Section IV - Systemic Factors

A. Statewide Information System

Item 24: Statewide Information System. Is the state operating a statewide information system that, at 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?

Previous Factor/Item Rating
This item is rated as a **Strength** because the Statewide information system, CAMIS, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care and is used extensively to track state performance on CFSR outcome measures.

Changes 2005-2010
In February of 2009 the Children's Administration went live with FamLink, the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) the new, comprehensive information system for both case management and program management.
FamLink, like CAMIS before it, provides information on location, goals, legal status, and demographics for each child in foster care. This tool supports consistent social work and business practices statewide, in order to assure that children and their families will receive the same level of quality services in every community in Washington.

Partnerships and Quality Assurance
FamLink created a model of project governance for Children's Administration that supports the multiple needs of the project. The project is supported by a Project Advisory Group (PAG) for decision making and programmatic guidance. An Intelligence Team (IT) uses conference calls to learn about business process changes and provide input on various project recommendations. The Implementation Leadership Team (ILT) supports the implementation of FamLink through the many facets of change management.

Engagement with our external partners in child welfare occurred at the initial design sessions of FamLink and continues through the present. The engagement with other DSHS administrations and a wide range of individuals within Children's Administration continues to drive the successful implementation of FamLink.

Impact on Practice
Washington has developed a statewide information system that serves as a case management tool for regional and headquarters workers, management, and administration by providing the following functions:

- Facilitates the gathering, documenting and reporting of client information;
- Provides authorized users with statewide access to client information; increasing staff productivity by making vital information readily accessible for more informed and timely decisions;
- Generates payments, documents and management reports;
- Provide managers with meaningful data to identify trends and issues used evaluate the effectiveness of the CA service practice and programs and support quality improvement efforts..
- Reports Washington data to the Federal AFCARS system
- Supervisors are expected to conduct case reviews with social workers on-line, reviewing the electronic case record as cases are discussed. This method is used by supervisors and social workers as an opportunity to continue improving our child welfare practice as staff navigates FamLink.

CA policy supports the requirement staff use the FamLink application for all case work activities. The use of FamLink as the record for case work documentation is woven throughout policy and training materials.

All placements are entered by the social worker at the point the child is placed. All children placed by CA in private placing agencies are tracked in FamLink by the assigned social worker. Various activities have a required time period to be entered in FamLink. These timeframes are established by the Policy and Practice Improvement Division of CA. All changes are tracked within FamLink. Private agency providers do not currently input date into FamLink, CA staff are responsible for entering private agency data into FamLink.

Conversion of data from the legacy system has impacted data accuracy. The requirement to convert over 20 years of data was a challenge for the data accuracy.

FamLink is transfer system and was not a custom built application for Children's Administration. This application is a transfer system successfully implemented in six states before transferring to Washington State.

Some of the staff continue to rate FamLink as unsatisfactory as a user friendly system. The implementation of FamLink required staff to adhere to specific work flows in their case work activities. These workflows are established by the Practice Model; federal requirements; legislative mandates; Braam lawsuit; and policy.

Staff are required to manage the many requirements of the integrated work of child welfare. FamLink was designed to support the interrogation of this work and requires staff to follow the established workflows. Some staff has reported disappointment as they had expectations for a system that would be more efficient to navigate, but have found FamLink, at least through the implementation and transition period, to be more complicated and time intensive.

Reports available to management continue to be refined to serve their requests for changing data elements. Case carrying staff does not find the reports useful as the FamLink reports tool displays the information very differently than they have previously used.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Strengths

- FamLink provides assistance for staff to better serve children and families throughout the state - more than just a way to document activities
- FamLink supports practice with tools and information about families
- FamLink requires consistency statewide

Challenges

- New Practice coupled with Implementation of the new automated system
- The impact of data conversion \ from legacy system to FamLink included 20 years of historical data
- Integrated model required specific workflows that staff may traditionally have not followed
- Reduction of staff and resources leaving 75% of planned staff resources for operations and ongoing maintained of new application

Summary

The Children's Administration now has a powerful tool to assist in the management of the child welfare system. However, usefulness of the data and reports as both case management and administrative tools is dependent upon accurate and timely data entry at the field staff level. Responsibility for data entry has had an impact upon and increased staff workload. Staff continue to seek easier and more efficient methods to document their case work in a timely and accurate manner.

Staff do have the four required data items (status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement) entered into FamLink and they are retrievable for every child.

B. Case Review

Item 25: Written Case Plan. Does the state provide a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan, to be developed jointly with the child, when appropriate, and the child's parent(s), that includes the required provisions?

Previous Factor/Item Rating

This item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** because the State does not have a process that ensures that families are consistently involved in the development of case plans.

Policy

Individual Service and Safety Plan (ISSP)

ISSP's are required to be completed within 60 days of the child's removal from the parent, and are updated a minimum of once every six months. The ISSP is required on all open out-of-home placement cases, whether voluntary or court-ordered.

The department shall consult with the care provider regarding the child's case plan. Foster parents are an integral part of the foster care system, and are encouraged to participate in the service planning for the child and the child's family if appropriate.

At present the state does not have data regarding the percentage of cases with an ISSP developed or updated within required timeframes.

Changes 2005-2010

Revisions were made to policy and procedure concerning:

- When and how service plans are written and updated
- Involvement of children, parents, and tribes in assessments
- Case plans for in-home and out-of-home cases
- Practice guidelines for engaging children, parents and tribes in the service planning process

The CPS/CWS Redesign requires Family Voluntary Service Social Workers (FVS-SWs) to develop, for in-home cases, an initial service plan for up to 90 days using identified risk factors. Risk factors include family history and child and caretaker characteristics. FVS-SWs partner with the family to identify areas of greatest concern and develop a service plan with goals, activities and services clearly identified.

The case plan is developed jointly with the child and the child's family by one or more of the following methods.

Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) Meetings

FTDM meetings are held at any time there is a placement decision to be made. Meetings are to be held prior to a child being placed in out of home care and prior to moving a child between placements, including reunifications and/or trial return home placements. FTDMs include parents, youth, relatives and others involved in the case.

Shared Planning Meetings

Shared planning meetings replaced specific types of staffings (e.g. permanency planning staffings, aka prognostic staffings, case conferences, etc) and occur within the time frames outlined below. The shared planning meetings focus on the three main elements of Safety, Permanency and Well-being.

- Shared planning meetings occur within:
- 72 hours from Original Placement Date (OPD);
- 30 days from OPD;
- 6 months (180 days) from OPD;
- 9 to 11 months from OPD;
- every 12 months thereafter

Participants are invited to Shared Planning Meetings with 5 days advance notice when possible. Written reports may be requested from individuals unable to attend. If the family, the child or the caregiver are not present, their perspective can be presented through the Caretakers Report to the Court form.

Dependency Case Conferences

Legislation in 2004 requires that case conferences are held following Shelter Care but no later than 30 days before Fact Finding. They also must be held prior to dispositional hearings, and at any time upon the request of a parent. RCW 13.34.067.094.

Dependency Mediation

Mediation is increasingly used as a tool for resolving factual issues in dependency cases and to determine elements of the case plan for children and services for parents. Generally sponsored by the juvenile court,

mediation includes the parents, the child's attorney or guardian ad litem, the parents' attorneys, Children's Administration and the AAG's office. A mediation program is currently in place in King County and Benton-Franklin Counties and is beginning in a number of other counties.

Impact on Practice

Developing standards, providing training and practice guides, implementing Family Team Decision Making, Shared Planning and Dependency Case Conference meetings and increased frequency social worker health and safety visits with children, parents and caregivers, provides staff with increased opportunities to work on the joint development of case plans.

Children's Administration has committed to work with the courts to ensure that the ISSP is concise, includes all information necessary for good decision-making, and in a format that is usable. The parents have a right to respond to the ISSP and to present alternatives to the report. RCW 13.34.120. The ISSP also is provided to caregivers.

Children's Administration or the responsible agency shall conduct a social study whenever a child is placed in out-of-home care under the supervision of the department or other agency. The study shall be conducted prior to placement, or, if this is not feasible due to the circumstances of the case, as soon as possible following placement.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to ensure that each child has a written case plan.

Strengths

- Children's Administration and its partners recognize that improvements need to be made to the ISSP. A group, consisting of court staff, Office of Public Defense (both an attorney and a social worker), CASA, social workers and social work supervisors, is currently working to redesign the ISSP. The workgroup is also working with our federal partners in help ensuring that the federal requirements are covered. Parental and child involvement, at present, is through defense counsel and the CASA. These entities represent parents and children and would represent their positions.
- Children's Administration is collaborating with representatives of the judiciary, defense counsel, attorney general, and CASA to improve the format and content of the ISSP.

Challenges

- Difficulty in sometimes locating important information and excessive length;
- Services to the child not consistently updated;
- Permanent plan not consistently kept current;
- Inconsistent or incomplete information in the ICWA section; Inconsistent communication with Tribal stakeholders regarding written case plans
- Inconsistently providing the ISSP to caregivers
- Documenting parent participation, particularly of fathers, in staffings and case planning
- Documenting that the foster or relative caregiver has received the ISSP and the notice of court hearings

Summary

Through Family Team Decision Making, Shared Planning Meetings, Dependency Case Conferences, supervisory reviews, active participation of parents' counsel and guardians ad litem, and court structured oversight, Washington has a comprehensive process to ensure that each child has a written case plan. Policy and state law requires staff to engage families in the joint development of their case plans. This is accomplished through the various joint meetings and monthly social worker visits with both the child and parents. While parent involvement in developing the case plan is occurring it is not consistently documented and tracked. Washington's pattern court forms are required (since January 2010) in all dependency and termination cases. The forms for every six-month review or permanency planning hearing document that the ISSP has been filed. Data regarding the number of plans developed in accordance to state policy is not currently available in FamLink, but is anticipated to show compliance.

Item 26: Periodic Reviews. Does the state child welfare system provide a process for the periodic review of the status of each child no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by court or by a court or by administrative review?

Previous Factor/Item Rating
This item was rated as a **Strength** because periodic reviews are being held in a timely manner at least once every 6 months.

Policy
State law requires that the case of every dependent child be reviewed by the juvenile court every six months from the date of the establishment of dependency or the date of the placement of the child, whichever comes first. Placement is limited to 90 days for children who are in placement as a result of a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) Disposition hearing.
Children who are in foster care for six months are subject to court action and their status would be reviewed by the court every six months. In exceptional circumstances, where a child is placed under a voluntary placement agreement and is not the subject of a dependency action, an administrative review, meeting the federal requirements for periodic review, would be conducted every six months.

The 6 month periodic review shall include findings regarding the agency and parental completion of disposition plan requirements, and, if necessary, revise permanency time limits.

The review shall consider both the agency's and parent's efforts that demonstrate consistent measurable progress over time in meeting the disposition plan requirements.
Periodic case reviews for children in out-of-home care cover the following content:

- The entire case plan, Individual Service and Safety Plan (ISSP), of the child
- The safety of the child
- The appropriateness of the type of placement
- The permanent plan for the child
- The legal status of the child
- Review of the appropriateness of services provided
- Review of the visitation plan
- Compliance with the case plan by the parent, child, and supervising agency, including whether progress has been made toward permanency
- The projected date for returning and safely maintaining the child at home or for completion of another safe permanent plan
- Whether parents have been notified or involved in agency decision making as it relates to changes in visitation, placement and the legal status of the child

Changes 2005-2010
This item was rated as a strength, therefore there were no Program Improvement Plan required for this item.

Court practices in scheduling and controlling continuances have been informed by the Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing in Washington 2009 Annual Report ("Dependency Timeliness Report.") The report presents data on a set of six performance measures which have a basis in state or federal law. The Washington State Center for Court Research has convened a workgroup of representatives from the courts, Children's Administration, the Attorney General's Office, the Office of Public Defense and Washington State CASA to make the Dependency Timeliness Report more robust and useful as a tool for targeting improvements for the benefit of dependent children and their families. The work group will begin by targeting specific measures and search for the reasons the statutory time frames have been missed, in order to build improvements in those areas. While the initial review hearing occurs timely in 90% of cases, study needs to take place as to why the remaining cases are not reviewed timely, and as to what practices are in place in courts that can either be improved or replicated by other courts for improvement. A key component that needs to be developed is resumption and improvement of regular data exchange between Children's Administration and the Washington State Center for Court Research.

In 2009, the legislature eliminated Foster Care Citizen Review Boards effective July 26, 2009. All 6-month reviews of active dependency cases are now done in superior court. Also in 2009 law was passed requiring that parents be advised in writing of the importance of participating in periodic reviews.

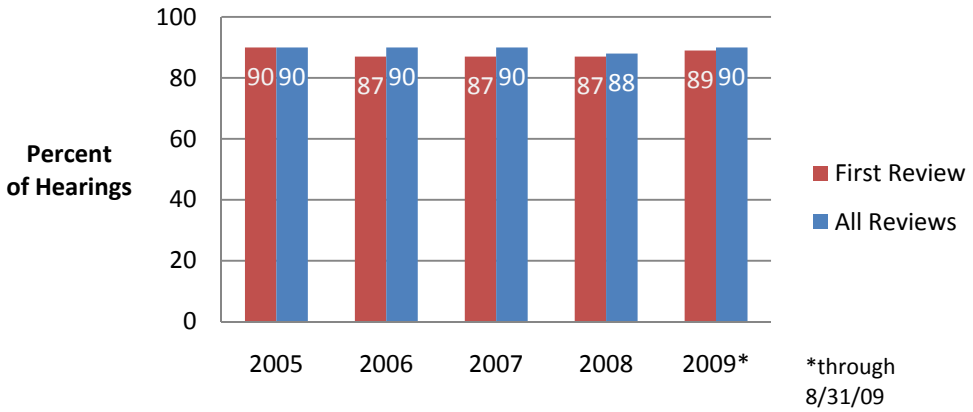
In 2007, the Court Improvement Program began a study in three representative counties to examine judicial workload in dependency cases. The study will enable the judiciary to justify additional positions needed in dependency courts. Initial results are expected to be released in late spring/early summer of 2010.

