’s mother”
 - “TANF, Medicaid and other financial assistance provided to mother and family”
 - “Head Start services were successfully used”
 - “Parenting classes were offered and taken advantage of by the mother”
 - “Good screenings; child receives speech therapy and counseling”
 - “Young man has received a great deal of psychiatric care”
 - “Tons of services were offered to the family”
 - *“Child has been receiving medication for depression”*
 - *“Child received good evaluations”*
 - *“Family counseling has been helpful”*
- Engagement of the child:
 - “Child made a great breakthrough when his cultural needs were identified and provided for in the psychiatric facility”
 - *“Child was on an IEP at the Wind River Indian School”*
- Family involvement:
 - *“Reunification goal is with grandmother”*
 - “Parents care and initiated contact with the system for services for their child”
 - “Relatives were used for the child’s placement”
 - “Parents voluntarily agreed to participate in inpatient treatment for their substance abuse issues”
 - “Child had three sets of grandparents and good extended family participation”
 - “Extended family’s involvement ensured the safety of the children”
 - “Even though grandmother, who was taking care of the child, was backsliding in her alcohol rehabilitation she still provided for the child”
 - “Good agency searching for father; father did not want involvement however”

- “Extended family, particularly aunts, are very engaged in the case”
- “Paternal aunt took care of the children, then the child was placed with the paternal uncle”
- *“Mother and child bond is very strong (could be codependent in future, however)”*
- **Legal System:**
 - *“Educational neglect charge was filed on mom; court was trying to hold mother accountable”*
 - *“Child asked to go back into the drug court’s jurisdiction as she felt she needed the structure”*
 - “Once Tribal Court assumed jurisdiction, the case was much easier to understand”
 - “Tribal court system moves expeditiously”
- **Preserving connections:**
 - “Culture is very important to the child; Arcadia in Butte, Montana is providing for and maintaining those cultural connections”
- **Successful outcomes:**
 - “Children are all thriving in their placements”

Additional contributing factors:

- “Eastern Shoshone Social Services lack basic resources such as communication equipment and infrastructure; some progress has been made to correct this, but more is needed”
- “Adolescent residential treatment facility is needed on the Wind River Indian Reservation”
- “Mother is 23 years old; this will be her 6th child”
- “Both mother and father had serious substance abuse issues”
- “Boy was a father at 15 years of age”
- “Child attendance in preschool is only about 50%”
- “Many regular medical appointments resulted in “no shows””
- “Child was targeted by others in his placement for his Native American ethnicity”
- “Unmarried couple with children”
- “Mother did not follow thru with inpatient treatment recommendation”

Opportunities for improvement:

- **Case planning:**
 - *“Case plans are needed other than just the court order and conditions of supervision”*
 - “Case planning needs to be completed”
 - “Three family plans and one case plan were in the case file and all were blank; this may be a WYCAPS issue.”
 - “Case file was lacking dental and medical records”
 - “Blank case plan in the case file”
 - “Medical records need to be in the case file”
 - *“Case needs to be family centered practice; no engagement of father”*
 - *“Hard copy case file was in good shape; little or no WYCAPS entries”*
- **Contact:**
 - *“Child felt that he did not have enough visitation from the caseworker”*
 - “Parents felt they needed more written and verbal contact with case worker”
 - “21 days lapsed before a response to a maltreatment allegation”
 - “Current relatives that have child would like more communication with the case worker”
 - *“Worker contact with mother was weak”*
 - *“Worker contact with child was weak”*

- Family involvement:
 - “Mother did not pay much attention to preventative medical and dental needs”
 - “Grand parents enabled the child’s parents behavior”
 - “Girl would like to see her brother in treatment”
 - “17 months and family is still not in a safe house”
 - “Parents are still abusing drugs and alcohol”
 - *“Mother needs psychological evaluation and then needs help following it”*
 - *“Father needs substance abuse treatment”*
 - *“Nobody from Riverton Middle School notified worker or family that child was being taken off IEP”*
 - *“Child is interested in his cultural heritage; mother may not be interested and deprive the child of that opportunity”*

Systemic Barriers:

- Area conditions:
 - *“Communication and case file sharing between Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone is weak and the lack of communication could create a serious safety issue for the child”*
 - “Different tribal affiliations and enrollments can lead to confusion”
 - “Confidentiality in a small community is difficult to maintain”
 - “A lack of affordable housing exists in the area”
 - “Family has transportation needs”
- Collaboration
 - “Lander Police Department would not honor the tribal court order”
 - “Riverton Police Department did not inform the agency of child welfare concerns”
 - “When working the case, it would be beneficial to coordinate all service providers in a wrap around structure”
 - *“The child was on an IEP at Wind River Indian School, but the IEP was not continued when the child transferred to the Riverton school system”*
- Legal system:
 - *“Only two law enforcement officers; when they are not able to appear in court, the case is often dropped”*
 - *“Judge would like to see a residential treatment facility funded on the Wind River Indian Reservation”*
 - “Courts need to ensure that parents receive notice of court hearings”
 - “Drug court did not let the case worker know of new charges”
 - “City and Tribal arrest records do not go on the state’s criminal records check system”
 - “The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) does not always report to the agency when they have a child welfare case”
- Resources:
 - “Transportation and gas money was needed for parents”
 - “A culturally appropriate placement was a 10 hour drive for the parents to visit”
- Tribal social services program needs:
 - “Foster parents, especially therapeutic foster parents”
 - *“Juvenile services office needs clerical help”*
 - “Video conferencing in the Eastern Shoshone Social Service office is needed”
 - “WYCAPS does not work well in the Eastern Shoshone Social Service office; workers enter information and the system freezes up resulting in the information being lost”

