

Final Report
New Hampshire Child and Family Services Review
November 2010

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



Nicholas A. Toumpas
Commissioner

Maggie Bishop
Director

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

129 PLEASANT STREET, CONCORD, NH 03301-3857
603-271-4451 1-800-852-3345 Ext. 4451
FAX: 603-271-4729 TDD Access: 1-800-735-2964

December 2, 2010

In August 2010 the Division for Children Youth and Families and Division for Juvenile Justice Services underwent a comprehensive quality review by the federal government called a Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The review focuses on three domains: Safety, Permanency and Well-Being of families and children served by the two agencies. The goal of the review is to help DCYF/DJJS improve child welfare and juvenile justice programs and strive to achieve the standards set by the federal government.

The Administration of Children and Families summed up the work since the last review in 2003 acknowledging the dedication and commitment from the leadership within DCYF and DJJS resulting in the culmination of a vision that values children, families and their communities, and appreciates and supports the agency workforce.

The federal review includes a program improvement process that will build on the organizations strengths and provide a process that will lead to improvements in safety, permanency and well being outcomes for children and families served by DCYF/DJJS. For your review we are posting the 2010 Child and Family Services Review Final Report.

Sincerely,

Maggie Bishop
Director
Division for Children, Youth and Families

William W. Fenniman, Jr.
Director
Division for Juvenile Justice Services

INTRODUCTION

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

The New Hampshire CFSR was conducted the week of August 2, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2009, to August 6, 2010. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), and Division for Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period ending September 30, 2008
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 17 cases in Littleton and Conway (Littleton/Conway), 31 cases in Manchester, and 17 cases in Portsmouth
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

All 65 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the children in the cases reviewed are presented in the table at the end of this section. For this table, and for other tables in the report, figures displayed may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Findings reported here pertain to children receiving services from DCYF and from DJJS pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DCYF. In New Hampshire, two divisions within DHHS share statutory and practice responsibility for the safety, permanency, and well-being of the State's children and youth. DCYF is the agency mandated to respond to concerns for child maltreatment while DJJS is the agency mandated to respond to children in need of services (CHINS) and youth adjudicated delinquent.

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

Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

Case Characteristics	Foster Care	In-Home Services
Total Number of Cases	40	25
Date case was opened		
Open prior to the period under review	30 (75%)	9 (36%)
Open during the period under review	10 (25%)	16 (64%)
Child entered foster care during the period under review	15 (37.5%)	N/A
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than 10	19 (47.5%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	7 (17.5%)	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	7 (17.5%)	*
16 and older	7 (17.5%)	*
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic	0	*
Asian Non-Hispanic	0	*
Black Non-Hispanic	1 (2.5%)	*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	0	*
Hispanic (of any race)	5 (12.5%)	*
White Non-Hispanic	34 (85%)	*
Unknown/Unable to Determine	0	*
Two or More Races Non-Hispanic	0	*
Primary reason for opening case		
Physical abuse	1 (2.5%)	0
Sexual abuse	0	2 (8%)
Emotional maltreatment	0	0
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	14 (35%)	8 (32%)
Medical neglect	1 (2.5%)	0
Abandonment	2 (5%)	0
Mental/physical health of parent	5 (12.5%)	0
Mental/physical health of child	1 (2.5%)	1 (4%)
Substance abuse by parent	8 (20%)	2 (8%)
Child's behavior	5 (12.5%)	5 (20%)
Substance abuse by child	1 (2.5%)	1 (4%)
Domestic violence in child's home	0	1 (4%)
Child in juvenile justice system	2 (5%)	3 (12%)
Other	0	2 (8%)

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

SECTION A: OUTCOMES

In the Outcomes Section of the CFSR Final Report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 items reviewed. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The item ratings are used to determine the performance of a State on the seven outcomes, each of which incorporates one or more of the individual items. The evaluation options for these outcomes are “substantially achieved,” “partially achieved,” and “not achieved.” For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern identified for that outcome.

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

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

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

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

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State’s performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of data indicators or percentages regarding Strength and Area Needing Improvement ratings. Key changes in the CFSR case review process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of New Hampshire’s status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State’s first CFSR, which was held in fiscal year (FY) 2003, the State’s status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Differences in findings across the sites included in the Onsite Review are presented in the tables. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate.

I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	7	6	7	20	71.4
Partially Achieved	0	2	1	3	10.7
Not Achieved	0	4	1	5	17.9
Total Applicable Cases	7	12	9	28	
Not Applicable Cases	10	19	8	37	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	100%	50%	78%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (%)	State's Percentage	Meets Standards?
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6 +	95.8	Yes
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68 +	99.88	Yes

Status of Safety Outcome 1

New Hampshire is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 71.4 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. However, New Hampshire met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence and absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

New Hampshire also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR. However, more recent data from the State's 2002 data profile showed that the State met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence; subsequently, the State was determined to be in substantial conformity with this outcome. Therefore, New Hampshire was not required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

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

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 28 (43 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

State policy requires that the agency must commence an assessment of credible reports of child abuse and neglect that warrant an investigation. The time period for commencing an assessment excludes weekends and holidays.

Timeframes for commencing investigations of reports of child abuse and neglect are the following:

- Level I: Face-to-face contact with the child victim is required within 24 hours of receipt of the report by the district office.
- Level II: Face-to-face contact with the child victim is required within 48 hours of receipt of the report by the district office.
- Level III: Face-to-face contact with the child victim is required within 72 hours of receipt of the report by the district office.

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

Item 1 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	7	7	7	21	75
Area Needing Improvement	0	5	2	7	25
Total Applicable Cases	7	12	9	28	
Not Applicable Cases	10	19	8	37	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	100%	58%	78%		

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 21 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy. Item 1 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes. The seven cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement included eight reports that were not investigated in a timely manner (two Level I reports, five Level II reports, and one Level III report).

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 1 was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, New Hampshire has a Centralized Intake Unit (CIU) that maintains responsibility for responding to all initial contacts for inquiries, information, and referrals. In addition, CIU is responsible for determining whether reports of maltreatment meet DCYF criteria regarding suspected child abuse or neglect. The Statewide Assessment reports that new allegations of abuse and neglect received on open cases are sent from CIU to the district office as a subsequent report. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that a Special Investigation Unit (SIU) provides standards and conducts investigations of alleged abuse and neglect of children in residential care facilities and foster homes.

The Statewide Assessment reports that 10 Child Protective Service Workers (CPSWs) receive reports during work hours Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Local law enforcement agencies provide coverage for reports made after DCYF work hours. The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF implemented Structured Decision Making (SDM), a set of research-based tools designed to identify safety and risk factors at the point of intake and at other critical points in the life of the case, which provide consistency and

guide staff at critical service decision points. The Statewide Assessment also notes that SDM tools are used to determine the level of the response needed (Level I, II, or III), but that the district office supervisor has the discretion to grant an extension of the timeframe requirements on levels II and III assessments in specific circumstances when there are no immediate safety concerns.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Bureau of Organizational Learning and Quality Improvement (BOLQI) collects data with regard to the timeliness of investigations. BOLQI data from 2009 show that 69.1 percent of assessments of all priority levels were initiated within required timeframes. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that Case Practice Reviews (CPRs), mirroring the CFSR process, were conducted in each district office from June 2006 through August 2009. The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 1 was rated as a Strength in 73 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

The Statewide Assessment notes that requests for information about services are referred to the appropriate local, State, Federal, or private agencies for services.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that delays in responding to reports of maltreatment in accordance with required timeframes sometimes occur due to child or parental refusal to cooperate and/or allow access to the child and an inability to coordinate an assessment with local law enforcement.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in responding to reports of abuse or neglect in a timely manner. Some stakeholders indicated that DCYF responds in a timely manner and that law enforcement agencies coordinate with DCYF in conducting investigations. However, other stakeholders indicated that, although Level I reports are responded to in a timely manner, levels II and III reports are not responded to consistently in a timely manner. In addition, a few stakeholders indicated that CIU does not direct referrals to the district offices in a timely manner. Some stakeholders also indicated that there are inconsistencies in how risk is assessed by CIU and some cases are inappropriately screened-out.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 16 (25 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine if there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review, and, if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. The results of the assessment of item 2 are presented in the table below.

Item 2 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	4	5	5	14	87.5
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	0	2	12.5
Total Applicable Cases	4	7	5	16	
Not Applicable Cases	13	24	12	49	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	100%	71%	100%		

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 14 cases when there was only one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family and there was not another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period. Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases when there were two substantiated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period.

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

- In 29 cases, there were three or fewer reports.
- In 29 cases, there were between four and nine reports.
- In seven cases, there were 10 or more maltreatment reports.

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of an Area Needing Improvement. In 87.5 percent of the applicable cases, there was no recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month period. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 2 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF minimizes repeat maltreatment by consistently using both formal and informal risk and safety assessments during case planning. The Statewide Assessment reports that DCYF is addressing an agency practice of substantiating each maltreatment report on the same or similar circumstances within 60 days, which can result in multiple findings of maltreatment for the same incident and thus result in an incorrect incidence level for repeat maltreatment. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, DCYF also is addressing the effectiveness and consistency with which the CPSW reviews the family history of maltreatment allegations and how the CPSW factors this information into the determination following the initial assessment.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 2 was rated as a Strength in 95.6 percent of the cases reviewed statewide and that 9 of the 12 district offices scored 100 percent on this item.

Stakeholder Interview Information

A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed concern that cases in which multiple reports are assessed as unfounded could actually represent repeat maltreatment.

Safety Outcome 2

Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	10	24	14	48	73.8
Partially Achieved	2	5	1	8	12.3
Not Achieved	5	2	2	9	13.8
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	59%	77%	82%		

Status of Safety Outcome 2

New Hampshire is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 73.8 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. New Hampshire also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 review was that, in some cases reviewed, the assessments conducted were not sufficient to address the safety issues in the home, which resulted in some children remaining at risk.

To address the identified concern, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Strengthened the assessment process by reevaluating intake criteria and the assessment policy
- Developed a second-level screening process and staff training via leadership meetings
- Developed the Reference Guide for Early Domestic Violence Identification & Referral and accompanying Domestic Violence Indicators
- Improved the use of SDM by reviewing the current use of the tool and establishing an SDM Core Team to oversee the application of SDM during intake and assessment
- Established regular and ongoing review of practice issues relative to assessment and family services
- Established risk assessment procedures within DJJS
- Improved the array of and staff's knowledge of prevention services

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable for 39 (60 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home, or if there were no concerns regarding the safety of any of the children in the home during the period under review. For applicable cases, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families that would prevent placement of children in foster care and at the same time ensure their safety. The results of the assessment of item 3 are presented in the table below.

Item 3 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	7	15	11	33	85
Area Needing Improvement	3	0	3	6	15
Total Applicable Cases	10	15	14	39	
Not Applicable Cases	7	16	3	26	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	70%	100%	79%		

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- Although no services were provided when the child was removed from the home, the removal was necessary to ensure the safety of the child (six cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal (17 cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent reentry (10 cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. This included (but was not limited to) the following: substance abuse treatment, domestic violence treatment, family and individual counseling, mental health treatment, therapy, parent aide, parent skills courses, educational advocacy and the use of alternative educational settings, family support, and intensive in-home services.

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

- Services were not provided to the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (one case).
- Services were provided, but they did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home (two cases).
- No services were provided to prevent the children's removal from the home, although the removal was not immediately necessary to ensure the children's safety (one case).
- Although services were provided to one child in the home, services were not provided to all children in the home, and some children were at risk in the home (two cases).