Impact on Practice

Children's Administration has policy, procedure and practice guides to assist social workers in meeting the requirement to review the status of children in care every six months.
The Administrative Office of the Courts, in or collaboration with Children's Administration and the Attorney General's Office, reports annually on dependency timeliness standards, including the requirement that cases be reviewed every six months.
Court practices in scheduling and controlling continuances have been informed by the Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing in Washington 2009 Annual Report. Sixteen courts participating in the Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Plan design their improvement projects with these timeliness factors as a primary consideration.

According to the Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing in Washington 2009 Annual Report, "The table below presents the percentage of over 100,000 review hearings *(the total number of hearings conducted 2005-2009)* that were timely by the year in which the review hearings were held. Overall, the large majority of both first dependency review hearings and all subsequent review hearings were held in a timely manner. Regarding first review hearings, 88% were held within six months of the petition. The rate has remained relatively stable over the past five years. The percentage of all review hearings timely has also remained stable at approximately 90%." The reasons for reviews not being conducted within the six month time frame range from the parties or their counsel being unavailable to congested court dockets.

Exhibit 4. Percent of Review Hearings within Six Months



Source: Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing: Annual Report 2009 Washington State Center for Court Research

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to provide a process for a periodic review of status no less frequently than 6 months.
Strengths

- Promising practices - such as Spokane County's, case management practices to have the same court commissioner at all hearings, and consistent participation by the same team of attorneys general, social workers, defense counsel and CASA.
- Approximately 90% of required 6-month Court Reviews for Dependency cases are being completed

- Early court scheduling practices to accommodate delays necessitated by conflicts in scheduling and late receipt of ISSP
- Electronic submission of the ISSP enhances timeliness of court reviews

Challenges
- Voluntary placements preceding dependency finding sometimes last too long, making it impossible to hold timely initial and subsequent review hearings. Voluntary placements are used in cases in which it is believed that the parent will be able to safely parent the child within a short period – and no longer than a six-month period. If the parent is not able to have the child returned within that time, Department policy requires that filing of a dependency petition and court-sanctioned placement be accomplished within 180 days of the voluntary placement date. If the petition is not filed until near the end of the 180 days, the court may not have time for a six-month review hearing
- Lack of sufficient time to hold court reviews is sometimes cited as a challenge to meaningful hearings; some 6-month review hearings are held in as little as 10 minutes. Many courts do not use time-specific calendaring practices, resulting in long waits for cases to be called and heard.
- Frequent rotation in judicial assignments reduces consistency in oversight.
- The workload study, mentioned above, is specifically looking at the issue of meaningful hearings. The Judicial Workload Study and the King County Model Court projects have included the issues of quality of hearings and time certain scheduling as components. Spokane is using team approach pre-meetings to resolve issues before the hearing. The studies will document the benefit of using these approaches and savings, if any, by using them. This documentation will help justify these improvements at other courts and, possibly, funding to achieve them.

Lack of reliable data on reasons for continuances, and whether this results negatively on dependency case processing, presents challenges in addressing possible remedies for continuances. Significant improvements in rates of timely hearings were seen between 2003 and 2005, with Children's Administration and the AAG's Office focus on the issue, as well as with the expansion of the Office of Public Defense Parents' Representation Program, providing more attorneys with lighter case loads for parents. A 2005 study of the Parents' Representation Program revealed that in the two pilot program sites, continuances were decreased to 12.6% as compared with the statewide rate of 31%. Increased collaboration, cooperation and collegiality among the professional stakeholders was cited as a major contributing reason for the decrease in continuances. Further study is needed to determine whether the Program's effect on reducing continuances has been sustained and whether the expansion of the Program into now 25 counties has replicated the success in decreasing continuances.

Summary
Six month review hearings are occurring in a timely way. Approximately 90% of first dependency review hearings and subsequent dependency review hearings occurred within the six-month requirement. This rate has remained relatively stable over the past five years. There are challenges with court scheduling and sufficient time for hearings as well as notification of hearings to caregivers and receipt of their reports. The judicial workload study, now underway, will address both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of improvements in court hearings.

Item 27: Permanency Hearings. Does the statewide child welfare system provide 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 that the child entered foster care and no less frequently every 12 months thereafter?

Previous Factor/Item Rating
This item was rated as a **Strength** because permanency hearings are held in a timely manner.

Policy
The juvenile court makes a determination regarding the future status of the child by the 12th month of placement for all. To provide reasonable assurance that this has occurred, permanency planning hearings are held for any child in placement by the 12th month of original placement date and annually thereafter.

Permanency planning hearings must occur:

By the 12th month of placement for all children in out-of-home care even if reunification with parents is the primary plan and the parents are making significant progress.

Within one year of each previous permanency planning hearing as long as the child remains in out-of-home care without a permanency plan being achieved. A child in a long-term care agreement is not considered to have permanency achieved, therefore, permanency planning hearings continue.

If, following 90 days of service delivery after disposition, the parents have failed to make progress or engage in services in resolving the issues that brought the child into care. This may coincide with the initial review hearing which is to be scheduled for in-court review six months from OPD or 90 days from the entry of the dispositional order, whichever comes first.

Within 30 days after the court has determined that reunification services for the family are no longer required in a case with a finding of aggravated circumstances. In those cases, the social worker must identify a primary or alternate permanency planning goal other than reunification with the legal parent(s).

Information covered during Permanency hearings include:

- Progress towards permanency goal; reunification, adoption/termination of parental rights, guardianship, independent living/long term foster care
- Findings as to if reasonable efforts have been made
- Permanency plan decisions/changes in goals
- Timeframes for achieving permanency
- Activities and services needed to achieve the permanent plan

Changes 2005-2010

This item was rated as a strength, therefore there were no Program Improvement Plan required for this item.

The Administrative Office of the courts, in consultation with Children's Administration and the Attorney General's Office, reports annually on dependency timeliness standards, including the requirement that cases be reviewed every twelve months. The report is required pursuant to legislation passed by the Legislature in 2007.

Impact on Practice

Children's Administration has policy, procedure and practice guides to assist social workers in meeting the requirement to review the permanency status of children in care every twelve months.

Practice and policy is for the social worker to submit an updated ISSP to the juvenile court prior to the permanency planning hearing within established timeframes. The ISSP submitted for a permanency planning hearing must clearly delineate the DCFS recommendations for permanency planning.

According to the Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing in Washington 2009 Annual Report a "majority of permanency planning hearings occur within 12 months. In the 12 counties with data on permanency planning hearings, 80% of the cases met the 12-month time standard in 2009. The rate had decreased from 85% to 78% from 2005 through 2008, but now appears to be improving." As noted above, the work group convened by the Washington State Center for Court Research will be studying the reasons for the decline in timeliness and methods for improvement that can be implemented statewide.

This finding represents approximately 43% of all dependency cases in the state and is representative of this practice around the state.

Exhibit 6. Percent of Cases with a Permanency Planning Hearing within 12 months, between 12-15 Months, and after 15 Months

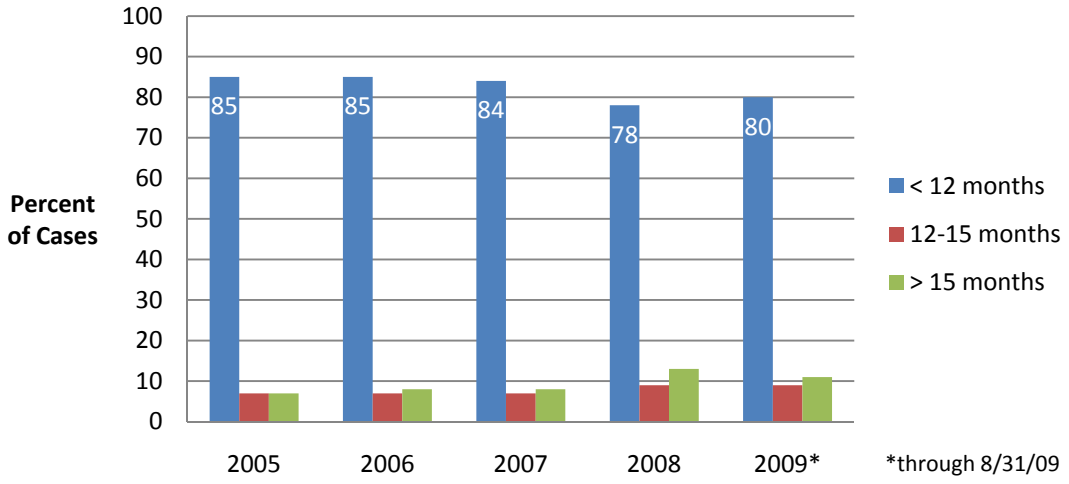
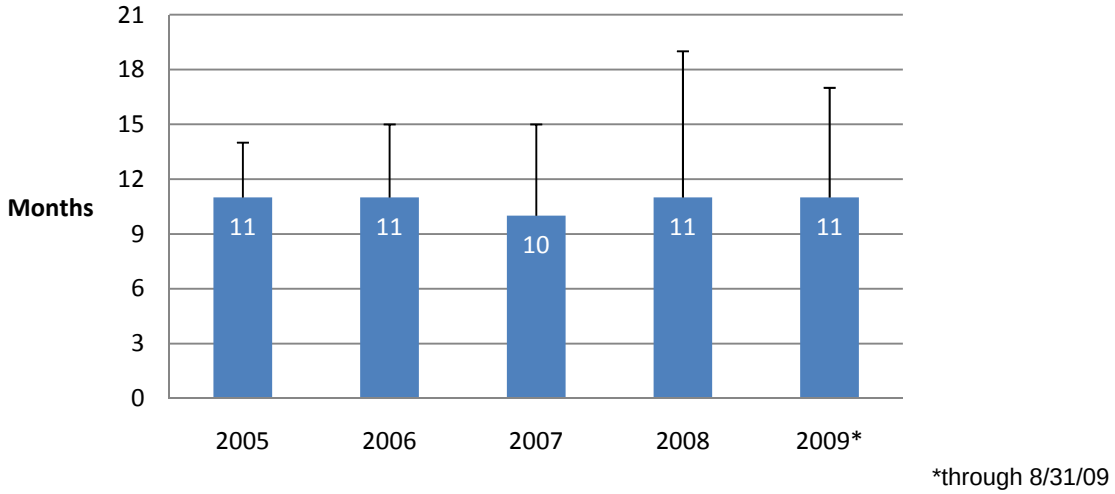


Exhibit 7. Median Number of Months to First Permanency Planning Hearing (with 90th Percentile)



Source: Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing: Annual Report 2009 Washington State Center for Court Research

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to provide a process that ensures children have a permanency hearing no later than 1 months after entering care.

Strengths

- Washington holds permanency planning hearings in a timely manner in nearly 80% of the cases included in the report (approximately 43% of all dependency cases statewide).
- Substantial improvement in tracking timeliness of permanency planning hearings
- The Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA), funded by the Court Improvement Program Grant, has provided needed training to judicial officers across the state, as well as sponsoring collaboration and planning for systems change at the local level through its "Table of Ten" program. CITA's responsiveness has enabled it to offer targeted training to individual courts, whereas before its inception, judges relied largely on annual or twice-yearly statewide conferences which covered a variety of issues in a generalized fashion.

- The Parents' Representation Program has substantially improved parent's representation and has contributed to earlier achievement of permanency, as well as increased reunifications. Linking specific services designed to remedy parental deficiencies to specific outcomes resulted in more meaningful permanency hearings
- The Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Plan offers courts and others involved in the child welfare system an opportunity to plan and implement programmatic changes tailored to that court's culture and community needs.

Challenges
- Insufficient resources for services, courts and child welfare partners, which inhibit ideal permanency planning hearings
- Permanency planning hearings are not always readily discernable from six-month review hearings. In part this may be due to early identification of a permanency plan for the child.
- Insufficient time is often not available for a meaningful examination of permanency planning. Recently, one judicial officer faced more than 40 hearings, including three shelter care hearings, on one calendar. As the judicial workload study referenced above noted, additional judicial officers would be required to conduct longer hearings.
- Parents have sometimes been faced with well-intentioned but daunting hearing and meeting schedules. The legislature, courts, parents' attorneys and Children's Administration are aware of the problems parents face in engaging in the complexity of services needed to resolve their parenting issues within the statutory time frame and are working to streamline services.
- Family team decision meetings must be scheduled well in advance for optimal attendance and meaningful participation
- Although the court system is in the process of lengthening the time in which judicial officers sit in juvenile court, there continues to be room for improvement in judicial officers' understanding that mere compliance with services does not always result in measurable progress.

Summary
Children's Administration, in collaboration with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and the Office of Public Defense (OPD), has made consistent efforts to increase the occurrence and timeliness of Permanency hearings. Partnerships with AOC and Court Improvement Projects, such as the CITA-sponsored Table of Ten have brought together local judicial officers, child welfare providers, guardians ad litem, and parents' and the AAG's Office to increase the speed and efficiency with which cases move through the system. The Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Plan, which was the result of a collaborative effort of the courts and the legislature, is bringing targeted improvements to 16 courts, with the expectation that those improvements will be replicable across the state.

Item 28: Termination of Parental Rights. Does the state provide a process for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)?

Previous Factor/Item Rating
This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the State is experiencing delays in completing the process of filing for termination of parental rights.

Policy requires a referral for termination of parental rights to be made to the Attorney General's Office if a child has been in out-of-home care for 12 of the past 19 months. A termination petition must be filed, unless there are compelling reasons not to file the petition to terminate parental rights at that time.

The process for AAG review is a two-part analysis. First, the AAG reviews the information provided by the Department to determine whether it is sufficient to meet the legal standard required to terminate parental rights. If there is not enough information, the AAG works with the social worker to get more information or to discuss the actions that need to be taken before a petition can be filed. Second, the AAG will determine whether there are compelling reasons why the petition should not be filed at that time.

Changes 2005-2010
In collaboration with Children's Administration and other players in the child welfare system, the Administrative Office of the Courts amended the form, Dependency Review Hearing Order to include a paragraph requiring the court to state if compelling reasons existed to justify not filing a petition for termination at the 15 of 22 month requirement.