Review process dynamics and considerations:

- Citizen reviewers in this review consisted of:

- Wyoming Boys School intake manager;
 - Wyoming Girls School superintendent;
 - tribal drug court representative;
 - tribal legal counsel;
 - tribal headstart representative;
 - ACF representative;
 - Praesidium consultant;
 - Praesidium consultant;
 - Fort Washakie Learning Center representative;
 - tribal prosecutor's office representative;
 - tribal ICWA coordinator, and
 - Eagles Wings representative.
- The period under review was October 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007.

May 7, 2007 11:45 a.m.

Eastern Shoshone Exit Meeting

Date: May 11, 2007

Location: Eastern Shoshone Department of Family Services

Attendance: Dr. Phill Rector, Rick Robb, Kelly Hamilton, Challis Coulston, Mazie Goggles, Glenda Lacey, Olivia Perry, Rita Phillips, Larry McAdams, Vicki Murdock, Rowena Day and Diana Schafer

Team's Desired Outcomes: To make a Program Improvement Plan from what was learned during the recent Mini CFSR and the 2005 assessment

Strengths: The group identified the following strengths for the Eastern Shoshone office:

- Well organized and prepared for the onsite review
- Creativity in individualized plans
- High intensity child protection cases
- Same day response or next day response by child protection staff to intakes
- Willingness to learn and to do quality work
- Physical case file organization in the child protection unit
- Family involvement in case planning due to the recent employment of a MDT coordinator
- Families generally do not return after case closure
- Workers make extra efforts to keep families together
- Workers have a good working relationship between one another
- The office has good working relationships with
 - i. the State of Wyoming;
 - ii. The Federal Bureau of Investigation;
 - iii. Indian Health Services (mental health)
 - iv. tribal prosecutor
 - v. local DFS offices, and
 - vi. the Northern Arapaho social service program.
- The program enjoys strong support of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council (ESBC)
- Diligence



- High caliber case work
- High levels of professionalism, while respecting cultural values
- High rate of relative placements

Needs:

- Functioning WYCAPS system
- Memorandum of understanding between the Eastern Shoshone child protection unit and the Northern Arapaho social service program, to be shared with all workers in both offices
- Improved timeliness of initial court orders to place children
- Improved collaboration and communication between FBI, BIA Law Enforcement, local DFS offices and Eastern Shoshone DFS agencies during investigations may help;
- Foster parent recruitment and retention
- Formal agreement between kinship care providers and the agency
- Defined relationship and protocol for communication between Eastern Shoshone DFS and Eastern Shoshone Juvenile Services
- Resolution of cross jurisdictional court related issues
- Video conferencing equipment and training to use the equipment is needed for:
 - i. Training;
 - ii. allowing visitation between children and families, and
 - iii. participating with other DFS forums
- Addition to the contract with the State of Wyoming of three positions currently funded by BIA

Program Improvement Plan:

1. Foster Care:
 - i. Write appropriate cultural standards (*Larry McAdams/Pat Hans/Mary Huyser*);
 - ii. create therapeutic foster care resources (*Dana Ward, Lisa Brockman and Dr. Phill Rector*);
 - iii. highlight positive foster care (*Juliette Rule*)
 - iv. certify of kinship homes (*Larry McAdams*), and
 - v. hire a foster care coordinator.
2. Training on coordination of multi jurisdictional issues to include law enforcement, social work staff, child protection team, prosecutors, judges, and investigative personnel (*WYCRP*)
 - Make all DFS training available to workers in the tribal offices and all tribal training available to DFS offices

3. Enhanced coordination between the Eastern Shoshone Juvenile Services and Eastern Shoshone Department of Family Services Unit (*Larry McAdams, Bob Quick and David Snyder*)
4. Family centered practice for juvenile services
 - Case plans need to include medical and educational records, and
 - updated training.
5. Case plans for both CPS and Juvenile Services
 - Scanner;
 - use MDT coordinator to develop case plans with the family;
 - written plans to be in the file, and
 - training on concurrent planning.

At the program directors request, this program improvement plan will be reviewed in August including Juvenile Services.

A report and presentation to be given to the Eastern Shoshone Business Council in the near future.