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 85 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 3 was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CPSW must complete the SDM Safety Assessment within 24 hours of face-to-face contact with the alleged victim and the full assessment must be completed no later than 60 calendar days from the date that the referral was originally received at the district office. Similarly, the Statewide Assessment indicates that DJJS Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers (JPPOs) must complete the Youth Status Report within 30 days of a summary disposition or before the disposition hearing. The Youth Status Report assessment includes an interview with the youth and family.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following placement prevention programs that are in operation statewide and delivered through contracts with community-based agencies:

- Comprehensive Family Support
- Strengthening Families Through Early Childhood Education, which promotes protective factors and builds parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, and provides concrete support in times of need

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from 2007 to 2009 show that 33 percent of the families first entering a Comprehensive Family Support Program were referred by DCYF during an assessment of the family. Of those families, 92 percent did not have a DCYF case opened for at least 2 years following completion of the program.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the effective and consistent use of SDM combined with targeted in-home services has led to a decrease in the percentage of children entering foster care placements. This percentage has declined from 54.5 percent in January 2009 to 46.9 percent in January 2010.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 3 was rated as a Strength in 91.9 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in providing services to families to prevent removal of children from their homes and that services provided by Individual Service Option (ISO) private providers and parent aides are particularly effective. A few stakeholders noted that comprehensive assessments are completed within 60 days and that community agencies assist with the assessment of cases involving sexual abuse or domestic violence.

Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 4 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	10	24	15	49	75
Area Needing Improvement	7	7	2	16	25
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	59%	77%	88%		

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 49 cases when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through the following: conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children’s home or foster home, and addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment.

Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 16 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no initial safety assessment (one case).
- There was no initial risk assessment (two cases).
- There was no ongoing safety assessment in the child’s home during the period under review (nine cases).
- There was no ongoing risk assessment in the child’s home during the period under review (nine cases).
- There were continued risk concerns in the home that were not addressed and/or monitored by the agency (eight cases).
- The case was closed without any safety and risk assessment (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assess and address the risk of harm to the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 4 was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CPSW must complete an SDM safety assessment within 24 hours of face-to-face contact with the child to determine immediate action and/or services needed to protect the child. The Statewide Assessment notes that, prior to closure of the Statewide Assessment, the SDM risk and safety assessment is completed to determine whether to open a case for services, identify appropriate contact requirements, and to inform the case planning process. In addition to the SDM process used by DCYF, the Statewide Assessment notes that DJJS uses a Risk/Needs Assessment Tool and the Detention Assessment Screening Instrument to develop and monitor the Community Supervision Plan that is developed for each child to address interventions, services, and safety. The JPPO must complete the Youth Status Report and Risk/Needs Assessment within 30 days of a summary disposition or before the disposition hearing, which must be held within 30 days of the filing of a petition.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that DCYF and DJJS policies are in place to support best practices relative to safety and risk management for children and youth involved with either or both systems. For example, the Statewide Assessment notes that the CPSW and the JPPO must schedule, attend, and participate in a joint case planning conference within 10 days of the identification of a joint case. The two agencies strive for clear and open communication with one another, with the client family, and with community stakeholders.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the CPR found that item 4 was rated as a Strength in 85.3 percent of the cases reviewed statewide. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is inconsistency among district offices in the timely completion of risk and safety assessments.

The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF is participating in the Breakthrough Series Collaborative to focus on disseminating effective new tools and strategies in key practice areas including safety and risk assessment and decision-making.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in conducting comprehensive safety and risk assessments for children and families. A few stakeholders noted that DJJS, in particular, assesses the safety of the whole family even though the focus of its work is with the juvenile offender.

However, some stakeholders indicated that safety and risk are not assessed consistently on an ongoing basis. In addition, a few stakeholders expressed concern that risk and safety are not appropriately assessed at the time that maltreatment reports are initially received by the agency, as indicated by the situations in which families are the subject of multiple similar maltreatment reports which are determined to be unfounded despite the frequency of the reports.

II. PERMANENCY

Permanency Outcome 1

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	7	12	9	28	70.0
Partially Achieved	3	8	1	12	30.0
Not Achieved	0	0	0	0	0
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	70%	60%	90%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (Scaled Score)	State Score (Scaled Score)	Meets Standards?
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6 +	101.1	No
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4 +	125.7	Yes
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7 +	107.2	No
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5 +	101.6	Yes

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

New Hampshire is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 70.0 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, New Hampshire met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness of adoptions and placement stability, but did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification and permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.

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

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the percentage of children reentering foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode, the percentage of reunifications that occurred within 12 months of the child's entry into foster care, and the percentage of children who were discharged to finalized adoptions within 24 months of entry into foster care.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to ensure that children experienced placement stability while in foster care.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to establish appropriate permanency goals.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to file for termination of parental rights (TPR) in a timely manner and there were numerous agency- and court-related delays pertaining to TPR and adoption finalization.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to achieve reunifications or adoptions in a timely manner.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA).

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Added a Permanency and Adolescent CPSW in each district office to specialize in permanency related issues; specifically to provide consultation on all cases in which the permanency goal is no longer reunification
- Created a Permanency Planning Team (PPT) in each district office to provide an opportunity for cooperative case planning to begin at the onset of a case
- Provided intensive reunification services in the five district offices that have the Permanency Plus Program, which provides time-limited, intensive family reunification services for children in first-time, out-of-home care placements, and expanded this program to four additional district offices
- Improved data accuracy in reporting of foster care reentries
- Focused efforts on recruitment of dual-purpose resource homes that work intensively with the birth family toward reunification and, if reunification is not possible, are prepared to become the permanent placement
- Increased collaboration on cases managed by DCYF and DJJS together and implemented review of these cases by the PPT
- Monitored all children in out-of-home placements to ensure that each has the most appropriate and least restrictive placement and the most appropriate permanency goal
- Monitored the number of cases and courts where TPR decisions were not received within 30 days of the final hearing to ensure that TPR proceedings are in accordance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), and reviewed findings with each district office and judge to resolve issues
- Worked with the Court Improvement Project (CIP) to assess and address reasons for delays in TPR proceedings—reviewed court files, surveyed judges and stakeholders, and expanded the Division of Family Courts statewide to address delays in filing TPR petitions in those areas in which the case had to be transferred from district court to probate court

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 5. Foster care reentries

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 15 (37.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of the assessment of item 5 are presented in the table below.

Item 5 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	2	7	5	14	93
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	1	1	7
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	7	6	15	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	13	4	25	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	83%		

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in 14 cases when the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode or there was evidence that concerted efforts were made to prevent reentry. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when the child’s entry into foster care occurred within 12 months of the date of discharge from a prior foster care placement episode.

Rating Determination

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 93 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

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

The data below are presented to provide additional information about foster care reentry. There is no national standard for the measure of foster care reentry. National standards with regard to permanency have been established only for the scaled composite scores.

The measure of foster care reentry is part of Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification. The State's performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

New Hampshire's performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: In the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period for the data indicators, 19.5 percent of children exiting foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is greater than the national median of 15.0 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF provides services following reunification to ensure a sustained reunification. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that the following strategies support families and inhibit foster care reentry: SDM, Finding Connections, Comprehensive Family Support, Family Resource Centers, Domestic Violence Specialists, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors, and the Post-Adoption Unit.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 5 was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that foster care reentry is not common. However, a few stakeholders indicated that, when children reenter foster care, it can be because the child was returned home prematurely, particularly for cases involving youth served through DJJS.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 6. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child's most recent placement setting. The results of the assessment of item 6 are presented in the table below.

Item 6 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	8	15	9	32	80
Area Needing Improvement	2	5	1	8	20
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	80%	75%	90%		

Item 6 was rated as a Strength in 32 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s current placement was stable, and that the child either did not experience a placement change during the period under review or that the placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests (i.e., they were intended to further achievement of the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services for the child).

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

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

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 26 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in nine cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in five cases experienced three or more placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 80 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

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

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

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, New Hampshire’s performance on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability was as follows:

- C4.1: 84.0 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national median of 83.3 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 86.0 percent.
- C4.2: 67.5 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 65.4 percent.
- C4.3: 44.3 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 41.8 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following strategies support the stability of foster care placements:

- The agency considers the foster parents to be a lifelong connection or permanent home for the child if the child cannot safely return home.
- The agency provides foster parents with after-hours support and respite care.
- The ISO program funds targeted services to support placements and reunifications.
- DCYF and DJJS monitor children entering residential care to ensure that children have an opportunity to make the changes necessary to allow them to return to a family setting.
- The PPT meets at least monthly to provide ongoing consultation, support placement stability, and ensure cooperative case planning among team members including the caseworkers, nurses, domestic violence specialists, alcohol and drug counselors, and Finding Connections specialists.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 6 was rated as a Strength in 81.7 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in ensuring that children have as few foster care placements as possible. Various stakeholders identified the following strategies as contributing to stability for children:

- The use of relative homes as placements
- Intensive work with foster families
- Preparation of children and foster families prior to placement
- Preparation of a comprehensive profile of the child

However, a few stakeholders indicated that youth tend to have less placement stability than younger children. Other stakeholders indicated that there are areas of the State in which there are an insufficient number of foster care placements to meet the need and that the scarcity of placements limits the ability of the agency to find an appropriately matched foster home for each child.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 7 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	7	16	9	32	80
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	1	8	20
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	70%	80%	90%		

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 32 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and, if relevant, that the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.

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

- The child’s permanency goal at the time of the onsite CFSR was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (three cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (two cases).
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, including the requirement to document compelling reasons for not filing for TPR in the case file (three cases).

ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 81 percent of 16 applicable cases.

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

- Reunification with parents only (four cases)
- Guardianship only (one case)
- Adoption only (13 cases)
- OPPLA only (five cases)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and reunification with parents (nine cases)
- Concurrent goals of guardianship and reunification with parents (three cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and reunification with relatives (one case)

- Concurrent goals of adoption and OPPLA (one case)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and OPPLA (two cases)
- Concurrent goals of guardianship, reunification with parents, and OPPLA (one case)

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 80 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements when relevant. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 7 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C3.1: 25.6 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is greater than the national median of 25.0 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 29.1 percent.
- C3.2: 98.8 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 98.0 percent.
- C3.3: 61.9 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is greater than the national median of 47.8 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following permanency options are considered for children: reunification with the family of origin, permanent placement with extended family (guardianship), and adoption. The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF allows Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA) (also known as OPPLA) as an additional goal option for permanency, but that the designation of an APPLA goal must be approved by the court at a permanency hearing.

The Statewide Assessment reports that, within 30 days of the child's placement, a primary and secondary goal for the child must be established. The Statewide Assessment indicates that concurrent planning is used to identify and work toward a child's primary

permanency goal while simultaneously identifying and working on a secondary goal. The concurrent plan refers to the alternative or contingency plan for the child if reunification with a parent is not possible.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 7 was rated as a Strength in 76.1 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State sets appropriate permanency goals for children in a timely manner and that concurrent goals are established for most children in foster care. Several stakeholders indicated that reunification is considered as the primary goal in the majority of cases. Although several stakeholders indicated that the agency works to achieve both concurrent goals, some stakeholders indicated that concurrent goals are pursued sequentially, rather than simultaneously. For example, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that adoption is not considered until efforts made to achieve reunification have been discontinued.

A few Littleton, Conway, and Portsmouth stakeholders indicated that the appropriateness of case goals is reviewed on a regular basis during the PPT meetings.

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

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 21 (52.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of the assessment of item 8 are presented in the table below.