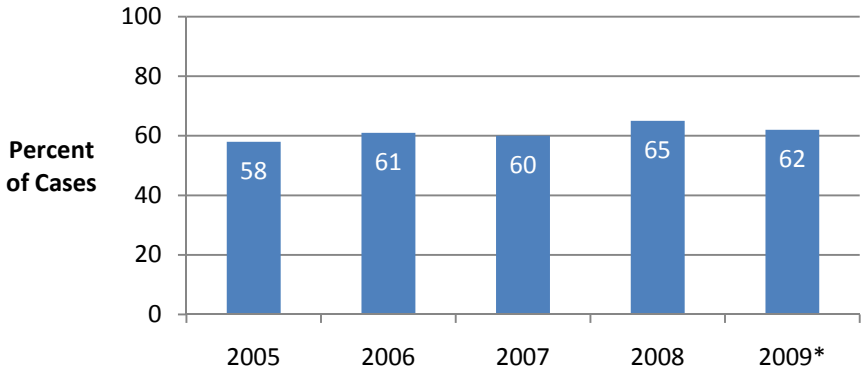
Effective July 2007 dependent youth, 12 years and older, (and younger children, with the showing of good cause, such as an older sibling qualifying for bringing a reunification petition) have the right to petition the court for reinstatement of parental rights if their permanent plan has not been achieved or will not be imminently achieved within three years of termination or exhaustion of the appeal process. In 2009, 6 petitions were filed statewide. It is anticipated that additional filings may be seen because of new legislation passed in 2010 (HB 2735), requiring Children's Administration to notify eligible youth of their right to petition for reinstatement.

Impact on Practice
In the first annual report, which covered a reporting period of 2004 – 2006, 54% of the cases reviewed met this requirement (Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing in Washington for Cases filed from 2004 – 2006)

According to the Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing in Washington 2009 Annual Report, "Termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions before 15 months of out-of-home care shows little change. While the majority of children spent more than 15 months in out-of-home care prior to the TPR petition, many cases are exempt from the statute as they involve relative placements, Native American children, or have other documented compelling reasons why a TPR petition was not filed. Of the non-exempt cases, 62% achieved the time standard in 2009. The average length of time of out-of-home care to the TPR petitions has been stable at 15 months for the past three years."

As the work group convened by the Washington State Center for Court Research begins its study of reasons for delay in filing and resolution of TPR petitions, improvements can be developed to address the delays. Documented reasons for not filing a TPR petition can be discerned through specific case inquiries and will be easily discernible in the case reviews to be conducted in September 2010; this data is not captured in broader case statistics reporting.

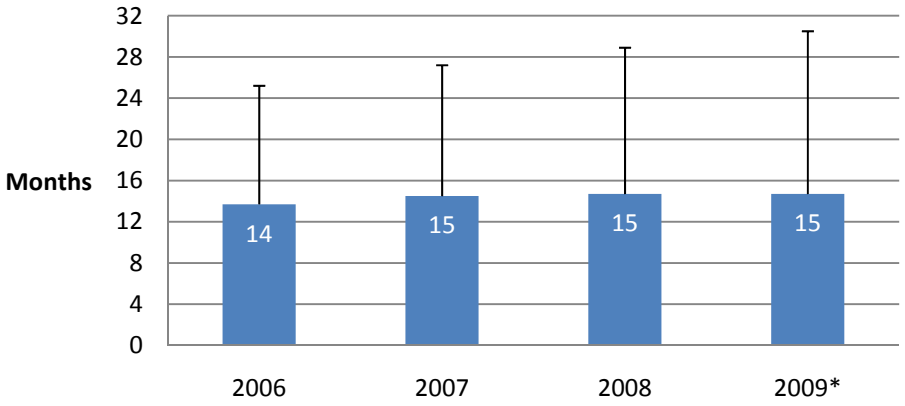
Exhibit 11. Percent of Cases with TPR Petition Filed before 15 Months of Out-of-Home Care



"For those cases in which a TPR petition was filed, children spent an average of 15 months in out-of-home care (see Exhibit 12). Ninety percent (90%) of the TPR petitions were filed within 28 months of out-of-home care. Since 2007, the median length of time in care to the TPR petition has remained stable at 15 months."

The courts, Children's Administration and other players in the system are working together to identify reasons for filings outside the 15-month time frame and to identify ways in which the time to permanency can be shortened.

Exhibit 12. Median Number of Out-of-Home Months to TPR Petition (with 90th Percentile)



*through 8/31/09

Source: Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing: Annual Report 2009 Washington State Center for Court Research

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to provide a process for the Termination of Parental Rights.

Strengths

- The implementation of unified family court principles, such as a dedicated, trained judiciary and case management practices have improved the timeliness of termination filings and hearings
- The collaborative Timeliness of Dependency Case Processing report has enabled the legislature, courts, Children's Administration and other participants to see the results of their practices in terms of timely termination filings
- Inclusion of compelling reasons to not file termination petitions allows for more accurate tracking of timeliness and targeted improvements
- The Parents' Representation Program and changes in staffing in attorneys general offices have also improved timeliness of filings
- The Social Worker's Practice Guide to Domestic Violence clarifies that it is possible and permissible to terminate one parent's rights if that increases the chances of permanency and well being with the other parent.
- Timely TPR filings has improved parents' motivations to engage in services

Challenges

- Working with all of the participants in the child welfare system to develop a process for mandatory pre-trial settlement conferences or early permanency mediation sessions in cases where termination of parental rights is likely.
- Increasing continued efforts to develop a strong juvenile court bench, who are well-trained in dependency and termination proceedings
- Foster parents need more education and support in working with children and parents who are working toward reunification. This would include education in helping foster parent to understand adoption and reunification. One suggestion was that Foster Parent training could be separated so that those seeking adoption would receive training separate from those only wanting to provide foster care.
- Foster Parent training should separate those seeking adoption from those only providing foster care.

Summary

Although the timeliness of TPRs has show little change over the past five years Children's Administration, the OAC and the AGs office have made attempts to assure for more timely filings of TPRs. Changes in staffing in the

attorney generals offices have also improved timeliness of filings. The use of timely TPR filings has improved parents' motivations to engage in services.

Item 29: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers. Does the state child welfare system provide a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have the opportunity to be heard in, any review hearing held with respect to the child?

Previous Factor/Item Rating

This item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** because caregivers are not routinely notified of their opportunity to be heard in reviews and hearings.

Policy

Children's Administration shall make reasonable efforts to enable parents and children over 12 to attend (and to receive notice of) periodic case reviews for children in out-of-home care.

Children's Administration shall provide a foster parent, pre-adoptive parent, or relative with notice of, and their right to an opportunity to be heard in, a review hearing pertaining to the child, but only if that person is currently providing care to that child at the time of the hearing. This provision does not grant party status or a right to fully participate in the proceeding to a caregiver who has been provided an opportunity to be heard.

Changes 2005-2010

Washington statute requires that foster parents, relative caretakers, and pre-adoptive parents receive notice of review hearings regarding a child in their care and that they are given the opportunity to be heard in any hearing.

Impact on Practice

If the child is dependent, the department or agency shall keep the care provider informed regarding the dates and location of dependency review and permanency planning hearings pertaining to the child.

The standardized written notice to be sent by the social worker provides all pertinent information about the hearing, including the date, time, place, and purpose, along with notice that foster parents may attend or submit information in writing. A standardized caregiver report form has been developed for foster parents to provide input to the court.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to provide caregivers with notification of hearings.

Strengths

- The Administrative Office of the Courts developed a form for verification that notice was provided to caregivers, for easier tracking of this requirement
- Use of caregiver's reports enables the court to hear first hand from those who care for the children
- Some courts regularly invite caregivers to give oral reports in hearings about the children in their care
- The pattern court forms, required in all dependency proceedings, require the court to make a finding as to whether the child's care giver was notified of the hearing.
- Until FamLink is able to provide accurate data, Children's Administration, in compliance with the Braam Settlement Agreement, has used a foster parent survey to determine compliance in certain areas. The survey provides the "best" statistical data available at this time. The September 2009 survey shows that:
- 59.4% of Licensed Caregivers surveyed reported receiving notice of court hearings within 10 working days prior to the hearing "Always" or "Most of the time,
- 60.4% of Unlicensed Caregivers surveyed reported receiving notice of court hearings within 10 working days prior to the hearing "Most of the time"
    - 8.4% and 9% respectively report receiving notice "About half the time"
    - 57.3% of Licensed Caregivers surveyed reported being advised that they would have the opportunity to be heard at the hearing "Always"

- 60% of Unlicensed Caregivers surveyed reported being advised that they would have the opportunity to be heard at the hearing "Most of the time",
    - 6.2% and 7.7% respectively report being advised "About half the time

Challenges
- Inconsistent use of the form developed to verify timely notice to caregivers. Children's Administration is obligated to provide the court with written verification of to whom, where, when, and how notice of the proceeding was provided to the foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, non-relative caregivers or relative caregivers.
- Caregivers not getting timely and consistent notice of hearings.
- There is inconsistent use of the form developed to verify timely notice to caregivers.
- Increase cooperation between birth parents and foster parents to communicating about the care of children

Central Case Review data indicates that notification of caregivers within required timeframes is an area needing improvement.

The caregiver was notified of the most recent court hearing within required time frames**.**

2009 Regional Results								2008
Regions	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	2009 Statewide Avg.	2008 Statewide Avg.
Percentage	42%	35%	46%	20%	29%	52%	37%	33%
Number of Cases	31	37	35	35	34	27	199	256

Inconsistency between court and agency practices regarding caregiver input and expectations has created uncertainty and confusion for care givers. Recent changes in statute and court forms will require a renewed focus on care givers. Some courts could be encouraged to better acknowledge caregivers' presence in court and confirm that their input was received and considered by the court in making a decision.

Summary
Changes in statute, court forms, and Children's Administration documents have been developed to make notification of caregivers easier and to ensure oversight of this requirement. Although the process has not been consistent in the notification to caregivers regarding court hearings these changes are expected to result in better compliance with this requirement. Additionally, the 2009 Foster Parent surveys show that notification is improving.

C. Quality Assurance

Item 30: Standards Ensuring Quality Services. Has the statewide child welfare system developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children?

Previous Factor/Item Rating
In CFSR-1 Item 30 was rated as a **Strength** because the State has standards to protect the safety and health of children.

Changes 2005-2010
Multiple changes and enhancements to policy and practice previously described throughout this assessment serve as practice standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services which protect their health and safety.

Child Health and Education Tracking (CHET) - (CHET) is a well-being screening to be completed within 30 days of the child's Original Placement Date
Medical/Dental Services for Children in Out-Of-Home Care or Receiving Other Services - Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) The purpose of this program is to screen children and youth 20 years of age and younger in order to identify physical and/or mental health problems.
Social Worker Monthly Health and Safety Visits - Required visits to the child in their residence on a monthly basis, and is to include interviews with caregivers.

Monthly Supervisor Case Reviews - Monthly 100% Supervisor review assists social workers in ensuring that appropriate and timely delivery of services to children in foster care is occurring and that any safety concerns are addressed.

The Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) provides specialized staff to inspect facilities for health and safety, provide foster care provider training, and investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect in licensed foster care homes and facilities.

State law requires that DLR staff conduct health and safety inspections on 10% of licensed foster homes (including licensed kinship care foster homes) on an annual basis. DLR Licensors use a risk tool to identify homes where there may be a concern about the quality of care and prioritize such homes for more frequent monitoring.

DLR annually completes a survey with licensed caregivers on how DSHS-Childrens Administration might improve its services.

Impact on Practice

The Children's Administration is committed to applying quality practice standards and services assure the health and safety of all children in foster care. Changes in the frequency of visits to children in their homes by social workers have improved both the identification of children's needs and strengthened relationships between staff and caregivers. These changes and the quality of DLR investigative standards have helped maintain the absence of CA/N in Foster Care rate of 99.62% at or near the national standard of 99.68%.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Strengths

- Increased focus on monthly visits with caregivers and children
- Training of staff and foster parents as to practice requirements has improved
- Ongoing training requirements for licensed caregivers established
- Caregivers are receiving more information about children placed with them
- Statewide Foster care meetings (1624) have led to positive suggestions for systemic improvements

Challenges

- Schedules of caregivers make meetings with social workers / DLR difficult
- Limited funding for support staff and supportive services
- Communication gaps between caregivers, Children's Administration, tribes, providers, parents
- False allegations of licensed homes creates undue stress

Summary

DSHS-Childrens Administration has made significant improvements to increase monitoring of the safety and well-being of children in out of home care. Supports, in the form of practice guides and checklist tools for, and training of, staff has enhanced the effective monitoring of and support of caregivers. Children's Administration has taken steps to empower the development of caregivers by increasing training opportunities and by issuing the annual DLR voluntary self-assessment.

Item 31: Quality Assurance System

Is the statewide child welfare system operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies the strengths and needs of the services delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented?

Previous Factor/Item Rating

CFSR-1 Item 31 was rated as a **Strength** in the 2003 Washington CFSR, Item #31. A statewide quality assurance system was in place that focused on outcomes data and case reviews to improve performance with regard to achieving safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children.

Changes 2005-2010

Washington has maintained an ongoing quality assurance system to evaluate the quality of practice in addressing child safety and well being, and achieving permanency for children placed in out of home care. Washington continues to utilize a Central Case Review Team (CCRT) which ensures consistent and reliable case review results. The results are utilized to improve practice by identifying strengths and areas needing improvement, and to develop Practice Improvement Plans at the office, regional and statewide levels.

Office Central Case Reviews

Since the previous statewide CFSR assessment, CCRT reviews were enhanced to provide a consistent measurement of the CFSR outcomes for safety, permanency and well-being and were used to measure 18 of 23 CFSR items of the PIP.

The CCRT tool has been updated on an annual basis to address policy changes and practice priorities. In March 2010 the CCRT began a major redesign of the CCRT protocol and tool to include an increased focus on child safety, the role of the supervisor and a tracking of disparities in practice and decision making for children of color. Changes also include the addition of parent interviews to gather the parent's perspective about working with Children's Administration. .

CCRT reviews are conducted in each of Washington's 46 field offices every 18 to 24 months. Each review includes cases from all program areas: CPS, Family Voluntary Services (FVS), Child Family Welfare Services (CFWS), and Family Reconciliation Services (FRS). The number of cases reviewed by CCRT is based on an average number of cases open per month over the last year for the specific office.

Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Reviews

In 2005, Washington State Tribes, Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIO), the Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) and Children's Administration began a cooperative effort to review DSHS-Childrens Administration compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and to assess in more detail ICW quality of practice in cases where a child may be Native American.

In 2007 and 2009, a random sample of cases was reviewed from all regions utilizing a blended team of reviewers from Tribal ICW staff, RAIO members, and the CCRT. As a result of the 2007 ICW Case Review, practice improvement activities were conducted at both the regional and statewide level. As a result of the 2009 ICW Case Review, continued collaboration between Tribes, RAIOs, IPAC and Children's Administration is occurring to identify key priorities and develop practice improvement plans.

Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) Child Protection Services (DLR/CPS) Reviews

In 2007, Children's Administration, in collaboration with the Braam Oversight Panel and the Director of the Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress, developed a CCRT tool to evaluate the quality of DLR/CPS investigations of child abuse / neglect in licensed homes.

The CCRT conducted DLR/CPS case reviews in 2008, 2009, and 2010, and the results were utilized to develop priorities and Practice Improvement Plans for DLR/CPS.

Special Reviews
Special reviews are conducted by the CCRT at the request of management to review offices or programs with an identified need for evaluation, or when required by legislative mandate.

The statewide Quality Practice Improvement Team (QPIT)
In early 2010, the statewide QPIT was formed as a unified quality assurance and accountability team designed to communicate expectations, track, monitor, and analyze program performance and service delivery that improves outcomes children and families in the areas of safety, permanency and well being. The QPIT is at the beginning stages of analyzing data from multiple sources on a quarterly basis to identify practice trends and make recommendations to management regarding practice improvement..

Performance Measures
Data reports from CAMIS and FamLink continue to be utilized by management as a monitoring tool to measure compliance with key priorities and accountability goals on an ongoing basis.

The Braam Settlement Agreement and Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) are additional QA systems which Children's Administration is held accountable and reports to on a quarterly basis. *Please see General Information for description.*

Impact on Practice
CCRT reviews impact practice many levels. CCRT reviews identify current practice trends at the office, regional and statewide level. The reviews are designed to be a developmental process by providing direct feedback to social workers, supervisors and management on all cases reviewed and through a debrief meeting to discuss preliminary office practice trends, policy and practice clarification and recommendations for improvement. At the conclusion of a CCRT review, office practice improvement strategies and goals are developed in response to the review results. Annual reports of CCRT findings are used to inform policy, practice and training decisions.
In addition to the CCRT that provides data on the quality of practice, Performance Measures and other data sources provide Children's Administration with additional information on current compliance on key areas of practice.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Washington continues to utilize the CCRT to ensure consistent and reliable case review results to identify current practice trends. The results are utilized to improve practice by identifying strengths and areas needing improvement, and to develop Practice Improvement Plans at the office, regional and statewide levels. The CCRT protocol has been recently strengthened to include recommendations and the development and tracking of Action Plans as a result of the case review.

In May 2008, Children's Administration formally ended its pursuit of accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA). With this decision the CQI infrastructure is no longer in place in many local offices and there was a reduction in regional Peer Reviews. Children's Administration is currently working towards rebuilding the capacity for Peer Reviews and the infrastructure to track performance improvement.

Summary
Washington has continued to rely on the CCRT, Performance Measures and other data sources to evaluate compliance and the quality of practice in addressing child safety and well being, and achieving permanency for children placed in out of home care. Continued improvements have been made to the CCRT process in order to meet quality assurance needs. The addition of ICW Case Reviews and the utilization of Tribal members as reviewers enhanced the collaboration between state and Tribes to improve outcomes for Indian children.

D. Staff & Provider Training

Item 32: Initial Staff Training. Is the state child welfare system 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?

Previous Factor/Item Rating
This item was rated as a **Strength** because all staff receive initial training that supports the goals and objectives of the agency and are required to complete the training before being assigned case-carrying responsibilities.

Changes 2005-2010
The New Employee Orientation Program requires that each employee receive an introduction to state service. supervisors and managers are responsible for ensuring new employees receive New Employee Orientation (NEO). The purpose of NEO is to provide staff with the initial phase of personnel processing and job familiarization.

In addition to New Employee Orientation all new Social Work staff must participate in mandatory Social Worker Academy training within 15 days of hire. Academy sessions are conducted each month. There is no waiting list for staff to attend. All Academy training is centralized and occurs in the Seattle area. All new CPS, FVS and CFWS social workers are required to attend four weeks (134 hours) of Academy training, and complete a field component. The field component is a structured training designed to teach social workers specific knowledge and skills relevant to their area of practice. All newly hired Intake, Adoptions, DLR-Licensing, DLR-CPS and FRS social workers are required to attend a specialized training week (40 hours) in their respective program area. Social workers are required to attend the first available specialized week training following date of hire. All staff evaluate the effectiveness of the training via class evaluations and follow up emails. The training consistently scores above 4.5 on a 5.0 scale.

In April 2009 the Academy curriculum was redesigned and condensed from 6 weeks to 4 weeks. This change was made at the direction of management in order to provide social workers to the field in a shorter period of time and to eliminate some redundancies. One “field week experience” training, including a series of things SWs were asked to observe, such as court sessions and shadowing experienced SWs, was eliminated and replaced with various reading assignments.

In April 2009 all curricula was revised to include Solution Based Casework & FamLink for all Academy and Post-Academy training.

To support supervisors, a 3 week Supervisors Academy is conducted twice a year for new and current CA supervisors in addition to the supervisory training provided by both DSHS and the Division of Human Resources. Topics of this training include; clinical supervision, core functions for supervisors, personnel issues, such as “just cause” and corrective actions and Solution Based Casework for supervisors.

Impact on Practice
New social workers cannot be assigned case carrying responsibilities until after successful completion of the four-week Academy training program. Exceptions to this policy will be referred to the Assistant Secretary of Children's Administration.

The training is competency based and student feedback via evaluations has been positive indicating that staff feel prepared with the skills to perform their job.

All mandatory training requirements are tracked by the Aspen Learning Management System (LMS). The Aspen LMS has the capability to track employee class completion for all trainings. After receiving data from Aspen, Academy staff notifies employees, and their supervisors, if they have not completed a required training and when the next session will be held. The current LMS does not have that capability of tracking the percentages of staff

that have met the training requirements prior to the assignment of cases. The new LMS system set for implementation in July will not have this capacity either.

The training requirements noted above do not pertain to private agency staff.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to operate a staff development and training program.
Strengths

- Training/Class evaluations are standardized to insure objectives of the curriculum are met
- Quarterly and annual data reports for all trainings/classes and evaluation results are used to improve all trainings
- A realignment of responsibilities among training staff, policy program managers and regional staff has strengthened working relationships and enhanced curriculum development
- The Professional Development Unit collaborated with FamLink staff and Solution Based Casework (SBC) coaches and helped train all social work staff in SBC
- SBC principles were incorporated into all relevant trainings.
- Quarterly meetings are held with regional representatives to discuss upcoming trainings and to develop future training schedules
- Trainings are contracted with the University of Washington, Harborview Medical Center and the National Indian Child Welfare Association
- Program managers monitor performance of contracted trainings and provide evaluation of the trainings throughout the year
- Several Child Welfare National Resource Centers are used for curriculum reviews and development
- Tribal members are involved in curriculum review and development and CA has placed a greater emphasis on developing cultural competency and strengthening ICWA training requirements
- DSHS Learning Center - June 2010 – New Learning Management System (LMS) will provide Children's Administration with enhanced capabilities to track training requirements and training completion for all employees

Challenges

- Budget restrictions and the loss of funding has resulted in:
- Loss of field and training staff
- Limitations on training contracted training services
- Restrictions on travel to training / development opportunities

Summary
New worker orientation and Academy training continues to be a strength. The redesign of Academy and integration of FamLink and SBC has had a positive impact within Children's Administration and is supported at all levels. Academy enhancement and collaborative efforts in curriculum development have strengthened staff's ability to perform their jobs effectively.

Item 33: Ongoing Staff Training. Does the statewide child welfare system provide 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?

Previous Factor/Item Rating
This item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** because the Children's Administration did not require staff to participate in training on an ongoing basis and although training is made available to staff, not all staff participate in training opportunities.

Changes 2005-2010
As a result of CFSR-1, effective January 2005 all social workers are required to complete twenty hours of ongoing training on an annual basis. This requirement can be fulfilled by participating in the following training opportunities:

- Conferences and trainings related to Child Welfare and/or other human services relevant to the social worker's scope of duties
- Children's Administration post academy trainings
- Children's Administration ongoing classes
- Certification programs and other training opportunities approved by the supervisor

All social workers hired after January 1, 2005 must complete 8.5 days of mandatory training in the following areas within their first 2 years of hire:

- Indian Child Welfare (ICW) – with additional training for Supervisors
- Substance Abuse
- Worker Safety
- Neglect
- Teaming with Foster Parents
- Permanency Planning

In addition, CPS social workers are required to attend Harborview's Investigation and Interviewing Training.

Children's Administration has held professional development conferences for Supervisors, Foster Parents (annual conference), Support Staff, and Indian Child Welfare.

Beginning in March 2007 Children's Administration now implements and trains on new or updated policies in April, and October with the option to implement newly legislatively mandated policies in July. This predictable schedule for policy and program changes allows information / training to be coordinated at the local offices.

Impact on Practice
The revised policy roll-out schedule highlighted above consolidated mandatory trainings and reduced the impact on staff time.

To insure training is completed in a timely manner, Supervisors are required to review the training records of staff during annual evaluation –"Performance Development Plan."

Data with regards to the percentage of social workers meeting the ongoing training requirements is not provided by the current LMS. It is the responsibility of each supervisor to ensure that the ongoing training requirements are met for each social worker. Data is not available as to the percentage of supervisors that ensure the meeting of social worker training requirements?

Training needs are identified by the Leadership team and the Program and Practice Improvement (PPI) Division identifies requirements based on policy changes and legislative requirements. If a worker does not meet the required number of training hours this issue is dealt with at the supervisory level.

Training is made available in all offices and in central locations. Exceptions are made on a case by case basis if individual training is needed. Based on classroom evaluations and staff feedback the incorporation of the elements of SBC and FamLink into ongoing training curricula has increased the effectiveness of social work in the field. Focus on presenting trainings in the regions, instead of requiring staff to travel to the Training Center has decreased the time away from casework activities.

Private agency staff do not have the same training requirements as staff and any cross training that may occur happens at the local level, but is not a requirement.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to provide ongoing training to staff.
Strengths
- Uniformity of training requirements
- Supervisors ability to track the training of employees
- DSHS, Children's Administration leadership, and Regional staff have and are participating in the training Undoing Racism
- Accessing the talents of our communities by contracting with them to provide training to staff
- Partnerships with the University of Washington and Eastern Washington University - Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program (CWTAP)
- Title IV-E stipend program for Masters of Social Work education at the University of Washington and Eastern Washington University
- SBC training is being conducted in all regions of the state.
- SBC case consultation and coaching session are held in each region with both social workers and supervisors

Challenges
- Limitations on professional development conferences due to budget constraints
- Workload demands often prevent or discourage staff from attending trainings
- The tracking of the required annual 20 hours of training is difficult when the training opportunity is external to the agency and not part of the LMS database

Summary
Since CFSR-1 Children's Administration has made significant changes and improvements to ongoing training requirements. The 8.5 day ongoing training is established in policy. The integration of FamLink and SBC into ongoing training has had a positive on service delivery.

Item 34: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training. Does the statewide child welfare system provide training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State-licensed or State-approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E? Does the training address the skills and knowledge base they need to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?

Previous Item Rating
In CFSR-1 Item 34 was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** because the State did not mandate ongoing training for foster parents and there are foster parents who do not participate in ongoing training opportunities.

Changes 2005-2010
In March 2005 a policy change was made requiring licensed foster parents to complete 36 hours of continuing education within each 3 year licensing period. Licensed Relatives are required to complete the same pre-service and mandatory training and timeframe requirements as non-relatives.

The Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) curriculum was expanded in 2002 to a 27 hour mandatory pre-licensing training. PRIDE is offered to all caregivers, licensed and unlicensed relatives, but is not mandatory for unlicensed caregivers. DLR has responsibility for monitoring on-going training requirements and maintains that data through FamLink.

Foster Parent Co-Trainers are an essential element of the PRIDE Pre-Service training curriculum. PRIDE Pre-Service embraces the philosophy of teamwork and collaboration and uses a co-trainer model with a child welfare educator and an experienced foster parent or adoptive parent.

Training is provided locally, in each region. Training is offered during the day, evenings and weekends. The average maximum wait time would be one month. Each region provides a minimum of one Pre-Service class locally each month. There are 12 trainers statewide.

The PRIDE curriculum is used by many private agencies. If they chose to use a different curriculum, they must follow the explicit criteria to include:

- Information about the potential impact of placement on foster children
- Social service agency administrative processes
- Requirements, responsibilities, expectations, and skills needed to be a foster parent
- Attachment, separation, and loss issues faced by birth parents, foster children, and foster parents
- Child management and discipline
- Birth family relationships
- Information on the limits of the adoption support program
- Assisting children transitioning out of foster care.

On-going hours for private agencies may vary. Each private agency has its own requirements for ongoing annual training.

There is specialized training for families providing therapeutic care, in addition to the standard pre-service training. Group Care staff are training to the requirements outlined in the Washington Administrative Code.

Impact on Practice

The Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI) provides consistent training for foster, adoptive and unlicensed relative caregivers statewide through the PRIDE Pre-Service curriculum, a variety of Special Topic trainings offered by professional trainers and First Aid/HIV/CPR/BBP training.

Classroom training is provided weekdays, weeknights and weekends to meet the needs of the caregivers. Increased efforts have been made to invite unlicensed relative caregivers to all trainings. On-going training is provided by both RFTI trainers, special topic contracted trainers and local community partner resources. The contracted trainers were solicited through a statewide Request for Proposal competitive process. RFTI keeps data on the number of unlicensed caregivers that attend classroom training, and utilize the lending library, on-line training and take First Aid/BBP/Blood Borne pathogens classroom training. The percentage of relatives participating in this training has not been calculated.

