



Washington State

CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

STATE ASSESSMENT

July 2010

Summary of Major Improvements Since CFSR Round 1

November 2003

Since the last federal review was conducted there have been significant improvements to the child welfare system. Governor Gregoire pushed hard for funding year after year to help speed up the investigative response times to referrals of possible child abuse, and to increase the frequency of visits to dependent children and those who remain in their homes. The Legislature provided the additional funding to move forward with these system improvements.

In 2005 the Governor required social workers to respond to emergent referrals for child abuse and neglect within 24 hours and non-emergent referrals within 72 hours. The quicker response times are currently being met 93 percent of the time and have resulted in a decline in repeat abuse and neglect of children in the state's custody. Our goal today is that we respond within 24 hours in emergent referrals 100 percent of the time.

In 2008 Children's Administration began requiring that all children in care receive monthly visits from their social worker. Children's Administration continues to demonstrate progress on achieving this critical goal. Since the first federal review, Children's Administration has put into place more than 90 new practice policies and procedures designed to strengthen practice in serving children and families, day to day.

The results of these efforts can be seen in many of the areas identified as strengths in this assessment:

- Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment
- Social worker visits with children
- Meeting educational, physical and mental/behavioral health needs of children in care
- Training

Children's Administration is also working on areas of practice that continue to be identified as in need of improvement. Children's Administration has streamlined and redesigned how we are organized to provide services to children and their families. Children's Administration includes families in decision-making and work in partnership with those we serve to identify their strengths, focus on everyday life events, and help them build the skills necessary to manage situations that are difficult for them. This focused approach in our work with families centers on child safety.

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