Needs which cannot be met by the local office but need addressed:

1. An effective collaboration between the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of Family Services and Eastern Shoshone Business Council is necessary to develop technology that will ensure the support of WYCAPS for use by Eastern Shoshone programs. Without access to WYCAPS, there cannot be a fully functioning caseworker. WYCAPS is currently not useable by either of the Eastern Shoshone programs:
 - Access to WYCAPS is vital to good case management practice. The inability to access WYCAPS affects:
 - Payment of providers;
 - the of use required case management tools, and
 - the ability to enter vital information regarding perpetrators into the system which informs central registry; therefore safety of children is compromised.
 - Fiber optics strung with telephone lines may be a possible solution to make WYCAPS operational.
2. Eastern Shoshone juvenile services program does not reflect current standards of practice due to a lack of updated training and supervision as reflected by scores during the recent onsite review involving:
 - Placement re entries;
 - child and family involvement in case planning;
 - assessment and services to meet needs of the child and family,

- and worker contact with children and parents.
- 3. Video conferencing and training on using the equipment:
 - For out of community placements to allow for:
 - Worker contact;
 - staffing;
 - family counseling;
 - case planning, and
 - family contact.
 - Video conferencing for shared training with DFS
- 4. Residential treatment facility specifically for tribal youth on the Wind River Indian Reservation
- 5. Availability of therapeutic foster care; Indian Health Services (IHS) support to seek funding
- 6. Indian Health Services social work position available to help with case management of children's mental health needs
- 7. Support positive news stories through use of the DFS public information officer
- 8. Scanners to allow incorporation of written case plans into WYCAPS

Appendix E



Kelly J. Hamilton
Executive Director

Executive Committee

Lisa Gossert, *Chairperson*
Rose Kor, *Vice Chairperson*
Carla Thurin, *Treasurer*
Tara Ackerman, *Secretary*
Vacant, *Member at Large*
Brenda Oswald, *Ex Officio*

Northern Arapaho April 17, 18, 19 and 20, 2007 Mini CFSR Report Northern Arapaho Tribal Review

Case Ratings:

#NA304 (Child protection case)

- Perfect scoring case. “Highly respected case worker”

#NA305 (Child protection case)

- 8 areas needing improvement: Item 3-Services to family to protect children in home and prevent removal; Item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; 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; Item 22-Physical health of the child and Item 23-Mental health of the child. “Extensive, extended family support”

#NA306 (Juvenile services case)

- Perfect scoring case. “Positive attitude of the family and their willingness to make changes; workers willingness to work with the family”

#NA307 (Child protection case)

- Perfect scoring case. “Service needs met in a timely manner and initial response to safety addressed immediately”

#NA308 (Child protection case)

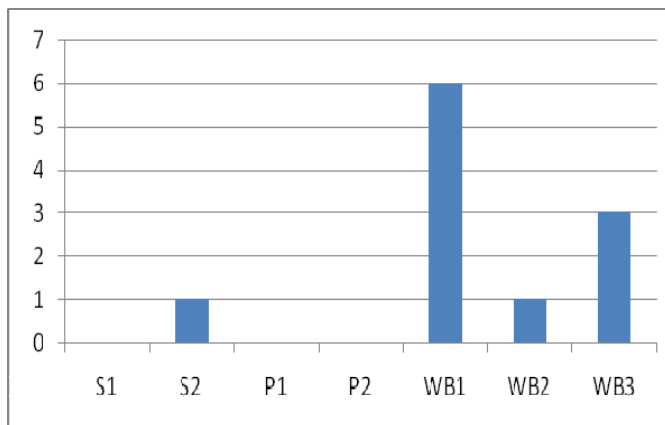
- 3 areas needing improvement: Item 17-Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents; Item 18-Child and family involvement in case planning and Item 22-Physical health of the child. “Safety addressed well, but case needs enhanced documentation”

#NA309 (Juvenile services case)

- Perfect scoring case. “Narrative entries are concise, well written and time related; case worker was strength based and case worker was an advocate for native children”

“Quality of the casework is much improved; safety has greatly improved since the 2005 assessment” – Bob Quick, Juvenile Services Administrator, DFS

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.



Italic font indicates juvenile service review comments; standard font indicates child protection review comments.

Issues requiring administrative level/Tribal Council attention:

- Case worker case loads
- Need for family assistance worker(s)
- Need for legal counsel
- Coordination and sharing of information between Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone
- Program vehicles
- Video conferencing capability for out of community placements to allow for:
 - Worker contact;
 - staffing;
 - family counseling;
 - case planning, and
 - family contact.
- Video conferencing between tribal office and tribal court and for training
- Residential treatment facility specifically for tribal youth on the Wind River Indian Reservation
- Availability of Indian Health Services (IHS) funds to support therapeutic foster care
- IHS social work position available to help with case management of children's mental health needs

Issues requiring local social service office attention:

- Policy requiring early childhood screening for preschool age children
- Safety documentation for relative placements
- Placement tracking in WYCAPS (unpaid relative placements)
- Documentation to include narrative, assessments, case plans medical records and mental health records

Overarching issues which the WYCRP can advocate for and support resolution of:

- Case workers must use their personal vehicle (s) which is a liability
- Housing for families and kinship care providers
- 24 hour crisis placement option needed for interim placements
- Drug Court (facilitation of resolution):
 - No case worker involvement in adult county drug court;
 - juvenile drug court requires three separate data entries, and
 - attention to step down and aftercare from drug court.
- Advocate for local tribal youth treatment options
- Transportation for citizens of the Wind River Indian Reservation