Of vital consideration in all training opportunities are racial, ethnic and cultural issues and the needs of the children and families served. Cultural issues are being addressed through training videos for; African American Children in care, Native American Children in care, and Gay, Bi-sexual, Lesbian, Transgender Youth. A Spanish curriculum for PRIDE and First Aid training is now available and used in communities with Spanish Speaking caregivers and potential foster parents. RFTI has included cultural awareness in Pre-Service and recently developed a video called **All My Relations** which is a film about the importance of cultural connections for Native American children.

A 30 hour in-service course providing post pre-service training was developed in response to caregiver feedback and requests. It is presented on a regular basis in each region. Although not required, this course does count towards the 36 hour continuing education requirement for licensed caregivers. Data is available with regards to the number of people that participate in this training, but most foster parents have not attended this training. The Foster Parent Association of Washington (FPAWS) is supportive of this training becoming mandatory. All of RFTI trainings are available to the public.

Children's Administration has developed a training offered statewide entitled "Engaging Families for Change" which focuses on the importance of working with birth families and the overall team approach to safely caring for and reuniting children with their birth families.

The training "Enhancing Relationships through Teaming" is offered statewide on an on-going basis. This is specifically for social workers and foster parents to work in partnership and actually requires them to attend the training together.

Alternative training methods in rural areas have been developed to meet the need of caregivers. These include a lending library with training materials and videos to caregivers via mail; regional subscriptions for self-study materials available to caregivers via mail and continued development and growth of our On-line Training opportunities for all caregivers.

RFTI has developed a stronger collaboration with the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) to ensure that the required training hours by foster parents are being completed. Collaboration with DLR has been successful in meeting the training needs of both licensed and unlicensed caregivers. This collaboration needs to be a continuous and ongoing process. The mandatory policy requires that a total of 36 hours be completed and can be shared by both applicants.

The Resource Family Training Institute is working closely with the statewide Foster Parent Association, other caregivers, support groups and using training survey's to identify gaps and more effective ways to provide training to caregivers.

All foster/adoptive parents complete pre-service prior to licensing. They can receive their first placement at that point.

Although data on the percentages of foster parents that complete the ongoing training requirements is currently being collected in FamLink, at present this data is not reported or readily accessible.
The table below reflects an increase in classroom trainings completed and an increase in the number of classroom trainings statewide.

FY 2007			
Classes	Number of Classes	Number of Participants	Evaluation Score 1 thru 5 (5 high)
Pride Pre-Service	210	N/A	N/A
In-Service	240	N/A	N/A
Totals	450	6279	4.67
FY 2008			
Classes	Number of Classes	Number of Participants	Evaluation Score
Pride Pre-Service	184	N/A	N/A
In-Service	250	N/A	N/A
Totals	434	6059	4.69
FY 2009			
Classes	Number of Classes	Number of Participants	Evaluation Score
Pride Pre-Service	179	N/A	N/A
In-Service	327	N/A	N/A
Totals	506	7112	4.67

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to provide training for current or prospective caregivers.

- RFTI provides consistent statewide training for foster, adoptive and unlicensed relative caregivers free of charge.
- Experienced foster parents co-train with RFTI Trainers for many classroom offerings.
- With the requirement of continuing education training hours and the expansion of opportunities, there is greater caregiver participation in all classes and other forms of training.
- The classroom training is provided weekdays, weeknights and weekends to meet the needs of the caregivers.

Challenges

- Too much information to cover in the initial 27 hours of training
- Some classes would be more helpful after parents have the experience of a child placed in the home
- Quality Assurance system needed to measure competency of foster parents
- Reunification emphasis needed for Foster Parent training/expectation
- Prospective caregivers are sometimes unrealistic about the behaviors and needs of foster children
- Foster parents are not sensitive to the youth's needs (Per foster youth)
- Foster parents report they need training on engagement with child / birth parents
- Significant budget reductions has delayed our ability to increase and enhance quality training for the state's caregivers
- RFTI lost 2 training staff positions, but has worked to provide the same number and quality of trainings
- Need for child care and travel reimbursement for the caregiver while attending training is hindered due to budget cuts

Summary

There have been significant improvements to training curriculum and delivery since the last CFSR that include required mandatory training for foster parents. Other notable improvements are the consistency and satisfaction with the delivery of PRIDE Pre-Service, First Aid and Special Topics training throughout the state.

The Training Unit has made significant efforts in communication and coordination with foster parents, unlicensed caregivers and the Division of Licensed Resources to provide training opportunities that address racial, ethnic and cultural issues and needs of the children and families served.

E. Service Array & Development

Item 35: Array of Services. Does the statewide child welfare system have in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families, that determine other service needs, that addresses the needs of families in addition to individual children to create a safe home environment, that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency?

Previous Item Rating

CFSR-1 finding rated item 35 as an **Area Needing Improvement** because the State had critical gaps in its service array in the areas of mental health services and substance abuse treatment, and have an insufficient pool of foster homes.

Changes 2005-2010

Children's Administration has made many improvements to the array and quality of services including specific improvements in Mental Health, Substance Abuse services and Foster Care recruitment and retention. In addition changes that include a new statewide practice model, a redesign of service delivery, an actuarial risk assessment model, and an increase in the number of dedicated staff to the Family Team Decision Meeting program have improved quality and delivery of services.

DSHS-Childrens Administration / Children and Family Services

Children and families enter through four primary program areas: Child Protective Services (CPS, Family Voluntary Services, Child and Family Welfare Services (CFWS) and Family Reconciliation Services (FRS). These programs are responsible for the investigation of child abuse and neglect complaints, child protection, family preservation, family reconciliation, foster care, group care, in-home services, independent living, and adoption services for children age 0 to 18 years.

Child Protective Services (CPS) provides 24 hour, seven day a week intake, screening and investigative services for reports of alleged child abuse and neglect. CPS social workers investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect to assess the safety and protection needs of children. Law enforcement, courts, Tribes, and community teams are also critical members of the child protection system. Each has a distinct role and is integral

to the checks and balances designed to protect children from abuse and neglect and to safeguard families from unnecessary disruption.

When it appears that a child is in danger of being harmed or has already been seriously abused or neglected, CPS, with a police officer or court order putting the child in protective custody, places the child with a relative or in foster care. By law, a child can be kept in protective custody for no more than 72 hours, excluding weekends and legal holidays. If the child is not returned to the parents or some other voluntary arrangement made within 72 hours, the matter must be reviewed by a court. If risk warrants ongoing placement, dependencies must be established in court within 75 days.

Family Voluntary Services (FVS) support families on a voluntary basis and focus on early engagement. Services with families are designed to help prevent chronic or serious problems which interfere with their ability to protect or parent children. This program serves families where the children are safe to remain in the home while the family engages in services through a Voluntary Service Agreement (VSA) or for children who are temporarily placed in an out of home setting through a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA).

Child and Family Welfare Services (CFWS) provides both permanency planning and court-ordered intensive treatment services to children and families who need help with chronic or serious problems which interfere with their ability to protect or parent children, such as on-going abuse and neglect or intensive medical needs. Services oversee the health and wellbeing of children in out of home placements and provide ongoing assessments of safety and risk to children. Children served in this program are dependents of the state (in-home or out-of-home care) or legally free for adoption.

Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) are voluntary in-home services focused on developing skills and supports within families to resolve problems related to at-risk youth in need of services or in family conflict. These services are designed to help families find solutions to their conflicts by developing skills and supports to maintain the family unit.

DSHS-Childrens Administration – Division of Licensed Resources (DLR)

DLR provides Child Protective Service investigations regarding allegations of abuse and neglect to children in licensed, certified and DSHS-operated facilities. The programs five main goals are:

1. Ensure the immediate safety of alleged child victims
2. Investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect and make determinations regarding the existence of child abuse and neglect
3. Assess whether the child in question has been abused or neglected in a state-regulated setting in ways that have not been alleged
4. Identify risk factors within the facility which create a substantial risk of harm to children
5. Ensure consistency and equity toward providers in the investigation of abuse and neglect

DLR licenses, supports, and monitors foster homes, and out of home care facilities for children. DLR also licenses child-placing agencies, and provides assistance to these agencies who certify private agency foster homes. Licensing staff are charged with ensuring the health, safety and quality of care for children in high quality foster family homes, group care facilities, and child placing agencies.

Description of Children's Administration Services

Out-of-Home Care Services

Adoption Program

The adoption program focuses exclusively on providing adoption services to children placed in state foster care and to families interested in adopting a child from foster care. Children's Administration focuses on placing children from foster care with approved adoptive families. These children are considered special needs and are often harder to place as a result of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect or are part of a sibling group. Adoption Services include, adoptive family recruitment, completion of adoptive home studies to determine the fitness and suitability of a family for adoption by providing training and pre-placement and post-placement services to the child and family. Focus is placed on matching children with approved adoptive families that are

best able to meet the needs of the child. Children's Administration implements the adoption policy of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978.

Adoption Support Program
Funding resources are available through the Adoption Support Program to assist families adopting children with special needs. Adoption Support is designed to help families offset the additional expenses involved in caring for a child with special needs. Pre-authorized counseling, medical and dental services, non-recurring adoption costs, and a negotiated monthly cash payment are some of the services that may be subsidized through Adoption Support.

Adoption Medical
Adoption Medical provides medical services to eligible adopted children through the state Medicaid program.

Behavior Rehabilitation Services (BRS)
Children's Administration contracts with community agencies for behavior rehabilitation services for children with extreme high level services needs. BRS provides necessary supports to allow the child to safely be served in their own home, foster home or a residential setting. BRS is a short term intensive support service designed to stabilize the child and safely move them to a Permanent resource.

Crisis Residential Centers (CRC)
Crisis Residential Centers provide temporary shelter for youth ages 12 through 17 who run away from home, are in severe conflict with their parents, or foster youth in need of a crisis placement. CRCs are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Placement is limited to a maximum of five days, and services are focused on assessment of needs and family reunification.

Secure Crisis Residential Centers (S-CRC)
Secure crisis residential centers provide twenty-four hour availability for short-term placements of up to five-days for runaways placed by law enforcement. These facilities were mandated by the "Becca Bill" legislation passed in 1995. The S-CRCs are either facility secure or staff secure, but otherwise operate as other CRCs, with an emphasis on assessment of needs and family reunification.

Children's Hospital Alternative Program (CHAP)
CHAP is a collaborative effort between Children's Administration , County Mental Health/Regional Support Networks (RSN) and private local providers. Children's Administration and the RSN blend funding to provide intensive supports to youth with severe mental health disorders and their families in an attempt to prevent inpatient hospitalization, stabilize the youth, build family skills so they can become more independent, self-reliant and gradually move from formal to informal supports within their own community. These intensive services are provided by a private agency either within the youth's home or in a treatment foster home.

Child Placing Agency (CPA)
Private Agency Services provide licensed foster homes and other contracted services such as; Parent/Child/Sibling Visitation Services, Follow-up Care Services, Borrowed Home Services, Respite Care Services, Case Aide Services, and can help manage some case responsibilities.

Education and Training Voucher Program
The federal CHAFEE Independence Act was amended in 2001 and authorizes funding to the states to provide financial assistance to youth who have aged out of foster care and are attending post secondary institutions. Youth who are eligible for this program may receive assistance with their cost of attendance up to $5,000 per year. Youth who are enrolled in this program before age 21 years may continue to receive this service until age 23 provided they are making satisfactory progress towards the completion of their program.

Family Foster Home Care Services
Foster homes provide twenty-four hour care for children of all ages who need temporary or extended out-of-home placement due to child abuse, neglect or family conflict. Foster care is provided by licensed foster parents, unlicensed relative caretakers or other approved suitable persons and is viewed as a short-term solution to an

emergent situation. The goal of foster care services is to return each child home safely or to find another appropriate permanent home as quickly as possible.

HOPE Centers
The Washington State Homeless, Youth Prevention/Protection and Engagement Act (HOPE) passed by the legislature in 1999 created HOPE Centers and Responsible Skills Living Programs. HOPE Centers are temporary residential placements for street youth. Youth can remain in a HOPE Center for up to 30 days while they receive assessment services and a permanent placement is identified. HOPE Centers are intended to stabilize an adolescent, perform comprehensive assessments of the youth's physical and mental health, identify substance abuse problems and educational status, and develop a long-term permanent plan.

Responsible Living Skills Program (RLSP)
The Washington State Homeless, Youth Prevention/Protection and Engagement Act (HOPE) passed by the legislature in 1999 created HOPE Centers and Responsible Skills Living Programs. RLSP offers permanent placement settings and independent living skills to youth who are considered "street youth" and who agree to participate fully in the program. Eligible youth are between ages 14 and 18; however priority is given to youth between the ages of 16 and 18. The RLSP may serve as a permanent placement for dependent youth who will exit from foster care into independent living at age 18. Youth must not have a permanency plan of return home and they must have lived in a HOPE Center or Secure Crisis Residential Center prior to entering RLSP. This requirement may be waived by the social worker if they view RLSP as the best placement for their youth.

Independent Living Services (ILS)
The federal CHAFEE Foster Care Independence Act (1999) requires states to identify youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and to provide those youth with a variety of Independent Living Services. Services include education, training, and support in the areas of educational stability and achievement, vocational training, career exploration, mentoring, employment placement and retention, daily living skills and avoidance of high risk behavior. Washington State administers these services to youth in state care through community-based and Tribal contractors. Independent Living Services are funded primarily through federal grant monies.

Transitional Living Services (TLS)
The federal CHAFEE Independence Act was amended in 2001 and directs states to deliver transitional living services to former foster care recipients between the ages of 18 and 20. Transitional living support services include assistance in accessing safe and stable housing, employment training, placement and retention services, and support toward the attainment of either a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) certificate. This service is provided through out Independent Living Program.

Street Youth Services
Street Youth Services consist of community-based outreach and case management targeting youth engaged in life styles characterized as homeless. These youth, referred to as street youth, are living away from their homes and may be chemically dependent, actively involved in prostitution, or delinquent behaviors. Services are aimed at engaging and assisting youth in ending this life style.