Item 8 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	3	9	6	18	86
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	1	3	14
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	11	7	21	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	9	3	19	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	82%	86%		

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in 18 cases when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three

cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner.

Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 86 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 8 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, New Hampshire's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification is presented below for the measures pertaining to timeliness:

- C1.1: 70.5 percent of the reunifications occurred in more than 8 days but less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national median of 69.9 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 75.2 percent.
- C1.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification after being in foster care for at least 8 days was 7.2 months. This length of stay is greater than the national median of 6.5 months. (For this measure, a lower number reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C1.3: 35.7 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in more than 7 days but less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 39.4 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF and DJJS are required to provide services to support the goals of reunification or placement with relatives. The Statewide Assessment notes that the goal of reunification is preferred to the goal of guardianship.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following strategies that assist DCYF in the achievement of the goals of reunification or guardianship in a timely manner:

- The Accelerated Reunification Model (ARM) identifies families for whom intensive services delivered through contract providers could enable a child to reunify within 30 days. In 2008, DCYF developed this program in collaboration with Casey Family Services and it is currently being rolled out statewide.
- Relative Guardianship is supported through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Relative Payee program.

- The PPT focuses ongoing attention on permanency.
- Incarcerated parents are invited to participate actively in the case planning process.
- Comprehensive Family Support programs support reunification and guardianship.
- Strengthening Families promotes protective factors and builds parental resilience.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 8 was rated as a Strength in 80.9 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in providing appropriate reunification services to families. Various stakeholders indicated that parent aides, ARM, and ISO providers offer services that are particularly useful in achieving timely reunifications.

Despite these positive comments, a few Littleton, Conway, and Manchester stakeholders indicated that reunification sometimes occurs prematurely, particularly for cases involving youth served through DJJS where the focus is on the child rather than the family.

Item 9. Adoption

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 19 (47.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The results of the assessment of item 9 are presented in the table below.

Item 9 Ratings*	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	6	5	2	13	68
Area Needing Improvement	1	5	0	6	32
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	10	2	19	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	10	8	21	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	86%	50%	100%		

*Four cases with concurrent goals of reunification and adoption are not included here because the goal of reunification was achieved during the period under review in less than 12 months from the time of the child's entry into foster care.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in 13 cases when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in six cases when reviewers identified one or more of the following:

- Delays in the setting hearings to finalize TPR (two cases)
- Delays in completing or approving home studies (one case)
- Delays in the identification of an adoptive resource (four cases)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 19 children with a goal of adoption rated for this item, 9 achieved the goal during the period under review.
- Of the nine children who had a finalized adoption during the period under review, four had been in foster care for less than 24 months.
- Of the 10 children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, 4 had been in foster care for at least 24 months.

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 68 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 9 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, New Hampshire's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions is presented below:

- C2.1: 20.0 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 26.8 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 31.1 months. This median length of stay is less than the national median of 32.4 months but greater than the national 25th percentile of 27.3 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C2.3: 27.1 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the year. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 22.7 percent.
- C2.4: 18.5 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 10.9 percent.

- C2.5: 74.4 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 53.7 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the goal of adoption is preferred to the goal of guardianship, even for children who are placed with relatives. The Statewide Assessment notes that voluntarily mediated adoption (VMA) provides an opportunity for all parties to participate actively in a court-approved mediation program to create a timely permanency plan of adoption for the child. The Statewide Assessment reports that the number of VMAs increased from 54 completed in 2008 to 68 completed in 2009. The Statewide Assessment indicates that VMA is completed prior to the surrender of parental rights and no later than the entry of any adoption decree when reunification is no longer a permanency option.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the Post-Adoption Services Program provides families with referral to services, advocacy, short-term case management, in-home supportive services, and professional consultation.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 9 was rated as a Strength in 62.9 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State’s effectiveness in achieving adoptions for children in a timely manner. Various stakeholders identified the following factors that facilitate timely adoption:

- VMA is a helpful strategy to expedite adoption through a cooperative process.
- Adoption subsidies are available, and they have been restructured to target the specific needs of the child.
- Post-adoption services are available.

However, some stakeholders noted that there are delays in scheduling hearings to address TPR and finalize TPR and adoptions due in part to staff furloughs reducing the number of days courts are available to hear child welfare cases.

Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 7 (17.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. The results of the assessment of item 10 are presented in the table below.

Item 10 Ratings*	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	2	2	2	6	86
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	14
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	2	2	7	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	18	8	33	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	67%	100%	100%		

*Two cases with concurrent goals of reunification/guardianship and OPPLA are not included here because the goal of reunification/guardianship was achieved during the period under review in less than 12 months from the time of the child's entry into foster care.

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in six cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and/or to provide the necessary service to prepare the child for independent living. Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that concerted efforts were not made to ensure that the child was placed in a permanent living arrangement.

The following provides information about the age of the child at the time the goal of OPPLA was established:

- Two children were age 10 or younger.
- Two children were older than age 10 but younger than age 16.
- Three children were age 16 or older.

Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 86 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 10 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires DCYF to initiate independent living preparations for children at the age of 14. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the Adolescent Program, which is implemented by Adolescent Workers in each district office, ensures that current and former DCYF and DJJS youth obtain the preparation, resources, and positive youth development services they need to establish permanent connections and become healthy, self-sufficient, and successful adults. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the Aftercare Services Program is a voluntary program that provides continued case management, future planning, and financial assistance designed to meet the needs of former foster care youth pursuing educational, employment, housing, and other goals.

The Statewide Assessment notes that CPSWs have ongoing discussions with older youth regarding adults in their lives who may provide long-term care support and guidance. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Finding Connections program identifies

relatives, other supports, and positive resources to increase the connections available to children and youth in foster care and to enhance the post-care support network.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 10 was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State’s effectiveness in appropriately addressing the needs of children with the goal of OPPLA. Various stakeholders indicated that the goal of OPPLA is established only for children for whom another goal has been ruled out. Most stakeholders indicated that Adolescent Workers, Finding Connections specialists, and the New Hampshire Teen Responsibility and Independent Living Skills program are effective in meeting the needs of youth in foster care. In addition, some stakeholders noted that foster parents are helpful in providing independent living skills training to youth. Some stakeholders noted that tuition waivers and other funds are used to support children in transition from foster care to adulthood. However, other stakeholders indicated that there are not enough housing or educational services to support the transition out of foster care.

Permanency Outcome 2

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	10	18	7	35	87.5
Partially Achieved	0	2	3	5	12.5
Not Achieved	0	0	0	0	0
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	100%	90%	70%		

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

New Hampshire is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87.5 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. New Hampshire also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care with their siblings and parents.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to seek and assess relatives as placement resources, particularly paternal relatives.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to support or strengthen the parent-child relationship, particularly with respect to fathers.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Revised SDM Case Contact Guidelines to improve practice and ensure consistency regarding visits between children in foster care and their parents and siblings
- Focused efforts, through the use of the Permanency Plus Program, on early identification of relative resources within 30 days of placement
- Used a team approach, through the use of the Permanency Plus Program and including the birth family and the foster family, to promote a strong and consistent relationship between the parent and child
- Focused efforts on identifying fathers, paternal relatives, and/or other appropriate parties in a timely manner

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

 X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 31 (77.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if: TPR was attained prior to the period under review, contact with parents was not considered to be in the child's best interests, and/or parents were deceased or their whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child's most current foster care setting was near the child's parents or close relatives. The results of the assessment of item 11 are presented in the table below.

Item 11 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	8	14	8	30	97
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	0	1	3
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	15	8	31	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	5	2	9	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	93%	100%		

Item 11 was rated as a Strength in 30 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed in the same community as the parents or in close proximity (23 cases).
- Even though the child was placed out of his or her community, the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the permanency goal (seven cases).

Item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the child was not placed in close proximity to the child’s parents.

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed children in locations close to their parents or relatives when appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 11 also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are required to make placement decisions based on the least restrictive setting that is in close proximity to the parents’ home, if this is consistent with the best interests and/or special needs of the child.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following strategies to facilitate the placement of children in close proximity to their parents:

- The Finding Connections Program identifies possible placement resources for children in foster care.
- Foster care recruitment and retention activities are planned by local teams in each district office to facilitate the placement of children within the community from which they were removed.
- The ISO can provide specialized services to support children in placements within the community who otherwise would need specialized therapeutic placements outside the community.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 11 was rated as a Strength in 94.7 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State places children in close proximity to their homes whenever possible.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 17 (42.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were currently, or had been, placed together, and if separated, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children. The results of the assessment of item 12 are presented in the table below.

Item 12 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	5	7	3	15	88
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	0	2	12
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	9	3	17	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	11	7	23	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	78%	100%		

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed with siblings (six cases).
- The separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs or because placement with siblings was not in the child’s best interests (nine cases).

Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together. For those cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement, one case involved a group of 4 siblings and one case involved a group of three siblings.

Rating Determination

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 88 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 12 was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, children and youth who must be placed away from their families are placed together with their siblings unless the serious specific needs or the safety of one or more siblings justifies separating them. The Statewide Assessment notes that the PPT reviews whether siblings are placed appropriately, together or separately, at regular intervals. The Statewide Assessment indicates that resource homes are shared among districts to increase the options for placing sibling groups together.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 12 was rated as a Strength in 93 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State makes efforts to keep siblings together in foster care unless it is in the best interests of one of the siblings to be placed separately.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 34 (85 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child's life or were deceased; or visitation with a parent was not considered in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care, and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The results of the assessment of item 13 are presented in the table below.

Item 13 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	9	16	6	31	91
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	3	3	9
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	16	9	34	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	4	1	6	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	67%		

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 31 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure sufficient visitation with the mother (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure sufficient visitation with the father (three cases).

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

Typical Frequency of Child’s Visits During the Period Under Review	With Mother	With Father	With Siblings in Foster Care
Visits occurred at least once a week	15 (50%)	7 (28%)	5 (50%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	6 (20%)	2 (8%)	3 (30%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	0	4 (16%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	9 (30%)	5 (20%)	2 (20%)
There were no visits during the period under review	0	7 (28%)	0
Total Applicable Cases	30	25	10

The data indicate that children visited at least once per month with their mothers in 70 percent of the applicable cases, with their fathers in 52 percent of the applicable cases, and with their siblings in foster care in 80 percent of the applicable cases.

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 91 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires caseworkers to develop a family visitation plan to ensure that connections between children in foster care and their parents and siblings are maintained. Policy also requires that visitation must take place in the “least restrictive” setting possible, considering the safety of the child and the appropriateness of the type of visit.

In addition to developing a visitation plan, the Statewide Assessment notes that the agency has established specific efforts to ensure that parents are not excluded from contact with their children. One effort is the Incarcerated Parents program, which supports visitation between children in foster care and their parents through in-person contacts or via telephone or web conferencing. Another effort is the Absent Parent Affidavit, which must be submitted to the court at each hearing and addresses efforts to locate absent parents.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 13 was rated as a Strength in 71 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State makes efforts to ensure that children in foster care visit with their parents and siblings who are placed in other foster homes. Some Manchester stakeholders noted that parent aides facilitate and supervise visitation when necessary. A few stakeholders noted that the requirement to file the Absent Parent Affidavit is helpful in identifying absent parents early in the case.

Item 14. Preserving connections

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 14 was applicable for 39 (97.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. One case was not applicable for this item because the child was an infant and was in foster care for less than 30 days. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child’s connections to neighborhood, community, faith, language, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 14 are presented in the table below.

Item 14 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	10	18	8	36	92
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	1	3	8
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	20	9	39	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	1	1	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	90%	89%		

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 36 cases when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends. Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three cases when reviewers determined that the agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to extended family.