Strengths:

- Collaboration:
 - "Good multi agency collaboration"
- Consistency:
 - "Other providers appreciate the work and consistency of the case worker"
 - "New case worker did a good job of assuming the case from the previous case worker"
 - "One case worker throughout the case provided consistency"
- Documentation and adherence to procedure (case planning):
 - "Case worker did a great job and family appreciated the caseworker"
 - "Great narrative entries; specific, concise, well written and clear outlining concerns and days of sobriety"

- *“Strength based case work”*
- *“Safety issues were addressed in a timely and appropriate fashion”*
- *“Case worker is very open to learning new things and trying new things”*
- *“Initial response to safety was addressed immediately”*
- *“Great job by case worker”*
- *“Case worker made attempts to contact dad and include dad in the case plan”*
- *“Early intervention screening”*
- *“Kin are expressing needs for child’s emotional difficulties”*
- *“ICPC begun for relative placement in Nevada”*
- *“Frequent, consistent home visits by caseworker occurred”*
- **Effective use of service array:**
 - *“Mother is court ordered to drug court and is currently in counseling”*
 - *“Good wrap around services for mom”*
 - *“Good and complete services offered for the entire family”*
- **Engagement of the child:**
 - *“Child is currently on an individual educational plan (IEP)”*
 - *“Child is very involved in school and associated with school sports”*
- **Family involvement:**
 - *“Family was very involved and worked the case plan with the child”*
 - *“Family is involved in the case planning process”*
 - *“Family was given the choice of what drug court to attend with their child”*
 - *“Kids stayed with kin, no moves or changes”*
 - *“Father supported the concurrent case plan”*
 - *“4 year old male placed with paternal aunt”*
- **Legal System**
 - *“Father and grandmother were both included on the court order”*
 - *“Consistent court orders helped the case move forward”*
- **Preserving connections:**
 - *“Child is involved in sports and family is very supportive”*
 - *“Efforts made to keep connections”*
 - *“Child was placed in the same community”*
- **Successful outcomes:**
 - *“Child is now off probation, is at home and doing well”*
 - *“Dad is maintaining his sobriety and attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings with his son”*
 - *“Difficult case to work but had a great outcome”*

Additional contributing factors:

- *“Juvenile justice cases often have child protective nuances”*
- *“Case worker has a large case load and must be in drug court at least three days a week”*
- *“Child was worried about mother who was grieving about loss of her father (child’s grandfather)”*
- *“Cultural competence present in community services”*
- *“Permanency definition changes in light of cultural issues; floating placements. The tribes are very collectivist and very clannish”*
- *“Child filled out food stamp forms because he was mad at mom for not doing it”*
- *“All six kids were left alone in a motel while mom was in a detoxification program”*
- *“No centralized place for information sharing between systems”*
- *“The waiting list for Head Start delays services”*
- *“Parents found intoxicated; child taken to the emergency room for welfare check”*
- *“Foster parenting is not the noble profession in the culture; children are cared for by kin”*

- “Children are cared for by entire families; case workers are not necessarily seen for the good that they accomplishment”
- “The lack of a contract or written agreement between the agency and the State of Wyoming continues to block resolution to some issues”
- “Due to high case volumes, concerns of well being are not necessarily a priority for workers as they are often focusing on new safety issues”

Opportunities for improvement:

- Aftercare:
 - “Mom and child needed counseling when an acquaintance died”
- Case planning:
 - “No immunization records in case file”
 - “No medical assessment done when child entered detention facility”
 - “Child had several probation officers”
 - “Court order is used as the case plan; may need policy addressing that usage and what else should be included in the case file”
 - “Family should be involved in creating a case plan”
 - “Lack of documentation in case file”
 - “Preventive health documentation needs to be in the case file”
 - “Checklists for different processes would help keeping the case file up to date”
 - “Training on how to write an assessment might be useful and then filing them in the correct place”
 - “Need to document why dad was not involved in the case planning”
 - “New incidents need to be created for new allegations of abuse and neglect”
 - “Case narratives need to be done in a consistent and timely fashion”
 - “School would like to have more communication about status of case plan”
 - “No preschool intakes were done”
 - “Case size, intensity and turnover of staff becomes a barrier for documentation”
 - “Needs assessment not completed”
 - “Gaps in documentation due to staff changes”
 - “Services recommended prior to removal of child but were not provided”
 - “Lack of documentation in the case file”
 - “Communication with the Eastern Shoshone Social Services program could be enhanced in order to provide better services for families that have intermarried”
- Communication:
 - “It may be helpful for families and their cases to have enhanced communication and information sharing between the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes”
 - “Foster care provider expressed a need to know what services were available for young children”
- Contact:
 - “Need to make contact with the family and document in the case file when family contacts are made”
- Family involvement:
 - “Father (in prison) was not involved and there was a lack of clarity regarding his status in the family”
 - “Family conflicts between maternal and paternal relatives led to stress for the child”
 - “Fathers are not involved and do not wish to be involved”

Systemic Barriers:

- Area conditions:
 - “Housing:

- 28 people living in a single dwelling
 - Family currently lives in a motel; hoping to move to an apartment”
 - “Poverty was a significant issue in the case”
 - “Housing opportunities are few:
 - Family lived in a motel for almost one year”
 - “Families do not have phones or cars to meet appointments”
 - “The family needed housing”
 - “There is inadequate housing and financial penalties exist for the number of children in the house:
 - Mother will be looking for housing for 5 kids;
 - \$475 for house with no drinkable water now \$500 per month; grandma is being charged \$25 per child, and
 - there is a great housing disparity and a lack of housing resources on and off of the Wind River Indian Reservation.”
- Legal system:
 - “Tribal drug court, drug court in Riverton and drug court in Lander equates to three different courts and several levels of probation with little or no communication and coordination between the programs”
 - “Lander Police Department does not always notify tribal social services when a probationer gets in trouble”
 - “Riverton Police Department does not always notify tribal social services when a probationer gets in trouble”
 - “Aftercare from drug court and a step down program would be helpful”
 - “Greater coordination with state drug courts would provide better consistency”
 - “Educational system would like some judicial oversight on certain children to help them to finish school”
- Tribal social services program needs:
 - “More case workers are needed”
 - “Workers need state vehicles to drive instead of their personal vehicles”
 - “Case worker case loads are high (33 cases) and the intensity of the cases is heavy; another case worker has a case load of 52 cases”
 - “Family assistance worker(s) is being recommended for the social service program”
 - “Case worker told not to put narrative in the case file as the narrative can be pulled by the FBI and courts”
 - “No legal support for the case worker when they are subpoenaed”
 - “Video conferencing is needed in the agency office”
 - “Resolution for high case worker turnover”

Review process dynamics and considerations:

- Citizen reviewers in this review consisted of:
 - Manager from the Wyoming Department of Health;
 - ICWA coordinator from Casey Family Programs;
 - intake manager from the Wyoming Boys School;
 - diversity coordinator from Casey Family Programs;
 - ACF representative;
 - University of Wyoming professor;
 - minister;
 - University of Texas professor;
 - tribal vital statistics employee, and
 - a representative from Praesidium.
- The period under review was October 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007.

Northern Arapaho Exit Meeting
Date: May 10, 2007
Location: Northern Arapaho Tribes Child Protection Services

Attendance: Dr. Phil Rector, Tom Kennah, Shawn Delorme, Kelly Hamilton, Karen Smith, Antionette Harris, Irenice Noseep, Susan Crazythunder, Rachel Felter, Frances Monroe, Diana Schafer, Velma Rhodes, Glendda Lacey, Rick Robb, Cori Duran, Ed Heimer and Vicki Murdock

Team's Desired Outcomes: To make a Program Improvement Plan from what was learned during the recent Mini CFSR and the 2005 assessment

Strengths: The group identified the following strengths for the Northern Arapaho office:

- Courage and a willingness to learn as demonstrated by voluntary participation in the review process
- Noteworthy success in achieving permanency for Arapaho children
- Staff resiliency through sense of humor
- Staff who are warm and welcoming to everyone
- Knowledgeable staff who have a sense of community and whose work demonstrated cultural sensitivity
- Families respect for the workers in the Arapaho office
- Workers investment in the success of their community
- Good rapport with families they serve
- Staff have learned good practice from the Mini CFSR
- Willing to learn and open to new ideas
- Adopting more progressive ideas
- Humility
- Persistence
- Calm flexibility
- Strong, supportive relationships among staff
- Growing, positive relationship between the Arapaho and the local DFS offices in Lander and Riverton
- Very experienced staff that teach and support newer staff



Needs: The group identified the following needs for the improvement of their work with their families

- A day to complete WYCAPS work
- Program vehicles
- A means to address personal liability insurance when personal vehicles are used
- A foster care coordinator
- Video Conferencing available at the Arapaho social service office, accessible to families and community members
- Documentation:
 - Improvement of case file documentation
 - assistance with what should be in a case file, and
 - address cultural issues regarding written documentation.
- A system for evaluating and distributing case loads taking into consideration the intensity of the cases, the distances involved and responsibility to multiple jurisdictions

- Legal consultation
- Recognition and respect as competent professionals
- To be included as partners in the development and provision of services to Arapaho families on and off the reservation
- Recognition of the distinct identity of the Northern Arapaho program
- More community involvement in future Mini CFSRs
- Preschool screening for all preschool aged children served by the program
- Improved identification of the placement cases on WYCAPs

Program Improvement Plan:

#1 – Training

- Case file organization (*Clint Hanes*)
- Effective narrative (*Clint Hanes*)
- Family case plan training (*Debra Hibbard*)
- Documentation of placement versus kinship in WYCAPs (*Sada Selvig*)
- Ethics training (*Clint Hanes*)
- Archiving of files through state archives (*Tom Kennah*)
- Utilize Indian Health Service staff for in service trainings (*Dr. Phill Rector*)
- Collaborate with the University of Wyoming for training (*Vicki Murdock*)
- Make all DFS training available to workers in the tribal offices and all tribal training available to DFS offices. (*Clint Hanes*)
- Worker exchange program between DFS and tribal programs (*WYCRP*)
- Training for clients and foster parents
 - MRT – Moral recognition training
 - SRT – Social recognition training
 - Parenting (*ICWA/Pat Stoehr*)
- Culturally appropriate foster parent training (*NICWA/Pat Hans/Mary Huyser*)