Social Security Program for Children in Foster Care
Children's Administration has a specialized program that identifies children in foster care with disabilities and applies for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) on their behalf. These applications and appeals result in monthly SSI benefits that are placed into accounts for the child's personal benefit and assistance with reimbursement of the child's foster and group care expenses. These benefits follow children when they leave care and are frequently part of the reunification plan. At any given time, there are about 1,450 children in foster care who qualify for SSI benefits and over 500 children who qualify for Social Security benefits based on the retirement, death or disability of a parent.

<u>Other Foster Care Services</u>

Interim and Receiving Care Services
Intensive emergency placement resources with contracted agencies are available for children and youth pending family reunification, less restrictive placement, or other long term permanent resource. Family Receiving Homes

provide emergency placement services for children and youth removed from their homes because of abuse, neglect or family conflict.

Foster Care Assessment Program (FCAP)
The Foster Care Assessment Program is a statewide contracted program to assess children who have been in out-of-home placement for more than 90 days and are in need of intensive planning to help achieve permanency. The program targets children who have complex health and behavioral problems which may pose barriers to the achievement of stable permanent placements.

Pediatric Interim Care (PIC)
PIC provides support services to the families of drug/alcohol affected children under the age of three years. Support services to the families may include specialized group care, specialized foster care, family support, foster family training and support, aftercare services, wraparound services and/or other services. There are currently three Pediatric Interim Care programs available in Washington State. One is a facility-based program that provides care and medical support to drug-affected infants for up to 45 days. Another provides care and intensive services to drug-affected infants and children age birth to three years through trained foster homes. The third program provides support services, but no placements, for drug affected children ages birth to three directly to the child through the foster parents, relative caregivers, and/or the birth parents to promote the child's well being and to provide training to the families on the particular needs of drug affected children.

Transportation and Supervised Visitation
Parent/Child/Sibling Visit contracts provide transportation and supervision for visits between children in out-of-home care and their siblings and families, essential services that support family reunification.

In-Home Services
Early Family Support Services (EFSS) – formerly Alternative Response (ARS)
Early Family Support Services are provided statewide through regional contractors to help reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect and re-referrals to CPS. EFSS serves families whose CPS referrals are determined to be low risk or moderately low risk at intake or following investigation. As a result of the Children's Administration 100% contract review initiated in 2005, this program has undergone improvements. The program is now has two pathways for services. The contracts have a short-term referral based service as well as a longer term, family engagement and intervention pathway. The family engagement path includes the Omaha System which is a family assessment component. The Omaha System allows providers to track and document family and individual outcomes.

Providers received training in Motivational Interviewing to provide addition skills to assist the provider in family engagement.

The program also includes the integration of evidenced based and promising practices: Promoting First Relationships and Triple P – Positive Parenting Program and possibly Project SafeCare. The goal of integrating evidenced based and promising programs is to allow providers to choose the appropriate service delivery model for the family and to utilize an evidenced based program if appropriate. These programs, as well as the Omaha System, will be phased in within the next few years due to the nature of training and oversight needed for implementation.

Home Support Specialists (HSS)
Some offices have paraprofessional CFS employees who are assigned to work directly in the home with high risk families teaching parenting skills. This includes basic physical and emotional care of children, personal hygiene, nutrition, homemaking, and life skills. Home Support Specialists also connect families with community resources and facilitate supervised visitation. Families receiving either CPS or CWS can be served by these paraprofessionals.

Public Health Nurses Early Intervention Program (EIP)
Trained public health nurses are available to provide voluntary in-home services which can safely prevent the need for more intrusive interventions for at-risk families with young children.
EIP was also involved in the Children's Administration contract review. Currently, this program is under review in an effort to improve service delivery.

Family Support Services

Child Care

Child care programs are available for families and children with an open case, and the case plan includes child care as a service to support the child's individual safety and service plan. Parents, unlicensed relative placements, and licensed foster parents are eligible for child care when the case plan includes child care as a service needed for the best interest of the child. Children's Administration implemented a child care payment structure for child care provided during "non-standard" hours. The payment rates under this policy cover child care provided overnight, and on weekends and holidays.

Crisis Family Intervention

Crisis Family Intervention (CFI) is available to families with youth ages 12 to 18 who are in conflict or who are experiencing problems with an at-risk youth. Families may request CFI services from the department. The service is a brief and voluntary service that is directed to preserve, strengthen, and reconcile families or caregivers in conflict. The main focus of CFI includes working with families to resolve the immediate crisis, identifying community resources to support family functioning, and developing protective supports.

Family Preservation Services (FPS)

Family Preservation Services are available primarily to families whose children face "substantial likelihood" of being placed outside of the home or to assist with reunifying a child with their family (from out-of-home care). Interventions focus on resolving the immediate crisis and strengthening a family's relationships through a variety of community resources. FPS is available to families within 48 hours of referral and is offered for a maximum of six months by a contracted service provider. Services include a pre- and post-service assessment using the North Carolina Family Assessment Scales.

Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS)

Intensive Family Preservation Services are available to families whose children are at "imminent risk" of foster care placement or to reunify a child with their family from out-of-home care. Contracted community agencies provide intensive in-home therapeutic services (6 to 10 hours of therapy per week) for up to 40 days, and 2 brief booster sessions at the request of the social worker of the family to reinforce gains and support the family using the evidence-based HOMEBUILDERS® model of service. Services are available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. IFPS focus on improving the family's ability to overcome a crisis situation and to remain together safely.

Home-Based Services (HBS)

CPS social service staff can purchase supplemental services for families who are at risk of child placement or support for families with children returning to their families following placement in foster care. Home Based Services are individualized to meet each family's need within available resources. Services may include parent aides and counseling, as well as supports for basic needs such as clothing, shelter, employment or transportation.

Evidence-Based Practices

Children's Administration is looking at multiple evidenced based and promising programs to determine priorities of program delivery and look at service gaps around the state. A plan will be developed to train more providers while supporting existing providers with consultation and additional training within our reduced budget. Children's Administration has incorporated the following evidence-based practices into our service array, including:

Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

PCIT is a parent training program that was originally designed to treat children (age two to seven) with problem behavior. Further studies of the program showed that PCIT helps parents improve parenting skills, build a warm and responsive relationship with their child; and decrease child behavior problems. The service lasts about 20 weeks and is delivered in one hour sessions. Trained therapists coach the parent (through the use of a one way mirror in which therapist uses a microphone device from another room) in child management techniques (e.g. how to praise appropriate behavior, ignore undesirable behavior, give clear, age-appropriate instructions, how to implement "time-outs") while parents are interacting with their children in a safe environment. Use of the program with clients involved in child welfare produced in one study a 50% reduction in re-occurrence of physical abuse and neglect.

In FY 09, this program was available in all regions, but not to all offices. In FY 10, regions will continue to expand services as funding allows.

The Incredible Years
Comprehensive, developmentally-based intervention with components for parents, teachers and children (age two to seven years) designed to prevent and treat emotional/behavioral problems in young children by promoting children's social, emotional and academic competence and strengthening parental competence and family relationships. Interventions use a group format and deliver content through multiple methods including video, discussion, activities, role playing, and home assignments. In FY 09, this program was available in Region 1, Region 2, and Region 3, and Region 4. In FY 10, Children's Administration will continue to assess service gaps and expand services to other areas throughout the state as funding allows.

Trauma Focused – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF CBT)
Intervention designed for children ages 5 -18 who have been the victim of trauma, including sexual abuse. The child's parent or caregiver must participate in the program. TF CBT uses cognitive-behavioral therapy and stress inoculation training procedures to reduce children's negative emotional and behavioral responses (e.g., post-traumatic stress) and correct maladaptive beliefs and attributions related to the abusive experiences. The program should not be used with children who exhibit externalizing behavior disorders (acting out behaviors). In FY 09, this program was available as a contract in Region 5 Pierce County, and in other community mental health centers around the state through RSN-funded services. Due to lack of funding the program was not able to expand.

Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
FFT is a family therapy that is provided usually in a family home. The program serves families with children between the ages of 11 and 18. FFT focuses reducing conflict in the family, improving communication, increasing use of age appropriate parenting skills, and improving parent supervision of children. The program lasts an average of 4 months. The entire family participates in FFT. With child welfare clients, one study showed a 50% reduction in out of home placement for adolescents whose families received FFT. This program was available in all regions.

Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC)
MTFC is a program for children ages 12 to 18 who are in foster care and exhibit problem behaviors that led to a referral to BRS. The program's goal is to increase developmentally appropriate behavior in children and adolescents who are in need of out-of-home placement. The intervention is multi-method and occurs in multiple settings. It is a strength-based, skill building model, which shapes desired behaviors through positive reinforcement. The treatment model assists the youth's permanent resource family with effective parenting skills. This will ensure that positive changes made while in the MTFC program are sustained long term. Children remain in MTFC foster homes for an average of 9 months. Studies indicate that children participating in MTFC experienced increased placement stability after completion of the program. In FY 09, a Latency age (6-11) site was added. In FY 10, Children's Administration was looking to expand the program to more regions of the state. However, budget restrictions impacted this plan. Two pilot sites for Project KEEP began spring of 2009. KEEP is an evidence based model that uses a support and skills group for foster parents. It has been shown to reduce placement disruptions and problem behaviors in foster youth and increase foster parent retention.

Two pilot sites for Project KEEP began spring of 2009. KEEP is an evidence based model which that uses a support and skills group to assist foster parents. It has been shown to reduce placement disruptions and problem behaviors in foster youth and increase foster parent retention. The two sites remain active, but fiscal constraints and new contracting guidelines may not allow for the continuation of the contract.

Nurse Family Partnerships (NFP)
NFP is a Prenatal and early childhood home visitation program designed to improve maternal and child health and well-being. Home visits conducted by experienced, well-trained and supervised nurses who work intensively with **first-time**, low-income mothers and their families over a period of two years. Goals for the program include improving maternal and fetal health by helping pregnant women improve their health-related behaviors; improving infant and child health and development by enhancing parental care giving skills; and improving the families' economic self-sufficiency. Studies have shown reductions child abuse and neglect, juvenile and adult crime, and increased employment by the participating mother. In FY 09, this program was available in Region 1, Region 2,

Region 3, Region 4, Region 5, and Region 6. It was supported by contract in Pierce County. Availability is through Public Health Jurisdictions in 10 counties throughout the state.

Promoting First Relationships
Promoting First Relationships is a prevention program dedicated to promoting children's social-emotional development through responsive, nurturing caregiver-child relationships. The program trains service providers in the use of practical, effective strategies for promoting secure and healthy relationships between caregivers and young children (birth to 3 years). By supporting parents and caregivers to be loving, responsive and tuned in to their children's feelings and needs, the desired goals can be achieved: happy children who engage in trusting and caring relationships with others and are free to explore and learn about the world around them. In FY 09, this program was available in Region 3 utilizing state staff as providers. It was also used in Region 4 and Region 5 through contracted providers. A research project using collaboration with Children's Administration, community mental health agencies and UW researchers is also available in Region 5. Also in FY 09, providers of two other contracted service programs, Medicaid Treatment Child Care (MTCC), and Pediatric Interim Care Services (PIC) were trained and offered the services as part of their program in Region 2, and Region 3 respectively. In FY 10, we will continue to support newly trained providers by supporting their consultation with the University of Washington as the program is outlined. As with other evidenced based and promising programs.

Homebuilders
Homebuilders is the service delivery model for Intensive Family Preservation Services designed to safely prevent out of home placement of children or facilitate return home. Referrals to the program are made when a family has been referred for child abuse and neglect and the child or children are at imminent risk of placement. The program is short in duration, usually four to six weeks. Homebuilders' therapists respond to families 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The program focuses on teaching parents to care effectively for their children by increasing the parent's ability to manage child behavior, utilize appropriate discipline, and provide a safe and nurturing home environment. Therapists have a low caseload (two cases at a time) allowing therapists to spend a greater amount of time with the family. Homebuilders' therapists also assist parents in enrolling in other longer term services that will help the parent maintain changes. The program in research has been shown to cost effectively reduce out of home placement of children.

Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)
Triple P is a parenting program that teaches parents methods and skills to manage child behavior and to increase the positive interaction with their child. The program was initially developed and studied as an intervention with children with conduct problems. In recent years the program has been utilized in child welfare settings. In one research study Triple P was shown to reduce child abuse and neglect. In FY 09, contracted providers were trained in Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 5, and Region 6. In FY 10 Children's Administration will continue to look at how this program is used in the regions and will develop a plan to implement Triple P in other areas around the state as funding allows.

Aggression Replacement Training (ART)
Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a psycho-educational training program for adolescents ages 12 to 18. The program teaches participants social skills, specific steps to reduce and control anger, and moral reasoning. The program is provided over a 10 week period and meets three times per week. The program has been shown to effectively increase socially appropriate behavior and to reduce aggression in adolescents involved in the juvenile justice system. A decision was made in FY 09 to train provider of BRS programs in ART since many of the children in BRS programs display poor social skills and aggressive behavior. In FY 10, training and implementation of this program will begin for BRS group home providers. Due to budget constraints no expansion will occur. Fiscal constraints will not allow the consultant contract to continue or to expand the service.

Project SafeCare
Project SafeCare is an intervention designed specifically to intervene with families that have been referred to child welfare for child neglect. The program has three components, Home Safety, Child Health, and Parent Skills. The service is provided in the family home and focus on parents practicing new skills in real time. Parents are supported by the home visitor until mastery of the skills and tasks are reached. Preliminary research on the program indicates the program is having an impact on re-referrals to child welfare. In FY 09, three agencies in

Region 3 have been providing the Project SafeCare program, serving a total of 28 families to date. In FY 10, Children's Administration intends to train a few internal staff as well as a few providers in Region 3.

Other Children's Administration Services

Domestic Violence Services

The Domestic Violence Program provides support for community-based shelters, emergency counseling and legal advocacy for children and families who have experienced domestic violence. A statewide toll-free hotline is available to link victims with services in their communities. Children's Administration also sets minimum standards for domestic violence perpetrator programs and certifies perpetrator treatment programs. Victims of domestic violence can receive emergency shelter, crisis counseling, court accompaniment and advocacy, and other support services from agencies that hold DSHS contracts. Funding is provided from state general funds, the federal Victims of Crime Act victim assistance grant, and the federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act grant.