Rating Determination

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 92 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections with neighborhood, community, faith, language, extended family, Tribe,

school, and friends. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 14 also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following strategies support connections for children in foster care:

- The Relative Notification policy requires caseworkers to send a Relative Notification Letter to all identified relatives to explore their appropriateness and willingness to care for the child.
- The Finding Connections program requires caseworkers to identify relatives and other community resources as supports for children and to document these efforts in the social study section of the case plan. State FY 2008 data show that 65 percent of cases discharged by connection specialists have “new adults” located.
- DCYF works closely with community members who represent different cultural, racial, or ethnic backgrounds to build and support cultural competency within resource families.
- DCYF recruits and trains resource families who are culturally responsive to children’s needs regardless of whether or not they have different backgrounds.
- DCYF is participating in the Breakthrough Series Collaborative to focus on disseminating effective new tools and strategies in key practice areas including respecting and responding to race, ethnicity, and culture.

The Statewide Assessment notes that, when DCYF has a case that is subject to the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), the CPSW/JPPPO works with the attorney in his/her district office to ensure that appropriate ICWA procedures are met.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 14 was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State makes efforts to ensure that children maintain their connections with their community, school, and extended family while they are in foster care. Some stakeholders indicated that Finding Connections specialists identify relatives and other individuals who can act as permanent connections for children and youth even if they are not used as placement resources.

Item 15. Relative placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 23 (57.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or the child

entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 15 are presented in the table below.

Item 15 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	4	7	5	16	70
Area Needing Improvement	1	4	2	7	30
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	11	7	23	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	9	3	17	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	80%	64%	71%		

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

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

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

- The agency had not made diligent efforts to search for maternal relatives (six cases).
- The agency had not made diligent efforts to search for paternal relatives (seven cases).

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 70 percent of applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 15 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires the following actions on the part of the CPSW:

- Explore placement with relatives and other connections as the first option even when an immediate or unplanned placement is necessary.
- Request information from parents about relatives who could care for the child within the first 30 days of placement.
- Use due diligence to find possible relatives.
- Send a Relative Notification Letter to the identified relatives to explore their appropriateness and willingness to care for the child.
- Document diligent efforts to identify relative connections and potential placements at the 3-, 6-, and 9-month court or administrative reviews.

The Statewide Assessment notes that before children are placed with relatives, safety checks are made with local law enforcement. The Statewide Assessment also notes that relatives receive funds to provide care for the children either by becoming licensed caregivers or through the TANF Relative Payee program.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, there is a Relative Care Specialist staff position in DCYF that is responsible for providing support to relative caregivers and for developing relative placement resources. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that the Finding Connections program provides a Connections Specialist to each district office to mine the case file to identify positive resources for the child, including relatives, for potential placement.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 15 was rated as a Strength in 76.1 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that New Hampshire Bridges (Bridges), a federally compliant State Administered Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) that facilitates the State's delivery of human services to families, children, and the communities in which they live, does not capture information accurately with regard to whether a child is placed with a relative because both the fostering and adopting categories replace the relative category. This issue has been brought to the attention of DCYF's Data Management Team for resolution. In addition, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is inconsistent practice regarding the due diligence with which caseworkers identify relative connections.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State makes efforts to identify relatives at the time a child is placed in foster care. Some stakeholders noted that the Finding Connections specialists continue to work to identify relatives after the child is placed in foster care.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 30 (75 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child, a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child's best interests throughout the period under review, or both parents were deceased. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. Results of the assessment of item 16 are presented in the table below.

Item 16 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	7	13	5	25	83
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	3	5	17
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	15	8	30	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	5	2	10	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	87%	62.5%		

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 25 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in five cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother when applicable (two cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father when applicable (four cases).

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

Efforts Made	With Mother Number of Cases	With Father Number of Cases
Encouraging a parent's participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	24	11
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments	15	5
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	14	8
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them	17	6
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	0	6
Total Applicable Cases (in which concerted efforts were identified)	27	19

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 83 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 16 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CPSW/JPPPO is required to enter information into the case plan about efforts made to maintain and support the parent-child relationship. Specifically, the Statewide Assessment notes that parents are included in the health care of their children when the health plan is developed, medical appointments are made, major medical decisions are needed, or special care for a child is needed. The Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers and foster parents are to encourage biological parents to be involved in any meetings or decisions with regard to educational issues.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the ARM program supports increased contact among biological and pre-adoptive family members who have children in foster care. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that all foster homes have been informed that the expectation of fostering includes engaging with birth families and foster parents are required to work with the birth families when the goal is reunification.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 16 was rated as a Strength in 71.6 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that one barrier to the agency supporting the relationship of the child in foster care with parents is insufficient transportation services, especially in Northern New Hampshire.

Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient substantive stakeholder comments on the relationship of the child in foster care with parents during the onsite CFSR.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	9	18	7	34	52.3
Partially Achieved	6	10	10	26	40.0
Not Achieved	2	3	0	5	7.7
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	53%	58%	41%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

New Hampshire is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 52.3 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 57.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 44 percent of the 25 in-home services cases.

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

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to assess children's and parents' needs and provide appropriate services to meet those needs.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to involve children and families in case planning.
- DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to ensure that the contact between caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads was of sufficient frequency and quality to meet the needs of the family.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Updated the Foster Parent Handbook and developed the Child Information Sheet to ensure that all foster parents have relevant, current, and complete information relative to their children in foster care
- Implemented the SDM Family Strengths, Needs Assessment, and Needs Review to assess families' needs
- Identified and enrolled providers of specialized services needed by children and families including substance abuse counselors and mental health professionals
- Focused efforts on increasing the number of parents and age-appropriate children/youth who attend and participate in case planning at the Administrative Case Review (ACR) meetings
- Revised case plan form, policy, and procedures and provided training to ensure that supervisors provide clinical supervision and oversight of the development of the case plan
- Improved the agency's capacity to meet the needs of children by reducing CPSW caseloads with the addition of the Permanency and Adolescent CPSW in each district office
- Focused efforts on improving the consistency of visitation between the CPSW/JPP0 and the child as specified in the case plan
- Established consistent practices related to the frequency and quality of staff visits with both parents

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 17 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	10	18	9	37	57
Area Needing Improvement	7	13	8	28	43
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	59%	58%	53%		

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 60 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 52 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 37 cases when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met.

Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 28 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was an inadequate assessment of children’s needs (seven cases). (Five cases involved a situation in which there was no assessment of any children in the family.)
- There was an inadequate assessment of mothers’ needs (12 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of fathers’ needs (16 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of foster parents’ needs (two cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address children’s needs (eight cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address mothers’ needs (17 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address fathers’ needs (19 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address foster parents’ needs (4 cases).

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

Target Person for Needs Assessment and Services	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable	Yes	Applicable
Child's needs assessed and met	39 (97.5%)	40	18 (72%)	25
Mother's needs assessed and met	24 (75%)	32	16 (64%)	25
Father's needs assessed and met	17 (63%)	27	12 (57%)	21
Foster parents' needs assessed and met	28 (87.5%)	32	N/A	N/A

The data indicate that the needs of children in foster care are assessed and met consistently. However, the needs of fathers are least likely to be assessed and met.

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 57 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the State had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 17 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that an individualized case plan must be completed within 30 days of case opening and reassessed throughout the life of the case. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the initial case plan must identify the services that are required to address specific needs as based on the finding of the SDM Caregiver and Child strengths and needs assessments. Additional assessments must be completed during the course of the case depending on whether the case is an in-home services case (safety assessment, family risk assessment, and family risk reassessment) or a foster care case (out-of-home placement and reunification assessment).

The Statewide Assessment notes that any intervention offered must target the issues identified in the assessments. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the ISO program provides resources to purchase specific services to target individualized service needs, including intensive therapeutic, social, and community-based services. The Statewide Assessment notes that the PPT reviews and updates case plans at regular intervals.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCYF is participating in the Breakthrough Series Collaborative to focus on disseminating effective new tools and strategies in key practice areas including integrated and comprehensive assessment and maintaining a focus on permanency and well-being.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 17 was rated as a Strength in 56.3 percent of the cases reviewed statewide. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that results of the CPR indicate that children’s needs were being assessed and addressed, but the needs of biological parents and, sometimes, foster parents, were not being assessed in a routine manner.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that, despite the implementation of the Finding Connections program and the Absent Parent Affidavits that are required at each hearing, it is a challenge to identify, involve, and engage fathers in case activities.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in ensuring that assessments are completed for children and families both initially and throughout the life of the case. Stakeholders noted that assessments are completed using the SDM tools.

Although a few stakeholders indicated that foster parents’ needs are assessed and appropriate services are provided to meet those needs, several stakeholders suggested that foster parents have unmet needs for services.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable for 62 (95 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, parents were not involved with the child in any way, and/or the child was too young or had cognitive delays or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (when appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process, and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child’s best interests. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. The results of the assessment of item 18 are presented in the table below.

Item 18 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	10	18	13	41	66
Area Needing Improvement	7	10	4	21	34
Total Applicable Cases	17	28	17	62	
Not Applicable Cases	0	3	0	3	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	59%	64%	76%		

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 73 percent of the 37 applicable foster care cases and 56 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 41 cases when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 21 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process. Specific information about involving mothers, fathers, and children in case planning is shown in the table below.

Person Involved in Case Planning	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable Cases	Yes	Applicable Cases
Mother	26 (81%)	32	19 (76%)	25
Father	19 (70%)	27	15 (68%)	22
Child	23 (96%)	24	15 (68%)	22

The data indicate that children and mothers in foster care cases are more likely to be involved in case planning. Fathers in both foster care and in-home cases are least likely to be involved in case planning.

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 66 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 18 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that the case plan must be completed within 30 days from the date a non-placement case is assigned and 60 days from the date of removal for placement cases. The case plan must be developed by the DCYF representative in conjunction with the family and service providers and is updated every 6 months. This group collectively determines the services that are needed to meet the family’s needs. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Social Study section of the Case Plan documents family needs and describes how the family and the caseworkers will work together to achieve the goals established in the plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the following strategies facilitate the engagement of children and parents in case planning:

- Children and parents are given the opportunity to participate in initial and ongoing case planning.
- Incarcerated parents are invited to participate actively in the case planning process.
- Finding Connections mandates monthly searches for absent parents.
- The Absent Parent Affidavit must be submitted to the court at each hearing, usually every 3 months.
- Supervision Reports, the PPT, and the ACR monitor the engagement of families in case planning.

- The Breakthrough Series Collaborative focuses on disseminating effective new tools and strategies in key practice areas including engaging the child/youth and family.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the ACR is an independent assessment of the case performed every 6 months. The Statewide Assessment reports that the ACR assesses the parents’ and child’s involvement in the development and modification of the case plan. ACR data indicate that compliance with requirements to involve family members in case planning improved from 86 percent in 2006 to 99 percent in 2009. However, the Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 18 was rated as a Strength in 66.9 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the engagement of families in case planning is inconsistent and that case plans often are created by the caseworker and then shared with the families instead of developed collaboratively. In addition, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that stakeholder information collected during the CPR indicates that many youth are not aware of their permanency plans.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State’s effectiveness in involving children and parents in case planning. Most stakeholders indicated that parents, children, and youth in both DCYF and DJJS are involved in developing the case plan and in case planning on an ongoing basis. Some Manchester, Littleton, and Conway stakeholders indicated that caseworkers use the social study process to engage families in case planning. However, some stakeholders indicated that the State is inconsistent in its efforts to involve parents, children, and youth in case planning.