#2 – Communications:

- More MDT/Family Partnership meetings (*Cori Duran/Diana Schafer*)
- Create a brochure for the program (*Lori Hutchinson*)
- Staffing to include all case workers within each discipline (*Bob Quick*)
- Specific case information transfer and sharing between tribal programs (*Antoinette Harris/Velma Rhodes*)
- Review existing MOU between the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho social service programs (*Antoinette Harris/Velma Rhodes*)

At the program director's request, this program improvement plan will be reviewed quarterly with the WYCRP and the Department of Family Services.

Report and presentation to be made to the Northern Arapaho Business Council in the near future.

Needs which cannot be met by the local office but need addressed:

1. Need for a contract or memorandum of understanding between the State of Wyoming and the Northern Arapaho. The benefits would include:
 - IVE agreement between the state and Northern Arapaho
 - Increased foster care funding, and
 - possibility for BIA and ICWA foster care assistance
 - Funding for additional positions
 - Addressing transportation needs of the program
 - Salary inequity between tribal program and state contracted positions
 - Attorney General:
 - Legal representation of contract staff, and
 - Clarification of role in working with the Northern Arapaho social service office
 - Administrative issues
 - Who is in charge of office when manager is away?
 - Inequities in payment due to different sources of staff
 - Grievance process
 - Additional staff to address high level and intense case loads
2. Program vehicles
3. Foster care coordinator
4. Video conferencing for out of community placements to allow for:
 - Worker contact;
 - staffing;
 - family counseling;
 - case planning, and
 - family contact.
 - Video conferencing between tribal office and tribal court
 - Video conferencing for shared training with DFS
5. Residential treatment facility specifically for tribal youth on the Wind River Indian Reservation
6. Availability of therapeutic foster care; Indian Health Services (IHS) support to seek funding
7. Indian Health Services social work position available to help with case management of children's mental health needs
8. Support positive news stories through use of the DFS public information officer (*Juliette Rule*)
9. Scanners to allow incorporation of written case plans into WYCAPS

Appendix F

Wyoming Child Welfare Services Survey

In January of 2007, the WYCRP began a continuous on-line web survey for people take and express their thoughts on the child welfare system in Wyoming. The WYCRP wanted to give others who may not be involved in the Mini CFSS process a chance to tell us about their experiences. Below are the survey results for the period January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2007. To participate in this survey, please visit us on the World Wide Web at <http://wycrp.org>. When percentages do not add up to 100%; this means that the field may have been left blank by the participant. Additionally, in some instances, the question may not have been answered, but a comment may have been left for that question. Words italicized and in (*parenthesis*) mean that the wording has been changed slightly for various reasons. Many of the comments are interesting and informative but the reader should remember that this is simply a web based survey and no effort has been made to accommodate the “other” side of the story.

1. How are you associated with the Wyoming child welfare system?

- Consumer of services: 0%
- Community based organization: 35.7%
- Department of Family Services: 14.3%
- Legal Community: 0%
- Provider of services: 21.4%
- Other: 28.6%
 - Parents attorney and GAL
 - Retired CASA
 - Bio-parent and parent advocate
 - CPS worker

2. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, was the system responsive to you or your family’s specific needs?

- Yes: 76.9%
- No: 7.7%
- Comments:
 - “Somewhat; I felt the investigator at the Cheyenne field office tried to lead the child into the alleged abuse. (*The investigator*) seemed impatient and frustrated when the child gave the same explanations for the bruises.”
 - I see a lack of services for the family before a child is taken into custody. If a case is substantiated, it seems to always involve taking custody of the child. If the case is not serious enough to warrant taking custody, it is not substantiated and services are offered on a voluntary basis but not court mandated. For example, if the child is not in imminent danger and yet abuse and/or neglect is occurring, why not court order services such as counseling, parenting classes etc.? If (the) situation continues or gets worse

even with services, then custody may e warranted. Also, I see a rush to termination especially were the children are very adoptable. I believe this is connected with the recruitment of foster parents by telling people that the best way to adopt is by becoming foster parents. In some cases, they system does not even pretend to be waiting the 15 out of 22 months. They are establishing a permanency goal of termination three or four months into the process even when the parents are cooperating with the plan.

- It (*the Wyoming child welfare system*) is unacceptably slow with regards to children and families in crisis.

3. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, do you feel referrals were made when appropriate?

- Yes: 57.1%
- No: 35.7%
- Comments:
 - (*The family was*) referred to Peak Wellness Center and there were unwilling to accommodate the (*family's*) needs and refused to provide the therapy the family requested. The family worked with Peak for over 6 months with no improvements so they had to start all over with a therapist in the private sector.
 - The common case plan usually included parenting classes but very seldom included parent counseling. I believe that classes are good but are much better if combined with parent counseling. Many times case workers are no well trained in the existence of community agencies and the services they offer and therefore do not make appropriate referrals.
 - Collaboration ad cross agency communication I poor.
 - Not always can the families choose their own service provider like counselors
 - In at least one case the children had even called for assistance as well as neighbors and school personnel; DFS delayed taking the children for five years.

4. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, do you feel commitments were followed through with in a timely fashion?

- Yes: 50.0%
- No: 42.9%
- Comments:
 - In some cases, I feel that our youth are still being left out o the loop and given information that affects them later without regard to their opinions.
 - When a case is referred it I sometimes closed long before the clients have achieved any progress in the offending behaviors. Cases should remain open until a standardized family assessment

shows they are making improvement and are at least close to being in the normal range.

- (The) Natrona County court system is too overloaded, therefore extremely slow.
- Services need to be upfront more
- Case worker promised children placements, visits, etc. that were never realized.

5. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, do you feel phone calls were returned in a timely fashion?

- Yes: 53.9%
- No: 38.5%
- Comments:
 - Again, in some cases calls are not returned to our youth by their GAL and our youth are suffering the consequences, because they are very stressed out because no one is telling them anything so they tend to act out negatively
 - DFS administrators are more likely not to return calls at all than they are to return calls.
 - Case workers never returned calls. Some did an excellent job communicating via email; they were very cooperative and helpful.
 - When it needed immediate response. But when it didn't; no lots of times I never received a call back.

6. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, do you feel you were notified of multi disciplinary, case planning, family partnership meetings and court hearings?

- Yes: 78.6%
- No: 14.3%
- Comments:
 - Not always in a timely fashion
 - I have been notified of court hearings but not had the documents from MDT's prior to the hearing.
 - Collaboration and cross agency communication is poor.
 - On occasion, CASA would be left out o the loop, but generally we were notified of all meetings/hearings.

7. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, do you feel you were able to participate in the planning and decision making process of the case and do you feel you were heard?

- Yes: 57.1%
- No: 21.4%
- Comments:
 - A case plan was done without the family involved. The plan was laid out very vaguely and the tasks were not time limited,

measurable let alone in words the family could understand. It was written in DFS lingo and the family was not vested in DFS's plan.

- Case workers will listen but will not change case plans that they have done. I believe case plan(s) should be developed by a team of professionals and family members.
- Depends on the case.
- For a long time I felt I wasn't being heard and the MDT didn't want to hear the truth about our situation. They made judgments based on third party information instead of talking to myself, the bio-parent.

8. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, do you feel you or those you served were culturally respected?

- Yes: 71.4%
- No: 21.4%
- Comments:
 - Workers could use more training in this area.
 - Cultural barriers (*exist*) in border line towns near the reservation
 - Due to the limitations of foster homes in this area, youth are not able to know their cultural backgrounds and it is something that is no kept in mind by most.

9. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, have you ever been involved in a family partnership?

- Yes: 50%
- No: 50%
- Comments:
 - But only after we requested it. It was not done on the family at the beginning of the case. I feel it could have eliminated a lot of stress if it had been done at the start.
 - For our foster son; it was very helpful. I don't see how a case plan could be done without a partnership.

10. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, please tell us about any barriers you may have encountered:

- Peak Wellness is the only game so to speak in Cheyenne. There is a long waiting list for services.
- Cultural barriers in border line towns near the reservation.
- Lack of communication from GAL, cultural diversity and community partnerships.
- Confidentiality is over used as an excuse of not engaging the community
- I believe we need a common philosophy/values clarified about removal of children from their home.
- It is far too difficult to access prevention services and dollars and way too east to place and fund out of home services

- The barriers come from administrators who do not welcome or see community input regarding the process. Child protection teams were created for this purpose but are treated with disdain and lack of respect for the expertise they represent.
- Too much work and not enough DFS workers to take care of it. Too much turn over at DFS. Good, bright people who want to be caseworkers but give up in frustration after a year or two. DFS has too much paperwork to take care of also. Every three caseworkers should have a clerk assigned to them to generate the necessary paperwork.
- Collaboration and cross agency communication is poor.
- Access to pertinent information can be limited.
- Foster parent that felt threatened by CASA involvement.
- Case workers so over burdened that vital issues were neglected.
- Laws that allowed grandparents with very questionable backgrounds to gain custody of children.
- Access to appropriate treatment.
- Lots of problems with the visit supervisors from self help center here in Casper continually cancelling visits due to their own issues outside of our visits or shortening them due to the lack of planning their personal appointments around the visits. Also DFS was not willing at that time to do the visits themselves on evening or weekend due to my working.
- Systemic barriers due to the geographical location and the technological system of the state.

11. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, please share with us some of the things that work particularly well with the system:

- As a citizen reviewer I have a better understanding of DFS's role in the community.
- Partnerships within DFS, juvenile probation, court, youth homes, independent living program and schools.
- Children seem to be safe once they enter the system.
- I believe many of the line workers, especially those with training and experience do an excellent job and are very compassionate and caring. However, because of the turnover and the promotion of many workers who do not develop that expertise, the front line worker many times is overwhelmed and confused by the myriad of policies and procedures.
- We have outstanding district court judges who really care. We are blessed with very good GAL's. Our DFS workers do their best with what they have to work with; we need to do whatever is necessary to keep the experienced one(s).
- Review hearings with the judge.
- MDT's
- When a dedicated foster parent, case worker and GAL are on the team, children are very well served.