Sexually Aggressive Youth (SAY)

Special programs are offered for sexually aggressive youth. Comprehensive intervention and treatment services are available for children who meet the definition of Sexually Aggressive Youth as defined in RCW 74.13.075. These services include one-time expenses for testing, monitoring equipment, or emergency interventions as well as ongoing evaluations, treatment and supervision.

Indian Child Welfare Services (ICW)

Services are provided to Indian children, consistent with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the Tribal-Washington State ICW Agreement of 1987, in the areas of child protective services, foster care, dependency guardianship, termination of parental rights, and adoption proceedings. In addition to direct services provided by the administration, additional services are funded through contracts with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes and Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIO) in the state enabling providers to serve their own Tribal members and off-reservation Indians. The administration monitors and provides technical assistance to its own staff and contracted Tribes and RAIOs on compliance with federal and state requirements related to the care of Indian children. Tribes and RAIOs are also able to contract for any service available for all children through Children's Administration.

- **Native American-Culturally Responsive Services**
  All services available to children in care are available to Native American children whether they are reservation based, off reservation or urban. This includes children in Tribal jurisdiction or State jurisdiction. Culturally responsive services are expected from all contracted providers. Reservation based children may access services available from the tribe. Some tribes also open up services to tribal children and families who are not affiliated with their specific tribe as well as to other individuals depending on resources. Enrolled children may access services through Indian Health Services which may include physical and mental health services.

Interstate Compact Placement of Children (ICPC)

This is a statutorily established (RCW 26.34) reciprocal placement and service agreement between Washington State and other states that governs the out-of-state placement of dependent and other children as specified by the Compact.

Medicaid Treatment Child Care (MTCC)

This program provides medically necessary psycho-social services to young children at risk of child abuse and neglect. Each child is assessed and an individualized treatment plan is developed to address the needs identified in the assessment. Services include but are not limited to:

- Play therapy
- Individual counseling for behavior modification
- Family counseling
- Group interventions with both child and parent
- Monthly home visits
- Facilitated groups for caregivers based on a treatment plan

Child Health & Education Tracking (CHET)
Child Health and Education Tracking is designed to identify and organize essential and appropriate wellbeing information about the physical health, development, connections, education and emotional/behavioral health of all children in state care or custody. This information is recorded in a central database and a summary is shared with foster parents, relative caregivers, pre-adoptive parents and social workers to use in placement decisions, case planning and service delivery to help children grow and thrive. In addition, as concerns are identified during the screening process, CHET screeners make the appropriate service referrals to Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program, Education Advocate, Supplemental Security Income, and the Foster Care Public Health Nurse Program.

Relative – Guardianship Assistance Program (R-GAP)
In October 2009 the Relative - Guardianship Assistance Program (R-GAP) was developed for Washington State as a result of the Federal Fostering Connections for Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 and the passage of SHB 1961 in 2009. R-GAP offers an additional permanent plan option under guardianships that also provides a subsidy for licensed relative guardians if a child is IV-E eligible.

Post Adoption Services-Adoption Support Program
Funding resources are available through the Adoption Support Program to assist families adopting children with special needs. Adoption Support is designed to help families offset the additional expenses involved in caring for a child with special needs. Pre-authorized counseling, medical and dental services, non-recurring adoption costs, and a negotiated monthly cash payment are some of the services that may be subsidized through Adoption Support.

Impact on Practice
Improved tools have been provided to social workers to assess for needs and more likely that appropriate services will be offered to parents and children. There has been a demonstrated increase in coordinated efforts across administrations which opened up the conversation and increased the number of people focused on finding solutions specifically for chemical dependency and mental health issues. The increased accessibility to information across the state through FamLink will increase our knowledge and understanding of practice.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's array of services.
Strengths
- Evidence Based Practices
- FTDMs
- Shared planning meetings using SBC to engage parents
- Collaboration between all parties to develop case /service plans, transportation, visitation etc.

Challenges
- Lack of funding for services and declining resources
- Gaps and delays in services negatively impacts transitioning children back home, and support for families post-adoption and post-dependency
- Lack of services and supports directly to fathers
- Lack of access to services that are culturally appropriate to the range of children and families being served.
- Resources to increase the availability of Evidence Based Programs
- Equitable access to services for relative placements
- Need for Spanish speaking providers and interpreters particularly in rural areas

Summary
Children's Administration has a broad array of services that are provided to children and families directly or through contracts and community organizations. These services include pre-placement preventive services in the form of regular home visits, assistance with food and housing, child care, counseling, home support specialists, coordinated efforts with public health nurses and substance abuse treatment. Improved communication with

families and providers is improving both our understanding of service needs and our ability to match services to needs.

Item 36: Service Accessibility. Are the services in item 35 accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the state's CFSP

Previous Item Rating
CFSR-1 finding rated item 36 as an **Area Needing Improvement** because services were not consistently accessible statewide. Specifically Independent living services were not available in sufficient supply and in sufficient locations; Sex offender treatment was needed in some locations; licensed child care is not readily available in some rural locations; In-home service/family preservation s services are insufficient in some rural areas and increased availability of transportation is needed.

Changes 2005-2010
The availability of services to families, children and youth in Washington State has greatly increased since 2005, however much work is left to be done. Access to services in rural areas is a challenge as is the need to insure that each office has a similar service array to offer.

Improvements to Services for Families, Children & Youth

Adolescent Services
- Increased support and opportunities for education through agreements with local school districts and regional advocates to improve educational goals
- Resources for Independent living have been both improved and increased through guidance by the youth advisory group "Passion to Action"

Health & Education Services
- Improved assessment for mental health and physical health are available through the Children's Health and Education Testing (CHET) evaluations are available in every office including rural communities

Maintaining Family Connections
- Visitation and transportation contracts were increased as well and Homebuilders services.

Increased Funding for Treatment of Trauma
- Legislation and programmatic changes support improved services to children who have suffered serious physical and sexual abuse

Increasing Awareness of Service Availability
- To keep social workers informed of services available statewide updates/memos are sent out from the Division of Field Operations.
- Social workers rare also made aware of services in their region or office through regional memos and local All-Staff or Unit meetings.

Neglect Legislation improves funding for services
In January 2007 additional funding was made available through the Neglect legislation to expand the availably of Home Based Services (HBS), Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) and Family Preservation Services (FPS). In addition, social workers are able to purchase specific evaluation or treatment services not covered by other funding sources.

DSHS Collaboration on Mental Health Services
Children's Health and Rehabilitation services / Mental Health Division, and Juvenile Rehabilitation worked collaboratively with Children's Administration to develop and implement the Children's Mental Health Initiative. This initiative specifically addressed the delivery of mental health services to children and their families using the strategies of:

The ongoing strategies used are:
- Introduce and expand the use of Evidence Based Practices
- Engagement with families and stakeholders through ongoing collaborative planning

Results of these annual reviews demonstrated that Children served in the publicly funded mental health system have to meet an access to care standard. More foster children are accepted into needed mental health services.
- 90.9% of children/youth receive a mental health assessment within 30 days of a request for services
- 92.3% of youth begin services within 30 days of the authorization for services

However we continue to experience challenges with insuring proper in or out-of-home treatment for youth with assaultive behaviors. In addition, both urban and rural areas of Washington are experiencing a growth in the diversity of its communities. Given this growth in both the volume and variety of culture present in a community we are experiencing challenges with providing culturally responsive mental health services.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to make services accessible to families and children in all areas of the state.
Strengths
- FTDMS were highly praised for engagement and expanding resources by involvement of community, extended family and friends
- All regions had particularly valued services unique to their community
- Existing collaboration efforts offer opportunity to be aware of the services in the community and share ideas across agencies
- Stakeholders supported the evidenced based services that are available and would like to see more.

Challenges
- Despite efforts services are not consistently accessible to children and families on a statewide basis
- Children's Administration continues to experience urban communities having a wider array of services than rural communities
- Rural areas lack specialized services, and have limited choices
- Services needed in rural areas included; culturally responsive services; Spanish speaking providers and interpreters; In-home services; Mental Health services, particularly for children; and transportation and parenting classes
- Services for transitional options to support parents after initial interventions are needed
- No adequate inventory of available services statewide to identify service type and location of service gaps
- Necessary services are not accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions in the State - some Tribes experience difficulty accessing State services for the families they serve.

Summary
There have been improvements to the accessibility and quality of services to children, youth and families across the state of Washington. A major factor for improving services has been the increased involvement of the families' stakeholders and Tribal communities on both the regional and statewide level. However DSHS-CA does continue to work towards increasing the availability of services to rural areas and expanding culturally competent services across the state in a time of budget reductions.

Item 37: Individualizing Services. Can the services in item 35 be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency?

Previous Item Rating
CFSR-1 finding rated item 37 as an **Area Needing Improvement** because services were not consistently individualized to meet cultural, language and service needs of families and children.

Changes 2005-2010

Engaging the Individual, Family and Community

DSHS-Childrens Administration's ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families has dramatically progressed through the increased involvement of family, friends and community supports in assessments, case planning, and service delivery. The primary tools used for this improved responsiveness are as follows:

- Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) meetings
- Shared Planning Meetings
- Global Assessment of Individual Needs (GAIN) for substance abuse assessment
- Solution Based Casework (SBC)

Each of these tools emphasizes the importance individualized solutions based upon information from that individual, family and community.

Evidence Based Practices

The expanded service array offered by Evidence Based Practices has created more opportunity for individualizing services that have proven their effectiveness in addressing issues within that family.

Adolescent Planning for Independence and Transition

Effective April 2008 the Independent Living policy was revised to improve practice for adolescents in care changes include:

- Social workers are responsible to assure foster youth age 15 and older (30+ days in care) have an Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) and an Independent Living/Learning plan developed in conjunction with their ISSP.
- Social workers are required to coordinate with the school district when developing an independent living plan for youth receiving special education services.
- Social workers must coordinate with DDD to develop a transition plan and make sure the youth gets a determination of eligibility for adult services prior to age 18.

Neglect Legislation improves funding for services to meet specific needs

Given this increased funding, social workers are able to provide specific evaluation or treatment services for children and their parents that are not covered by other funding sources. In addition, should a family have specific needs for, furniture; clothing etc. requests can be made for Home based Service funds to meet that need. In addition to a greater access to Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) and Family Preservation Services (FPS) to stabilize the child in their home or placement outside of the home.

Impact on Practice

The more effective Children's Administration has become at assessment the more individualized service plans have become. The more we involve the child, family and community in decision making the more effective services are in addressing issues of concern. Progress with expanding services across the state has helped to offer services that meet individual needs, however work remains to be completed to insure an even broader access to culturally competent services in all rural areas. In addition, attention must be given to instructing staff and empowering parents to understand the importance of individualized services, rather than just a "one-size-fits-all" case plan.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families.

Strengths

- FTDMs have been increasing engagement and creative service & support development
- Evidence based and promising practices increase the likelihood that the appropriate service is provided to a parent or child. Increased assessment of medical and mental health needs and communication with caregivers has increased the individualization of service
- Dependency 101 classes for families involved with CPS engages and educates parents about how services are delivered and empowers them to participate in their own case planning

Challenges

- Lack of services in rural areas where service array is more limited
- Limited transportation options in rural areas make attending services difficult
- Evidence Based Practices and Family Team Decision Making practices need a more vigorous and qualitative monitoring and evaluation process
- Better identification of every families' culture to aid in determining both appropriate and effective services
- Some social workers use a "cookie cutter approach to case plans"

Summary

Children's Administration has made important gains in the area of individualizing services for families and children by increasing both the variety and quality of services generally available. CA continues to learn about disproportionately represented populations and their needs. In addition feedback from birth parents and youth has increased our knowledge and awareness of their individual needs. A collaborative process with individuals and with community stakeholders continues to expand and guide our development of services to families.

F. Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Item 38: State Engagement in Consultation with Stakeholders. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, does the state engage 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 the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP?

Previous Item Rating

CFSR-1 finding rated item 38 was rated as **Strength**. It was found that the Department did engage in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, service providers, resource care providers, the juvenile court and other various community agencies and provides an opportunity to include stakeholder input in the CFSP.

Changes 2005-2010

Children's Administration continues to engage and consult with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court and other public and private child and family serving agencies as a means to insuring both the safety and wellbeing for children and families in Washington State.

Annually the Child and Family Strategic Plan (CFSP) are shared and input on progress is gathered from the following groups as part of an ongoing community consultation:

- Statewide Planning Committee
- Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC)
- A Foster Youth Advisory Board "Passion to Action" Quarterly Foster Parent Meetings
- Partners for Our Children (POC)
- Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents
- Quarterly Statewide and Regional Foster Parent 1624 Collaborations
- Birth to Six Interagency Coordinating Council
- Child Fatality Committee, Children, Youth, and Family Services Advisory Committee
- Children's Justice Advisory Board
- Family Policy Council Interagency Coordinating Committee
- Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee
- Governor's Office on Indian Affairs
- Foster Care Advisory Committee
- Foster Care Citizen Review Board Advisory Committee
- Court Improvement Project

Impact on Practice
Ongoing effective collaboration with stakeholders and tribes has improved practice with better problem identification, creative solutions, increased resources including stronger engagement and sense of shared responsibility.

Examples include:
- The 2004 partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to initiate the Family to Family strategies to improve child outcomes. Strategies included Family Team Decision Making meetings that allow for family and community input into any change in a child's placement.
- The ICW case review, which was a collaborative quality assurance review initiated by the IPAC and implemented in 2008. This review provides the assessment and improvement plan for ICW services supported by both Children's Administration and tribes.
- Evidence Based Practices / Services were established pursued through a community based process for identifying needs and selection of service.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to engage in ongoing consultation with stakeholders.
Strengths
- Many sites have begun implementation of a Family to Family infrastructure which involves staff and community members working together on building community partnerships, recruitment, development and support of caregivers, family team decision making, and self-evaluation.
- The diversity of the members of our Statewide CFSR Self-Assessment Committee is seen as a strength, as well as the fact that the Court Improvement Project is co-sponsoring the CFSR.