Item 19. Caseworker visits with child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 19 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	14	27	15	56	86
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	2	9	14
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	82%	87%	88%		

Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 97.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 68 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 56 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

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

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

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases	In-Home Services Cases
Visits occurred at least once a week	6 (15%)	1 (4%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	6 (15%)	4 (16%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	27 (67.5%)	15 (60%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	1 (2.5%)	5 (20%)
Total Cases	40	25

The data indicate that caseworkers visited with children at least once per month in 97.5 percent of the foster care cases and 80 percent of the in-home services cases.

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 86 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 19 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are required to visit face-to-face with the child monthly in the child’s home, in the child’s foster home, or in the child’s residential facility. The Statewide Assessment notes that policy requires DCYF staff to follow the SDM Children in Placement Case Contact protocol or Children In-Home Case Contact protocol, as appropriate, when conducting visits with children. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that documentation of case visits does not always reflect whether caseworkers discussed case plan goals with the child.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the following strategies support the effectiveness of caseworker visits with children:

- The reduction of caseworker caseloads
- The use of Supervisor’s Report, the PPT, and the ACR to monitor caseworker visits with children

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 19 was rated as a Strength in 79.2 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State ensures that caseworkers visit at least monthly with children in foster care.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 59 (91 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of their children. All cases that were not applicable are foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker’s face-to-face contact with the children’s mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and ensure the children’s safety and well-being. The results of the assessment of item 20 are presented in the table below.

Item 20 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	11	17	8	36	61
Area Needing Improvement	5	10	8	23	39
Total Applicable Cases	16	27	16	59	
Not Applicable Cases	1	4	1	6	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	69%	63%	50%		

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 65 percent of the 34 applicable foster care cases and 56 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 36 cases when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.

Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 23 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency (14 cases).
- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient quality (10 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency (16 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient quality (10 cases).

- There were no visits with the mother (five cases).
- There were no visits with the father (seven cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the table below.

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	5 (15%)	2 (8%)	0	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	4 (12%)	0	3 (12%)	2 (10%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	11 (33%)	9 (36%)	13 (52%)	9 (43%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	11 (33%)	11 (44%)	6 (24%)	6 (29%)
There were no visits during the period under review	2 (6%)	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	4 (19%)
Total Applicable Cases	33	25	25	21

The data indicate that caseworkers visited at least once per month with mothers in 61 percent of the applicable foster care cases and 64 percent of the in-home services cases; caseworkers visited at least once per month with fathers in 44 percent of the applicable foster care cases and 52 percent of the applicable in-home services cases.

Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 61 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 20 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, there is no required frequency of visits or contacts between caseworkers and the parents of children in foster care. However, the Statewide Assessment indicates that caseworkers are required to visit the child and family in in-home cases at least monthly. The caseworker is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient visits and contacts to facilitate focused and timely goal achievement. The Statewide Assessment notes that frequent court hearings provide the CPSW with an opportunity to engage with birth parents before or after the hearing is held. The Statewide Assessment indicates that incarcerated parents continue to be seen by the CPSW and participate in case planning. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are challenges and inconsistencies in practice in maintaining caseworker contact with fathers in prison, and with parents of older youth. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that there are challenges in identifying fathers and maintaining consistent caseworker visitation with fathers.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 20 was rated as a Strength in 55 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that caseworkers visit regularly with parents of children in foster care.

Well-Being Outcome 2

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	7	25	12	44	91.7
Not Achieved	3	1	0	4	8.3
Total Applicable Cases	10	26	12	48	
Not Applicable Cases	7	5	5	17	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	70%	96%	100%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

New Hampshire is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 91.7 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 94 percent of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 88 percent of the 17 applicable in-home services cases.

New Hampshire was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 48 (74 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable for this item if either of the following applied: Children were not of school age, or children in the in-home services cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-

related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs. The results of the assessment of item 21 are presented in the table below.

Item 21 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	7	25	12	44	92
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	0	4	8
Total Applicable Cases	10	26	12	48	
Not Applicable Cases	7	5	5	17	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	70%	96%	100%		

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 44 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were assessed appropriately and services were provided, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in four cases when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were neither assessed nor addressed.

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 92 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of Strength. A 95-percent standard is established for this item because it is the only item assessed for this outcome. Item 21 was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF and DJJS policy requires that children must be provided with educational planning and educational services. Specific policy requirements include the following:

- Caseworkers must make attempts to keep children in the same school when a child is placed out-of-home.
- When educational needs are identified, caseworkers must refer students for educational testing.
- If a child is eligible for special education services, caseworkers must attend Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings.
- Caseworkers must document educational needs, student records, and, if applicable, the IEP, in the case plan.
- Foster parents are responsible for enrolling children in school and ensuring that adequate educational services are provided.
- Caseworkers and foster parents are to encourage biological parents to be involved in any meetings or decisions with regard to educational issues.
- When a child is initially removed from home or there is a change of placement, DCYF motions the court to join school districts as parties to the case so they can inform the court of the student’s educational needs.

The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF established a statewide protocol among school districts, residential providers, and the New Hampshire Department of Education (DOE) to address credits earned at a residential placement. The Statewide Assessment

indicates that, if a child will be educated in a new school, DCYF formally notifies the two involved school districts so that they can discuss the student’s educational needs.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 21 was rated as a Strength in 95.3 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State’s effectiveness in assessing and meeting the educational needs of children.

Well-Being Outcome 3

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	15	27	12	54	84.4
Partially Achieved	1	0	3	4	6.3
Not Achieved	1	3	2	6	9.4
Total Applicable Cases	17	30	17	64	
Not Applicable Cases	0	1	0	1	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	88%	90%	71%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

New Hampshire is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 84.4 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 92.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 71 percent of the 24 applicable in-home services cases.

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

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 review was that DCYF was inconsistent in its efforts to assess and address children’s mental health needs.

To address the identified concern, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Collaborated with a subgroup of Community Mental Health Center children’s directors to ensure that all children/youth in court-ordered placement receive a mental health and developmental assessment within 30-days of placement
- Assigned a family therapist to each child/youth during their first out-of-home placement
- Committed to making available home-based therapeutic services to all children/youth at home
- Provided training for all district office staff relative to protocols regarding accessing mental health services

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 22. Physical health of the child

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 45 (69 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable for this item if they were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children’s physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of the assessment of item 22 are presented in the table below.

Item 22	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	12	22	10	44	98
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	1	1	2
Total Applicable Cases	12	22	11	45	
Not Applicable Cases	5	9	6	20	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	91%		

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 80 percent of the 5 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 44 cases when reviewers determined that children’s medical and dental needs were assessed routinely and necessary services were provided. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the child’s physical health and dental health needs were assessed but were not addressed adequately.

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of a Strength. In 98 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children’s physical health needs. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that children younger than age 2 must have a comprehensive health and developmental assessment within 48 hours of placement in out-of-home care. Children age 2 and older must have a comprehensive health and developmental assessment within 30 days of placement. The Statewide Assessment indicates that each child in out-of-home care must receive regular medical and dental examinations.

The Statewide Assessment notes that a Child Health Care Plan must be completed for each child in foster care within 30 days of the child’s initial health and developmental assessment and must incorporate physical, dental, mental, and developmental history. This plan must be updated every 6 months or when there are changes in the child’s health. The Child Health Care Plan identifies the child’s health needs and describes how and by whom services will be provided.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 22 was rated as a Strength in 90.6 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that it is a challenge to ensure adequate access to dental care for children in foster care, particularly for children living in small communities.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in meeting the physical and dental health needs of children. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that nurses located in district offices are effective in managing health concerns for children, and these stakeholders expressed concern that there are fewer nurses available due to funding cuts.

Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 49 (75 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable for this item if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been assessed appropriately and appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The results of the assessment of item 23 are presented in the table below.

Item 23 Ratings	Littleton/Conway	Manchester	Portsmouth	Total	Percent
Strength	11	18	11	40	82
Area Needing Improvement	2	3	4	9	18
Total Applicable Cases	13	21	15	49	
Not Applicable Cases	4	10	2	16	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	
Strength by Site	85%	86%	73%		

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of the 26 applicable foster care cases and 74 percent of the 23 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 40 cases when reviewers determined that children’s mental health needs were assessed appropriately and the identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in nine cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- Mental health needs were neither assessed nor addressed (five cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but were not addressed adequately (four cases).

Rating Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 82 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that every child must receive a mental health assessment within 30 days of placement in out-of-home care and that the Child Health Care Plan must include the child’s mental and developmental health history. The Statewide Assessment notes that mental health and child developmental services also are available and are offered to meet the needs of children and families in in-home services cases.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the following strategies facilitate the provision of mental health services to children:

- The New Hampshire Association for Infant Mental Health addresses all systems of development for children birth to 6 years.
- The Foster Care Behavioral Health Program provides comprehensive behavioral health assessment for every child’s first out-of-home placement or upon placement in a group home.
- Psychosocial assessment requirements are place for all in-home services cases.
- The Project for Adolescent Trauma Treatment evaluates and disseminates best practices for severely emotionally disturbed adolescents.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR found that item 23 was rated as a Strength in 88.1 percent of the cases reviewed statewide.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is a lack of mental health care providers in some parts of the State.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that although mental health assessments are conducted appropriately for children, there are not enough mental health service providers to meet the needs in the State, and there are waiting lists to receive mental health services.

SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

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

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. The overall rating for each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (i.e., a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

Rating the Systemic Factor

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

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

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

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

Status of Statewide Information System

New Hampshire is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. New Hampshire also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 24. The State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Bridges is an information system that can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for every child in foster care. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Bridges is the DCYF and DJJS system of record and can identify the status, demographic characteristics, goals, and location of every child in foster care. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Bridges case management system was determined to be fully compliant with Federal SACWIS requirements in 2008. The Statewide Assessment indicates that Bridges displays the actual address of the location of the child in addition to the placement agency.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Bridges data warehouse provides the data and tools for ad hoc management report generation in all functional areas of the application. Standardized reports can be designed to augment reports automatically generated

by Bridges. The Statewide Assessment indicates that caseworkers use Bridges as a case management tool to collect case information, conduct case planning, print reports, and track milestones.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that Bridges can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child in foster care. Several stakeholders noted that Bridges generates reports that are useful to caseworkers and supervisors. Some stakeholders noted that a child’s placement information is accessible across district offices. Some stakeholders also noted that DJJS uses Bridges and that information entered by DCYF and DJJS is accessible across divisions.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

Status of Case Review System

New Hampshire is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. New Hampshire also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- DCYF was not consistent in its efforts to involve parents in the case planning process.
- DCYF was not consistent in its efforts to ensure that permanency hearings were held for children in foster care or for adjudicated delinquents in a timely manner due in part to court hearing delays.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Reviewed and improved the current Case Plan form, policy, and procedures to ensure that every child has a case plan developed with his/her family and with his/her primary CPSW/JPPO
- Increased the number of parents who attend and participate in case planning at ACR meetings

- Provided satisfaction surveys to assess parents' involvement in the development of the case plan
- In partnership with CIP, examined reasons for delays in adjudicatory hearings which could result in delays in permanency hearings
- Adopted policy, developed forms and instructions, and provided training on permanency hearings for DJJS staff to ensure that these hearings would be held consistently in all DJJS cases where children/youth are in foster homes or residential placements

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 25. The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has a process to ensure that each child is provided with a case plan consistently. However, the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews cite an inconsistency in practice in developing case plans jointly with the child's parents. In addition, during the onsite CFSR, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve mothers in case planning in 79 percent of the applicable cases and fathers in case planning in 69 percent of the applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that caseworkers must complete an individualized case plan within 30 days of case opening. The plan must identify the services needed to address specific needs and must be reviewed and updated at least every 6 months, or when placement changes occur. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Family Service CPSW will review with the family the assessment finding and any existing service referrals, determine the family's progress if services have already begun, and complete a social study.