- When a worker is honest and nonjudgmental; they have to build a trust with addicted parents especially.
- Communication, when it is done properly.

12. As a participant in the Wyoming child welfare system, is there anything else you would like us to know?

- I like this survey.
- I believe one of the key concerns is the lack of consistent notification to parents of their right to an attorney and the right to have free legal services if they qualify. This is especially needed if the child has been taken into custody. I believe this could be done with the first official contact with DFS. It could be easily included in the notification for the first shelter care hearing. I believe lawyers are not an enemy of the system and just make sure that the rights of the parents are not trampled in the ground. The system is much more likely to dot their "i's" and cross their "t's" if a lawyer is present. Without legal advice, parents are sometimes intimidated into signing documents that later come back to haunt them. Legal advised is part of every other legal process, why should it not be given when children are being taken away from their parents. Many would say that children's rights are more important. I believe both parents and children's rights are important. Most children who are taken from the home don't want to lose their family they just want the family to change.
- CASA is a very valuable program in the system.
- Things that help: Having knowledge of how the system works, local politics, maintaining a neutral identity.
- There is an unhealthy social structure in some DFS offices. Those that are not doing their jobs are not brought into sync: "friends" are hired and "educated" how to slide along
- I believe that GALs should be required to spend some time getting to know the bio-parent. The GAL in my case only took third hand information and never took the time to get *(to)* know what was really going on in our life prior to my children entering the system. In my case and I'm sure it is the same in theirs, there was many years of serious life problems that could have helped the GAL and the rest of the MDT to better understand our life. I also believe that the parent should be educated on the laws, rights, and responsibilities of the entire process that they are about to go through in regard to the child welfare system. They should have access to this education as soon as the case is opened. *(The)* peer mentor *(program)* at UPLIFT (307) 232-8944, for support and education on the child welfare system, as well as a peer advocate to help guide them through the child welfare system *(is useful)*.
- I would like yearly reviews of the area offices.
- MDTs need to be information gathering and sharing of information, not sessions where DFS says this is how it is.



WYCRP Administrative Information

Purpose

The WYCRP is a federally mandated group of professional and private citizens who are responsible for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively discharging child protective responsibilities; pursuant to the 1996 amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and any subsequent amendments. Through a review of policies, procedures, research and case review, the purpose of the Citizen Review Panel is to promote child safety and quality services to children and families.

Mission

The WYCRP's mission is to review of our child welfare procedures throughout the system, offering summaries and recommendations for improvements benefiting children and families.

History

Originally, the WYCRP was created within the Department of Family Services. At the turn of the century, the membership conferred with the director of the Department of Family services and concurred that the organization may be more objective if it was a private, nonprofit 501C3 organization. Today the WYCRP operates with bylaws, policies and procedures in place with a full panel that meets at least quarterly and with smaller executive committee which meets the first Wednesday of each month with the executive officer. The organization employs an executive director and administrative assistant.

Membership

The bylaws of the WYCRP allow for up to 25 members for a broad representation from around the State of Wyoming. From the general membership of the WYCRP (WYCRP), five executive committee members are elected in accordance with the organization's bylaws. The executive committee meets monthly with the executive director to attend to the business of the organization.

If you would like to be apply to be a member of the WYCRP, please contact Kelly J. Hamilton at (307) 632-0032 or via email at khamilton@wycrp.org.

Organizational meetings pursuant to bylaws

During this reporting period, WYCRP meetings were held on: 9/13/06, 12/14/06, 2/21/07, 4/4/07 and 6/28/07.

During the reporting period, WYCRP executive committee meetings were held on: 7/1/2006, 7/31/2006, 9/6/2006, 10/10/2006, 11/20/2006, 1/3/07, 2/7/07, 2/21/07, 4/4/07, 5/2/07 and 6/6/2007.



Glossary

AFCARS	Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocates
CFSR	Child and family services review
CHINS	Child in need of supervision
CPS	Child Protection Services
DFS	DFS
Disparity	The condition or fact of being unequal when used in describing disproportionality in the child welfare system
Disproportionality	A statistical and conceptual overview of a situation in which a particular racial ethnic group of children are represented in foster care at a higher or lower percentage than their representation in the general population
DOH	Wyoming Department of Health
FINS	Family in need of services
GAL	Guardian ad Litem
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act
JS	Juvenile Services
MDT	Multi Disciplinary Team
Mini CFSR	Wyoming's instrument used to conduct child and family services reviews
NCANDS	National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System
PIP	Program Improvement Plan
PUR	Period under review
Second Partied	The review of a Mini CFSR instrument for completeness and accuracy
WBS	Wyoming Boys School
WGS	Wyoming Girls School
WYCRP	WYCRP, Incorporated

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NOTES



“I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves.”

Thomas Jefferson – 1821

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