The Statewide Assessment notes that some of the family engagement strategies identified in the Statewide Assessment include the following:

- Completing social studies with the family
- Family team meetings
- The use of Finding Connections specialists and diligent efforts to identify absent parents
- The Incarcerated Parents Program

- The use of the PPT as a way to monitor the engagement of families
- Family engagement training

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the engagement of families in case planning, both initially and on an ongoing basis, is inconsistent and that case plans often are created or updated by the caseworker and then shared with the families instead of being developed collaboratively with the family. The Statewide Assessment also acknowledges that the data used to assess whether case plans are developed collaboratively with parents are limited to whether there is a parent signature on the case plan and that more information is needed to assess family involvement effectively.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the ACR, Supervisory Reports, Court Reviews, CPR, and Scrubs (an internal review of Bridges for key documentation) indicate that DCYF is developing case plans for children in out-of-home care consistently. Data from the ACRs conducted in 2009 show that 98 percent of DCYF and DJJS cases had case plans that were developed in compliance with the timeframe requirements.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The majority of stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State is effective in ensuring that case plans are developed for children in foster care consistently. Various stakeholders indicated that case plans are developed within 30 days, are ready prior to the first dispositional hearing, and are revised every 6 months or more often, as needed.

Many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State is effective in developing case plans jointly with the child’s parents. Some stakeholders indicated that parents are engaged in case planning in both DCYF and DJJS cases initially and on an ongoing basis. However, other stakeholders noted that there are inconsistencies in practice in engaging parents in case planning.

Item 26. The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State provides a process for the periodic review of each child at least once every 6 months. In addition, the court schedules review hearings for each child every 3 months. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, an ACR, which is conducted by a provider under contract with the State, must take place when a child has been in out-of-home care for 6 months. The Statewide Assessment notes that the CPSW is required to prepare the case record for review, schedule the review, and invite parents and other relevant individuals. The Statewide Assessment also notes

that the ACR is held at a location and time that is most supportive of the family and children. The Statewide Assessment reports that in 2009, only 11 children who met the criteria for an ACR did not have a timely review.

In addition to the ACR, the Statewide Assessment indicates that court review hearings are scheduled every 3 months following the dispositional hearing.

The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF and DJJS are in the process of modifying the ACR process to ensure that the first ACR occurs within 10 days, the next within 4 months, and then every 6 months thereafter. The Statewide Assessment notes that the new process has been implemented as a pilot in Portsmouth in January 2010 and in Rochester in April 2010.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in ensuring that an ACR is held regarding the status of each child in foster care at least every 6 months. Several stakeholders indicated that court hearings are held more frequently, usually every 3 months.

Stakeholders commenting on this item agreed that both the court reviews and ACRs are effective in addressing the goals of the case plan and moving the case toward permanency. Portsmouth stakeholders indicated that the Family Assessment and Inclusive Reunification (FAIR) pilot program there provides for more frequent ACRs of foster care cases, addresses the case plan effectively, and has expedited permanency.

Item 27. The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter

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

Item 27 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State ensures that permanency hearings occur when a child has been in out-of-home care for 12 months and at least every 12 months thereafter. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, new Permanency Legislation enacted into State statute and implemented January 1, 2008, requires that the court shall hold and complete a permanency hearing for every abuse and neglect case within 12 months of the adjudicatory finding for out-of-home placement, within 12 months of the date the child enters the out-of-home placement, or when a child has been in out-of-home care for 14 months, whichever is earliest. A permanency hearing must be held every 12 months while the child remains in out-of-home placement.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the State statute requires that at each permanency review hearing, the court must determine whether DCYF has made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan and to consider whether services to the family have been accessible, available, and appropriate. The Permanency Planning Protocols, developed by a collaborative of the CIP, support the court's focus on timeliness in permanency.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in 2007, the CIP received a grant to develop improved performance indicators related to the timeliness of court hearings but that there has been difficulty collecting this information through Bridges because the State is unable to track specific hearing types.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in ensuring that permanency hearings are held for children within 12 months of their entry into foster care. Most Littleton and Conway stakeholders and some Manchester stakeholders indicated that permanency hearings are held in a timely manner every time. However, a few Manchester and Portsmouth stakeholders indicated that there are delays (some indicated a few weeks) in holding the permanency hearing due in part to court furloughs. However, some stakeholders indicated that while other hearings may be delayed, permanency hearings usually are not because they are given priority.

Several stakeholders noted that permanency hearings are effective in addressing the permanent situation for children and youth.

Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act

Strength **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 28 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State provides a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA and information from stakeholder interviews indicates that TPR is filed in a timely manner consistently. In addition, during the onsite CFSR, reviewers determined that ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 81 percent of 16 applicable cases. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, if a permanency order results in establishing a goal of adoption for a child, the district or family court will order DCYF to file a TPR petition. The Permanency Planning Protocols state that the best practice is to file the TPR petition within 60 calendar days of the permanency order, but in all cases the petition shall be filed within 90 days.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCYF has the ability to file a TPR petition absent an order of the court; however, this practice is not common. The Statewide Assessment indicates that DCYF can proceed with TPR if it is determined that adoption is in the child's best interests, but the child is not placed with an adoptive family.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the Model Court in Merrimack features new TPR protocols including the requirement that a TPR petition be filed immediately following the permanency hearing if the court changes the goal to adoption.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the internal approval process for a TPR petition includes the following features:

- The Child Protection Assistant Administrator that oversees a district office reviews the petition and supporting documents.
- Social studies are updated by the CPSW for the permanency hearing and then filed in court with the TPR petition.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Bridges is able to provide reports that identify those children who have been in care for 15 of the past 22 months. However, the Statewide Assessment does not provide data to show the percentage of cases in compliance with the provisions of ASFA.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Consistently, stakeholders across the sites commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally ensures that TPR petitions are filed in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Several stakeholders attributed the positive shift in timeliness to the restructuring of the TPR process within the court system and to the use of mediated agreements. Several stakeholders noted that, when a child has been in foster care for 12 months, often TPR petitions are filed at or immediately after the permanency hearing in which the goal is changed to adoption.

In addition, some stakeholders noted that compelling reasons not to file TPR include providing the parents with additional time to complete case plan goals.

Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State consistently provides caregivers with notice of and an opportunity to be heard in administrative reviews, with regard to court hearings, the State is inconsistent in its efforts to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers are notified. This item was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CPSW is required to notify individuals involved in the case, including foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers, of the date, time, and place that an ACR will be held. ACR data show that 96 percent of DJJS cases and 98 percent of DCYF cases were compliant with this requirement in 2009. The Statewide Assessment also reports that 48 percent of foster parents and 58 percent of relative caregivers attended the ACR in 2009.

The Statewide Assessment reports that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers must receive notice from the court about the date and time of review and permanency hearings and are strongly encouraged to attend. The Statewide Assessment notes that caregivers also are strongly encouraged to submit a letter or report to the court, whether or not they attend the hearing in person. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCYF is required to furnish the court with the current contact information for all caregivers. However, the Statewide Assessment does not provided data regarding notification of caregivers about court hearings with respect to the child in their care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State’s effectiveness in ensuring that caregivers are notified of the ACR and court hearings. Several stakeholders indicated that foster parents are notified about the ACR. However, there was confusion expressed by many stakeholders regarding whether the agency or the court is responsible for providing notice to caregivers of court hearings. Specifically, caregivers at all three sites provided mixed responses when asked whether the court or the agency was responsible for providing notice of court hearings. In addition, many stakeholders indicated that notice of court hearings is not provided to caregivers consistently.

Stakeholders commenting on this item agreed that when caregivers appear at the ACR or court hearings, they have an opportunity to be heard.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

Status of Quality Assurance System

New Hampshire is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance (QA) System. New Hampshire also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children

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

Item 30 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health, including certification standards for service providers. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute and administrative rule require certification, in addition to licensing, for payment standards for community-based providers. All community-based providers, including residential care providers, who receive Medicaid or financial reimbursement from DHHS for services provided to children and families must adhere to these rules. Certification standards identify the qualifications and performance requirements to become a provider for the agency, and DCYF and DJJS may only access certified providers for services for children and families. The Statewide Assessment notes that providers are monitored for compliance by a periodic recertification process as well as through scheduled and periodic site reviews.

The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF uses a system of performance-based contracting to measure case outcomes in residential, home-based, and preventive services. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that the SIU provides standards and conducts investigations of alleged abuse and neglect of children in residential care facilities and foster homes.

The Statewide Assessment notes that comprehensive licensing standards are in place to regulate out-of-home placements. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that SDM provides a set of research-based tools for making decisions related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in ensuring that standards are in place to protect the safety and health of children. Several stakeholders noted that certification standards are in place for ISO providers and residential treatment facilities and that compliance with certification standards is monitored annually. Some stakeholders reported that safety assessment protocols are used to monitor the safety and health of children.

Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State's quality assurance system, the CPR, identifies the strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, develops improvement plans, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CPR, which is modeled on the Federal CFSR process, is held to identify strengths and areas needing improvement in each district office with regard to outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. The Statewide Assessment notes that each ongoing case review component reviews 12 randomly selected ongoing cases—8 from DCYF and 4 from DJJS. Three other review instruments measure the following components: One evaluates the assessment phase of child protective services; one evaluates compliance with fiscal policies and procedures; and one evaluates services delivered to adolescents. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that representatives from BOLQI facilitate a community-based stakeholder focus group during each district office review.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the CPR results are presented in a final report delivered to each district office. If necessary, local Practice Improvement Initiatives (PII) are developed. The PII includes specific action steps to be implemented to improve practice or systemic operations in the areas identified during the onsite review as needing improvement. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCYF and DJJS management work with BOLQI and the district office staff to monitor improvement initiatives and report on program outcomes. In addition, CPR results are used to inform training and statewide policy changes.

To ensure that quality services are provided by DCYF, the Statewide Assessment indicates that BOLQI randomly selects one case or assessment per worker, per month, in each district office for review by supervisors. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that the ACR monthly reports inform DCYF and DJJS of data collected, recent trends, and provide recommendations in order to assess the State's progress toward meeting its goal of permanency for all children in foster care. The Statewide Assessment also indicates

that there is an internal review process called Scrubs. Scrubs reviews the case file and Bridges to ensure that documentation conforms to Federal review standards.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that supervisors’ reports generated by Bridges are used as tools to improve efficiency and quality, guide caseload and staffing decisions, and identify areas of strength and challenges in practice. The Statewide Assessment reports that the CPR and supervisory reports have had positive impacts on practice and on improved outcomes.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that the DJJS Quality Improvement Unit provides independent data analysis and measures program outcomes. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that public oversight groups, such as the Citizen’s Review Panel, the Child Welfare Committee, and the DCYF Advisory Board conduct QA investigations and other review activities.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State conducts the CPR regularly and that the CPR is effective in improving practice. Several stakeholders noted that caseworker participation in the CPR as a reviewer is valuable in improving practice. Some stakeholders noted that CPR results are shared throughout the district office and that improvement plans are developed.

IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

Status of Staff and Provider Training

New Hampshire is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. New Hampshire also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services

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

Item 32 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State is operating an effective pre-service training program for DCYF and DJJS staff, and participation in training is tracked in Bridges. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, training is required for new DCYF and DJJS staff and includes classroom training, on-the-job training, mentoring, and supervision. DCYF operates the Core Academy, which provides 123 hours of training, and DJJS operates the Juvenile Probation and Parole Institute, which provides 150 hours of training. The Statewide Assessment notes that training must be completed within the first 6-12 months of employment and prior to assignment of a full caseload.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the DCYF training curriculum is competency-based and includes the following eight modules:

- Family-centered approach to child protective services
- Engaging families
- Legal issues
- Assessment
- Investigative process
- Casework process and case planning
- Effects of abuse and neglect on child development
- Separation, placement, and reunification

The DJJS training curriculum includes the following subject areas in addition to others:

- Family strengths-based practice in juvenile probation
- Ethics
- Adolescent development
- Special education
- Adolescent mental health issues
- Case planning and file management
- Domestic violence
- Substance abuse
- Residential services
- Community networking, wraparound, and continuum of service

The Statewide Assessment reports that Bridges is used to monitor DCYF and DJJS employee training attendance and completion of core training. The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF core training is provided by the Center for Professional Excellence in Child Welfare (CPE) and that CPE also conducts evaluation and analysis of the training. CPE data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that during 2010, 100 percent of training participants indicated that they were “satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with the core training and with their accomplishment of learning objectives.

The Statewide Assessment notes that BOLQI is responsible for leading and providing learning opportunities for DCYF and DJJS staff and that the Workforce Development Committee leads, implements, and monitors workforce initiatives including internships, job previews, hiring, competency-based training, mentoring, ongoing and advanced training, exit interviews, program improvement surveys, and a statewide advisory council.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that Bridges does not have the capability to provide data reports pertaining to training completion rates and hours or specific modules.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State provides initial training to new DCYF and DJJS caseworkers. Several stakeholders noted that initial training is offered throughout the year and that it is comprehensive and effective in providing caseworkers with the knowledge and skills needed to perform their jobs. In addition, several stakeholders noted that on-the-job training and mentoring programs are particularly effective in preparing new caseworkers for their jobs. Various stakeholders indicated that DCYF and DJJS mentoring programs match new caseworkers with experienced caseworkers to provide an opportunity for the new caseworker to shadow the experienced caseworker over the course of the first year on the job.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP

Strength **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 33 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State requires DCYF and DJJS caseworkers to complete 30 and 40 hours, respectively, of ongoing training annually and that the State develops and provides that training. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that DCYF staff that deliver services directly to children and families must complete 30 hours of ongoing training annually. The Statewide Assessment notes that CPE and Bridges both track participation of DCYF staff in training. The Statewide Assessment notes that DJJS staff are required to complete 40 training hours annually and that 98 percent of DJJS field staff completed ongoing training requirements in 2009.

The Statewide Assessment notes that potential ongoing training needs are identified through the CPR findings, annual training surveys for DJJS staff, and annual individual training plans developed for DCYF staff. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Learning Advisory Council reviews training content to ensure that the training will have a positive impact on the outcomes of children and families. In addition, DCYF has partnered with the CIP and CASA to develop and provide joint ongoing training programs for caseworkers.

The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF staff have access to training opportunities that are provided by State agencies other than DCYF and by community and university partners. The Statewide Assessment reports that CPE data show that 99 percent of participants were satisfied or extremely satisfied with specialized training provided in 2010. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that DJJS data show that 94.3 percent of ongoing training participants were satisfied with training they received.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that supervisors within DCYF and DJJS have access to numerous opportunities for supervisory training. All DJJS supervisors within their first year of promotion must attend DJJS Supervisor Training, which spans a 5-day period. In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that DCYF holds a 10-day intensive, indepth supervisory training on a biannual basis. Both DJJS and DCYF supervisory training curricula include clinical and management content areas.

The Statewide Assessment reports that a series of trainings called Related Trainings, some of which are required, is generally completed within a new employee's first year of employment and includes 60 hours of training. Related Training subjects include but are not limited to domestic violence, mentoring, mental health, interstate compact, cultural competency, and special education.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in providing ongoing training to staff. Some stakeholders indicated that DCYF requires caseworkers to complete 30 hours of annual training and that DJJS requires 40 hours. Most stakeholders commenting on this item indicated that ongoing training that is provided to caseworkers and supervisors is helpful and useful. In addition, several stakeholders indicated that an individual training plan is developed for each staff member and that training liaisons in each district office are particularly helpful in identifying training opportunities. Some stakeholders indicated that mandatory supervisory training is provided to new supervisory staff over the course of 6 months and includes leadership, management, case management, and child welfare content.

However, several stakeholders expressed the opinion that there are not enough ongoing training opportunities relevant to experienced caseworkers.

Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children

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

Item 34 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State requires and provides initial training for prospective adoptive parents and initial and ongoing training for foster parents and residential facility staff. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, all applicants for foster home licensing must attend 21 hours of preservice training and either 16 (for foster parents and staff of licensed facilities) or 32 (for specialized foster families) hours of ongoing training to renew their license every 2 years. The Statewide Assessment notes that, when foster parents renew their licenses they must submit a list of trainings that they have attended to meet the requirement. Specialized foster parents are required to ensure that one-half of their training hours are devoted to becoming more competent in meeting the needs of the children in their care. The Statewide Assessment notes that BOLQI is responsible for providing training for foster and adoptive parents, relative caregivers, residential staff, and providers. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the Caregiver Ongoing Training program provides competency-based courses for foster parents, relative caregivers, and residential staff. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that the Foster/Adopt Parent Association provides monthly support groups statewide.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the same pre-service training, using the Foster and Adoptive Care Essentials (FACES) curriculum, is delivered to both prospective foster and adoptive parents. The Statewide Assessment also notes that residential staff participate in Residential Counselor Core Training, which is a 30-hour competency-based training series to provide the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to the position.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ongoing training needs are identified through the use of surveys, focus groups, support groups, and ongoing dialogue with caregivers. Foster and adoptive parent attendance at training is tracked through the Education and Training Partnership and forwarded to the CPSW who then documents training completion in Bridges. The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the Education and Training Partnership show that 97 percent of participants were satisfied with FACES in 2009. Training for foster parents contracted as individual service providers is tracked by the private child-placing agency.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in providing initial and ongoing training for foster and pre-adoptive parents. Some stakeholders noted that 16 hours of ongoing training is required for foster parents and 32 hours is required for specialized foster families. Several stakeholders indicated that both initial and ongoing training are effective in providing foster and pre-adoptive families with the knowledge and skills needed to care for children in foster care. Several stakeholders also noted that there is a wide variety of training opportunities available throughout the year and that there are no barriers to accessing an adequate number of training hours to meet the requirements.

V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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

Status of Service Array and Resource Development

New Hampshire is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. New Hampshire was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The services available in the State were not adequate to enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.
- Existing services were not consistently available throughout the State. Key services noted to be lacking were substance abuse treatment and mental health services.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Conducted a service resource and needs assessment in each district office that included regular monitoring of all family services cases for adequacy and accessibility of needed community services
- Improved the array of prevention services, dental services, and treatment services for domestic violence, substance abuse, sexual abuse, and mental health
- Improved the access to transportation services for families connected to DCYF and/or DJJS
- Established wraparound teams to work with DCYF and DJJS to ensure access to local services

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency

Strength **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 35 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has a broad array of services to assess the strengths and address the needs of children and families. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State's service array ranges from child care to crisis stabilization, parent education, and counseling services and includes community-based in-home services in addition to placement and permanency planning services. The Statewide Assessment indicates that services are designed to meet the needs of children and families in both DCYF and DJJS. Community-based services are designed to address needs around home stability, risk management, placement avoidance, reunification of children and youth with their families, placement stability and preservation, and permanency preparedness.

The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF collaborates with appropriate community-based partners or other department staff and funds services through the ISO program for both foster care and in-home cases. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that service needs are examined through onsite compliance reviews of providers and adjusted in response to newly identified needs or needs that arise in different areas.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has a broad array of services to assess the strengths and address the needs of children and families. Some stakeholders indicated that in-home preventive services are particularly effective. Although Littleton and Conway stakeholders indicated that there are not enough services in those areas to meet the needs of families and State-level stakeholders indicated that services in the north of the State are fewer, this is discussed under item 36. Manchester and Portsmouth stakeholders indicated that there is a rich array of services in place.

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

Strength **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that, although the State has programs to bring services to the local level and improve access to services throughout the State, there are barriers to accessing key services, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment services, in many parts of the State due to the

rural nature of the State and a deficiency of service providers. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a crucial component of the ISO program is that all services are provided in the home, removing transportation as a barrier to service access. For example, the Statewide Assessment notes that community-based comprehensive family support services are available statewide. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF funds transportation services through independent agencies and has reorganized service delivery to be more convenient to children and families.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following innovative programs developed to meet identified needs in the community:

- The Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor program is active in the northern part of the State to increase access and better meet the substance abuse treatment needs of clients.
- The ARM is used in certain parts of the State to facilitate timely reunification with intensive service provision.
- DCYF uses geomapping technology to assess statewide trends on issues including but not limited to removal rates of children and the number of foster homes in each town.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that State statute requires that at each review hearing the court must consider whether services to the family have been accessible, available, and appropriate.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following barriers to service accessibility:

- It is a challenge to ensure adequate access to dental care for children in foster care, particularly for children living in small communities. However, Medicaid reimbursement has been expanded to enlarge the pool of dentists.
- There is inconsistent access to local community mental health services, and there are waiting lists for mental health services.
- CPR stakeholder interviews revealed that there is a lack of availability of services in certain areas of the State and that there is inconsistency among CPSWs, JPPOs, and providers as to their understanding of available services.
- Transportation is extremely limited, especially in the many rural areas of the State.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR identified the following service areas for which there are not enough providers in parts of the State:

- Stakeholders from all sites noted that there is a lack of sufficient and appropriate mental health assessment and treatment services for parents and children and inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment services for parents and children.
- Stakeholders from all sites noted that there is a lack of transportation options and services.
- Stakeholders from all sites noted that there is a lack of transition services and housing for youth transitioning out of foster care.
- State-level, Littleton, Conway, and Manchester stakeholders noted that there is a lack of sufficient child care.

- Littleton, Conway, and Manchester stakeholders noted that there is a lack of sufficient foster homes.
- Littleton, Conway, and Portsmouth stakeholders noted that there is a lack of sufficient parenting supports.

Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that even though there have been budget cuts and there are not enough service providers in key service areas, families receive the services they need.

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

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

Item 37 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State effectively uses case planning mechanisms and flexible funds to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families. Although performance in the case reviews indicates that, in practice, children and families are not receiving the services that they need consistently, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has the capacity to individualize services for families through the use of SDM assessment tools, the ISO program, and the PPT. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF and DJJS use the community-based in-home family support programs and the ISO program to meet the unique needs of children and families. The ISO program includes 12 agencies throughout the State and provides flexible funds to pay for the various unique needs of children and families in a timely fashion. The Statewide Assessment notes that the assessment and treatment planning process that is mandated of all service providers leads to service plans that are uniquely designed to meet the child’s or family’s needs.

The Statewide Assessment notes that DCYF has the ability to contract for services that are needed in a specific region of the State. The need for a specific service is identified by field staff and developed by the appropriate staff within the agency. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCYF uses a comprehensive service utilization matrix to assist the CPSW in choosing the most appropriate service for each family.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following strategies that assist DCYF and DJJS in individualizing services to meet the unique needs of children and families:

- The SDM assessment protocol is used to identify specific interventions tailored to the needs of families.
- DCYF developed multiple forums for practice discussions regarding needs assessments and service delivery.
- Local wraparound teams are available to families with issues that one agency cannot address by itself.

- The PPT, featuring regular case conferences, assures that services to the family are appropriate and adjusted in response to the family’s unique and changing situation.
- The ARM provides intensive individualized services to encourage timely reunification.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that CPR results of stakeholder interviews revealed that sometimes there are inconsistent expectations between the DCYF or DJJS caseworker and the community-based provider with regard to how services are delivered, what services are available, or whether a particular service is required for a family. In addition, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the substance abuse services that are available are not always designed to meet individualized family needs.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in individualizing services and service plans to meet the unique needs of children and families. Some stakeholders indicated that services are individualized through the use of SDM tools and the ISO program. However, several Manchester stakeholders indicated that, despite the availability of translators, it is a challenge to provide services to families who do not speak English.

VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

New Hampshire is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. New Hampshire also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP

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

Item 38 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State engages in ongoing consultation with key stakeholders in the development of the CFSP, including the courts, service providers, and families. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF maintains several longstanding collaborative relationships with consumers, providers, community advocates, and stakeholders. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following initiatives that were developed to obtain ongoing consultation regarding the goals and objectives of the CFSP:

- Oversight panels with diverse membership, such as the Citizen’s Review Panel, the Child Welfare Committee, the Youth Advisory Board, and the DCYF Advisory Board, are used to inform policy and practice.
- CPR focus groups are used to inform State policy and goals.
- Community and faith-based initiatives design recruitment plans and conduct recruitment activities.
- The New Hampshire Youth Vision was developed in collaboration with the departments of Juvenile Justice, Education, Labor, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in engaging in ongoing consultation with consumers, service providers, families, courts, CASAs, and other government agencies in developing the goals and objectives of the CFSP. Various stakeholders identified the following examples of successful partnerships: the collaborative work between DJJS and DCYF, the Framework for Collaboration (a project to reduce the length of stay in foster care and reduce foster care placements in residential treatment facilities), the DCYF Advisory Board, the Child Welfare Committee, university partnerships, court partnerships, and the New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund.

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

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

Item 39 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State develops the APSR in consultation with key stakeholders. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, New Hampshire uses both direct and indirect feedback from children, families, providers, and other parties to inform the APSR. For example, the Statewide Assessment notes that the oversight panels provide annual reports to DCYF to inform the development of the APSR. The Statewide Assessment also notes that, on an informal basis, the voices of youth, parents, relative caregivers, foster and adoptive parents, stakeholders, provider partners, and staff are represented in all aspects of agency operations including training, policy development, and practice improvement.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCYF and DJJS engage in meaningful consultation on an ongoing basis, in many cases monthly, with key stakeholders, the courts, and advisory committees.

Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State coordinates its services with those of other Federal and federally assisted programs serving the same population. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCYF coordinates services with those administered by DJJS, the bureaus of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund, DOE, New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Family Resource Centers, CIP, courts, and University of New Hampshire.

The Statewide Assessment reports that DCYF and DJJS have made collaborative efforts to accomplish the following priorities:

- Developed an integrated CPR process
- Actively share training resources and conduct joint planning
- Use the same case management information system
- Developed an enhanced, shared service array
- Developed a joint case-planning policy for families involved with both systems

In addition, the Statewide Assessment identifies the following sample of coordinated service delivery projects:

- The Greenbook Project improved how child protection, the courts, and domestic violence coalitions work together when responding to the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse or neglect.

- The Foster Care Health Program Advisory Committee reviews management reports, policies, and practices, and makes recommendations relative to improving screening and coordination of services.
- The Strengthening Families Initiative is supported by the New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund in coordination with DCYF.
- The State established court procedures for educationally handicapped children as related to residential/educational placements.
- The Foster Care Behavioral Health Program provides an opportunity for the Bureau of Behavioral Health, DCYF, and DJJS to collaborate.
- DCYF, DJJS, the CIP, and court-appointed special advocates (CASA) have collaborated to develop the Model Court project, protocols relative to abuse and neglect cases and TPR proceedings, and practice recommendations in areas such as visitation and permanency planning.
- The ISO rule identified coordination of community services as a core component of service.
- DCYF and DJJS have an interagency agreement with the Bureau of Developmental Services that allows DCYF and DJJS to access developmental services for children.
- DCYF has a partnership with the departments of Corrections and Education to develop protocols for ensuring that children of incarcerated parents can maintain that relationship.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that sometimes caseworkers are unable to coordinate services effectively due to high caseloads. The Statewide Assessment also reports that sometimes there are differences among CPSWs, JPPOs, and providers with regard to their understanding of available services.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCYF coordinates child welfare service delivery with other agencies and programs serving the same population. Several stakeholders noted that there is an MOU with DJJS and that the level of collaboration between DJJS and DCYF facilitates service delivery. In addition, various stakeholders noted that there is a collaborative relationship to ensure coordination of services with the following entities: Head Start programs, child care programs, child support enforcement programs, Medicaid, public health programs, education programs, and the courts. Several stakeholders indicated that the PPT and the Framework for Collaboration provide DCYF, DJJS, and providers with a regular opportunity to address and resolve common issues.

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

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

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

New Hampshire is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. New Hampshire also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has standards for foster family homes and child care institutions and reviews licensing records to ensure that licensing requirements are met. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State identifies the following requirements for licensing foster and adoptive homes:

- Foster parents must complete 26 hours of foster parent training and submit references, medical statements, financial information, an autobiography, copies of birth certificates, and a marriage certificate, if applicable.
- The agency must complete criminal background checks and fingerprinting.
- The home must be deemed safe and pass both a town health and fire inspection.
- One home study is completed for the purposes of fostering and adopting.
- The licensing agency must decide whether to grant a license within 120 days of the date of the completed application.

- Licensing records are reviewed prior to licensing to ensure that the necessary requirements are fulfilled.
- A foster care license is valid for no more than 2 years.
- The licensor must visit the home annually, and the caseworker must meet with the foster parent in their home on a monthly basis if a child is placed in the home.
- When foster parents renew their license, they must submit a list of trainings that they have attended to meet the requirement.
- The renewal process includes a home visit by the licensor, an updated criminal check, central registry check, and fire inspection.

In addition to licensing, the Statewide Assessment notes that residential care facilities must be certified as providers and recertified every 2 years in order to receive payment for placement through DHHS. Teams comprised of staff from DCYF and DJJS conduct residential care provider site reviews. Noncompliance with the certification standards triggers corrective action plans and more frequent monitoring reviews.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has licensing standards in place for foster and adoptive homes and, in addition to licensing standards, there are certification standards for residential treatment facilities and group homes. Some stakeholders noted that there are no delays in obtaining an initial license and that the relicensing process includes repeat home visits, inspections, and criminal records checks.

Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds

 X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State ensures that licensing standards are applied equally statewide and to all licensed foster family homes and child care institutions. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

The title IV-E eligibility review conducted in December 2009 found that all foster home and child care institution licensing records were available for review and contained the required foster care provider license information.

Statewide Assessment

According to the Statewide Assessment, all individuals applying to foster or adopt in the State follow the same regulations, including relatives, those individuals being licensed through a local district office, and those applying through a child-placing agency.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following variations in licensing policies:

- To become a licensed foster home, relative providers must complete the basic application process required by all licensed foster parents. However, training requirements may be waived for relative providers.
- The Statewide Assessment notes that Specialized Foster Care Licenses are issued to families that have additional training and experience.
- In some cases, permits are issued for a period not to exceed 6 months, with approval from a Child Protection Assistant Administrator, when the most appropriate placement is found but the home is not yet licensed. This time limit is provided to allow the parents to meet all requirements and become licensed. Title IV-E reimbursement is not available for unlicensed placements operating under a permit.

The Statewide Assessment notes that, to ensure that all licensing agencies use the same licensing standards, monthly meetings are held with all resource workers from the district offices, and quarterly meetings are held with child-placing agencies. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that an annual training is held for the above-mentioned individuals to review regulations and ensure consistency.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that most towns have adopted the 2004 National Fire Association Code Standard for use in completing the fire safety inspection during licensure.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State applies licensing standards equally to all foster and pre-adoptive homes receiving title IV-E payments.

Some stakeholders noted that waivers of licensing requirements for training are issued only for relative caregivers. In addition, these stakeholders noted that relative caregivers who are not licensed must comply with the requirements for home studies, criminal records checks, and safety inspections.

Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances in licensing foster and adoptive placements. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

The title IV-E eligibility review conducted in December 2009 found that criminal records checks were completed consistently on foster family homes and child care staff employed in child care institutions for all of the cases reviewed.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, licensing requirements include a Live Scan FBI fingerprint check, a New Hampshire criminal records check, a Central Registry check, and a local police check. The Statewide Assessment notes that criminal background clearances are valid for only 2 years and must be completed again to renew a foster care license. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that background checks are required for each applicant and every household member age 17 and older prior to licensing, permitting, and placement of children in the home.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that unlicensed relative placements require criminal background and Central Registry checks.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State consistently conducts criminal background clearances for adults in foster homes, pre-adoptive homes, group homes, and residential treatment facilities. Some stakeholders confirmed information from the Statewide Assessment that criminal background checks are conducted again at the time of relicensing.

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

 X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has developed a collaborative process with community and faith-based organizations to ensure the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State uses a diligent recruitment model for potential foster and adoptive families that reflects not only the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care, but also focuses on recruiting families who are linked to the neighborhood and communities where children lived prior to entry into foster care. The Statewide Assessment notes that continuous recruitment and retention of foster homes enables DCYF to have a sufficient number and types of foster homes to match children’s needs to a foster family’s skills. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that recruitment is based on partnerships with foster parents and local communities.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the Community and Faith-Based Initiative provides recruitment and retention programs statewide.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR did not comment on the recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care. Some stakeholders indicated that there is a need for more foster homes for adolescents. In addition, some stakeholders noted that there is an effort to recruit families within the community from which children are entering foster care.

Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children

 X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has a process to use cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely permanent placements for waiting children. This item also was rated as a Strength in New Hampshire's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State uses the following cross-jurisdictional resources:

- Wendy's Wonderful Kids
- AdoptUsKids
- Heart Gallery
- DVD of "waiting children"
- Waiting Children brochure
- National Adoption Month

The Statewide Assessment indicates that State policy with regard to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) reflects Federal requirements. DCYF works through the ICPC office to take all necessary steps to evaluate potential resources for waiting children who may reside in other States. The Statewide Assessment notes that State policy requires a timely home study within 60 days for children placed in New Hampshire from another State. The Statewide Assessment reports that Bridges tracks home studies and visitations for all cases of children placed in the State from another State or location. The Statewide Assessment also reports that DCYF tracks the timeframes for pending requests from other States and that, during the period October 2008 through September 2009, 57 percent of the ICPC requests were completed within 60 days by district offices.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ACR data for 2009 show that 4 percent of DCYF children were placed out of State, 5 percent of DJJS CHINS children were placed out of State, and 4 percent of DJJS delinquency children were placed out of State.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely and permanent placements for waiting children. Some stakeholders noted that the ICPC process is useful in facilitating the placement of a child with a relative. In addition, various stakeholders noted that the agency uses Finding Connections specialists, Wendy's Wonderful Kids, Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange, Jordan's Furniture events, the Heart Gallery, and AdoptUsKids as resources to identify placements. Some stakeholders also noted that the agency conducts targeted recruitment for individual children when necessary. However, other stakeholders noted that there are very few children placed outside of the State and that there is an effort to avoid out-of-State placements.