Challenges
- Engaging and collaborating with partners in a productive way that improves outcomes and requires time for scheduling and follow-up with multiple stakeholders
- Budget cuts have reduced non case carrying staff, the ability to travel, and the availability to attend non-case-related meetings
- We continue to seek ways to engage all tribes in our essential work together

Summary
Children's Administration cannot fully meet the safety, permanency and well-being needs of Washington's children and their families in isolation. By acknowledging and acting upon Children's Administration's interdependency with families and communities significant progress has been made in collaborations and partnerships across the state. Both formal and informal supports, networks, groups and individuals are coming together to discuss and plan how to better meet the child welfare needs of our state.

Item 39: Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to the CFSP. Does the agency develop, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP?

Previous Item Rating
This item was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** because some stakeholders were not consistently consulted in the State process for the development of the Annual Progress and Services Report.

According to the 2003 Statewide Assessment, Children's Administration solicits stakeholder input for the biennial updates to the strategic plan and annual reports. This input is used in development of the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). However, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, tribal representatives expressed concern that Tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations are not adequately consulted in developing the APSR.

Changes 2005-2010

Given the concerns listed above, the following processes were put in place to insure a greater degree of consultation with both tribal communities and other stakeholders. Each group listed below is asked for input on specific topics as they relate to the APSR and are provided access to the final ASPR and all related DSHS-Childrens Administration reports:

- The Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) has had increased opportunities and increased influence over evaluation of programs to tribes evidenced by the ICW Case Review.
- New committees have been formed to advise Children's Administration on what service populations to focus on, such as services to adolescents.
- The Passion to Action - Youth Advisory Committee was actively involved in the last three legislative sessions. Members of this committee present at gatherings to inform professionals and volunteers about needs of children in foster care.
- The newly formed Statewide Quality Assurance Team has initiated recruitment of stakeholders and tribal representatives.
- The Braam Settlement Agreement includes meetings, telephone calls, and dialogues with stakeholders and tribes to identify best practice methods and resources to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.
- Children's Administration continues to improve and strengthen the process of collaboration:
    - Opportunities for inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders and tribal representatives in a timely and meaningful consultation process are priorities.
    - Careful consideration is expected when developing policy and program to who will be impacted and how they can effectively have a say in the process.
    - Advocacy committees for veteran birth parents have been implemented and are full participants as were many other committees and individuals.

- The following committees or advisory groups provide regular and ongoing collaboration and consultation to Children's Administrations:
    - Court Improvement Advisory Committee
    - Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee
    - Indian Policy Advisory Committee
    - Foster Parent Hubs and Regional Foster Parent Meetings
    - Foster Parents Association of Washington
    - University of Washington Partners for Our Children
    - Committee for Transforming Child Welfare
    - University of Washington School of Social Work and Eastern Washington School of Social Work Statewide Education Committee
    - The Casey Family Program and Annie E. Casey
    - National Resource Centers of the Children's Bureau
    - Catalyst for Kids
    - Superior Court Judges Association sub-committee for children and families
    - Passion to Action Youth Advisory Committee
    - Providers groups
    - Private Agencies
    - Veteran Birth Parents Advocacy Committees

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to consult with stakeholders on the development of annual reports of progress and services.

Strengths

- Engagement of tribes and stakeholders to a greater degree than ever before
- Feedback from stakeholders is resulting in changes in both the strategic plan and services in the field

Challenges

- Differences in how we approach work across administrations is sometimes a barrier to working together

- Sharing information efficiently is still in the development stage
- Lower funding means a reduced capacity to develop services to meet needs highlighted in annual reports

Summary
Children's Administration is dedicated to helping children and families. The process of consultation with community stakeholders and tribal representatives in completing the CFSP report is a key tool for meeting the needs of our communities. Efforts have been made to increase both the access of tribes and stakeholders in the process of completing the CFSP and their access to the final report and other related information.

Item 40: Coordination of CFSP Services with Other Federal Programs. Are the State's services under the CFSP coordinated with the services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?

Previous Item Rating
CFSR-1 finding rated item 40 was rated as **Strength** because the State had a number of efforts to coordinate and integrate service programs.
According to the 2003 Statewide Assessment, the Department of Social and Health Services has sought to improve service integration across State agencies, and the Governor has made this a top priority.

Changes 2005-2010
With the focus of DSHS being – One Department – One Vision – One Mission – One Core set of Values, efforts are underway to increase the coordination of services within DSHS. One necessary area to bring focus to is that of coordinating Federal or federally assisted programs under the CFSP. Evidence of this increased attention to coordinating services federally funded services is the cooperation between HRSA, OSPI and CA to support the health and education needs of children in foster care. Other areas of Federal or federally assisted programs that Children's Administration is working towards better coordination are:

- TANF
- Food Assistance
- Medicaid
- WorkFirst
- Title IV-E
- Adoption Support
- Social Security Benefits (Title 19)
- One Child Care through the DSHS – Community Services Office
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Vouchers

Impact on Practice
- Increased ability to access medical screenings for children in care resulting in more timely medical developmental screenings.
- There is greater access to substance abuse and mental health assessments.
- There is a greater ability to resolve individual and systemic issues related to educational needs of foster children.
- Access to educational and medical records is more effective, timely and therefore informative for caregivers and social workers.
- There is more efficient access to services and payment by parents and social workers and an increased ability to problem solve across systems.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to coordinate with other Federal or federally assisted programs.
Strengths
- The positive impact of practice reinforces the commitment to collaboration and coordination of resources

- Regional success stories of coordinated services with local housing authorities
- New partnerships with the Community Service Offices helps to streamline services to clients

Challenges
- Budget cuts resulted in the loss of some support staff which impacts the ability to maximize the completion of IV-E assessments / claims
- History of poor coordination of services between some City and County housing authorities
- Differences in how we approach work across administrations is sometimes a barrier to working together
- Sharing information especially through FamLink is in the development stage

Summary
Children's Administration continues to improve and strengthen the process of collaboration across administrations and communities. Secretary Dreyfus has reorganized DSHS in support of "One Department, One Vision, One Mission, and One Core Set of Values." The quantity and quality of collaboration has matured and improved. Some cutbacks in hiring support staff have limited the ability of some regional offices to maximize claims on federal funding. However efforts to coordinate federally funded services within the DSHS and within our communities is progressing well. *See General Information Section for description*

G. Foster & Adoptive Home Licensing

Item 41: Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions. Has the state implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with the recommended national standards?

Previous Item Rating
In CFSR-1 Item 5 was rated as a **Strength** reviewer found that the state did implement comprehensive standards for licensing foster family homes and child care institutions

Changes 2005-2010
In CFSR-1 Item 41 was rated as Strength, therefore there were no changes required through the Program Improvement Plan for this item.

In July 2007 new standards for foster family homes and child-placing agencies were implemented that meet and exceed recommended national standards. Children's Administration currently requires FBI fingerprint checks for all new licensed caregivers, as well as birth and adoptive children age 18 and older living in the home, and has extended this requirement to any other adults having unsupervised access to children and youth. Any additional adult joining the household for a period of more than 14 days requires an FBI background check prior to having any unsupervised access to children.

The new Subsidized Guardianship law authorizes the use of the more liberal Adoption and Safe Family Act standard for criminal history rather than the DSHS Secretary's more restrictive list of disqualifying criminal acts. This more liberal standard concerning criminal history allows more relatives to seek licensure as a guardianship is established for a child.

Foster home licensing requirements remain the same as last review period with the exception of Adam Walsh legislation requiring all adults in the home age 18 and over who are not department children, having unsupervised access to children, obtain an FBI fingerprint clearance. Private Agency (PA) foster homes are "certified" by their agency, but licensing requirements are the same for all licensed foster homes.
Group care staff do not have the same requirements as stipulated for foster parents in Adam Walsh legislation. Group care staff must obtain fingerprint clearance prior to unsupervised contact only if they have lived outside of the state of WA during the past three years.

Foster parents and group care staff do not need to re-submit a fingerprint based clearance at time of renewal as long as their remains no break in service.

An “initial license” may be issued instead of a full license, to a home or facility not to exceed six months to allow reasonable time to meet all requirements and become fully licensed. These homes are not eligible for IVE funding and are granted on an extremely limited basis. A “probationary license” is a license issued as part of a disciplinary action to an individual or agency that has previously been issued a full license but is out of compliance with minimum licensing requirements and has entered into an agreement aimed at correcting deficiencies.

General licensing requirements are:

- Age 21
- TB testing
- Background clearance
- CPR training
- First Aid training
- HIV/AIDS training
- An approved home study and facility check for licensed foster homes
- A health & safety certificate of compliance from DOH and Fire Marshall for group care facilities and staffed residential homes licensed for six.
- Additionally, pre-service training must be completed prior to the issuance of a foster care license

Impact on Practice

All foster homes, group residential facilities and child-placing agencies are re-licensed every three years. In addition, at least ten percent of licensed resource homes must be monitored annually to determine whether the level of safety and compliance with requirements are still being met. Children’s Administration has exceeded the state requirement of ten percent of homes monitored for the past five years. FY05-12.8%, FY06-13.4%, FY07-13.4%, FY08- 13.9% and FY09-16.4%

The same licensing requirements apply private agency as to state licensed foster homes. Internal DLR data shows for fiscal year 2008-2009 a 69% timely renewal statistic. However, a FamLink query can now be requested for this data.

DLR has developed a collaborative assessment process for state licensed caregivers. Self-assessments are completed annually on a voluntary basis by the caregiver. If the assessment is returned, the licensor produces an annual development plan in consultation with the caregiver. This process provides an opportunity to interface with the foster family between licensing periods to ensure that licensing standards continue to be met, to assess their needs, and to provide the family with additional supports, if needed. As this assessment process is a requirement of the Braam action, private agency homes are exempt from self-assessments. Requirements for those homes are monitored by the agency.

Federal statute signed into law in 2008 allows tribes to license their own homes using tribal licensing standards for families on or near reservations. The Port Gamble/S’Klallam is currently the only tribe in the State of Washington licensing its own foster families. The Port Gamble/S’Klallam has a IV-E agreement.

Washington supports tribal licensing. The challenges remain around tribal licensing standards meeting IV-E funding requirements.

Washington state statute has changed to allow suitable persons with a relationship to a child to receive placement of that child under certain circumstances, without requiring a foster family license. This has allowed families to support placement of a child quickly without issuing an initial license. An unlicensed “suitable person” must meet Adam Walsh requirements for background clearance including FBI fingerprinting, a completed home study and a home inspection. Placements can be made immediately given the noted clearances: however, these homes do not need to be licensed unless they desire funding at foster care levels. DLR uses the same licensing standards for relatives and non-relatives.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children’s

Administration's ability to implement standards for foster care homes and child care institutions in accord with recommended national standards.

Strengths

DLR has developed a standard curriculum that is required of new licensing staff and is offered twice annually. This training has also been made available to private agency licensors on a space available basis. Large numbers of private agency staff have benefited from this training opportunity, and it has served to establish greater consistency in practice statewide.

Challenges

Quality assurance systems are needed to guarantee adherence to training material and policy standards

Summary

Washington had implemented standards which are in accordance with federal requirements and has extended those standards requiring fingerprint and background checks for all adults having unsupervised access with child in care.

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

Previous Item Rating

In CFSR-1 Item 42 was rated as a **Strength** because reviewers found that the state did implement comprehensive standards for licensing foster family homes and child care institutions.

Changes 2005-2010

Statute has changed to allow suitable persons with a relationship to a child to receive placement of that child under certain circumstances, without requiring a foster family license. This has allowed families to support placement of a child quickly without applying for an initial license with DLR.

DLR is tracking all waivers and administrative approvals at the regional level. The Assistant Secretary approves Waivers for Disqualifying Crimes and Crimes on the 5 year Secretary's list (less than 5 years since conviction). Waivers to licensing requirements require DLR Area Administrator approval. The most common reason for requesting a licensing waiver include income requirements, space and placement of sibling-related requests. Other requirements regarding character and suitability may include criminal history waivers for disqualifying crimes. Data can be accessed through FamLink but is not readily available.

Impact on Practice

Children's Administration has established a standard application packet for all foster families being licensed directly by the state and those families being certified through a child-placing agency.

There is a single licensing process as defined in item 41. If an adoptive parent is unlicensed, they do not have to complete all licensing requirements but they must complete Adam Walsh fingerprint requirements as well as the Adoptive Home Study process.

Each licensing record is reviewed at the supervisory level prior to approval for placement. The new FAMLINK data system ensures that a license is approved and a service array is established by the licensor prior to the family receiving payment.

DLR program managers provide interpretation of rules and statutes and technical assistance to the field. Updated information is shared at supervisors and managers meetings in order to maintain consistency throughout the state.

DLR has established professional standards for licensing staff regarding timeliness of licenses and health and safety reviews of homes and facilities. Comprehensive reviews for BRS contracted facilities are completed by regional licensors quarterly. Individual performance for these standards is now being identified in the employee's annual performance review.

Private agencies licensing requirements are monitored by Regional Licensors. Regional Licensors monitor compliance with all licensing requirements, provide technical assistance, licensing guidance, and investigative oversight for licensing infractions. In addition, contract managers provide oversight for contracted services.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to apply standards to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions.
Strengths

- DLR licensing will allow waivers for placement of children with relatives
- To keep siblings together waivers may be given with regard to non-safety requirements such as number of children in the foster home

Challenges

- Need for more monitoring and quality assurance of Child Placing Agencies

Summary
DLR has developed a tracking system for all administrative approvals and waivers at the regional level. A standard application process has been developed for all licensed homes and facilities and each licensing record is reviewed at the supervisor level.

Item 43: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks. Does the state comply with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements, and does the State have in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children?

Previous Item Rating
In CFSR-1 Item 43 was rated as a **Strength** because reviewers found that criminal background checks are consistently completed for prospective foster and adoptive parents.

Changes 2005-2010
Washington applicants requesting a license, certification, or a position as an employee, volunteer, intern, or contractor in a foster home, group care facility, staffed residential home, or child-placing agency must clear a background check prior to having unsupervised access to children.

In July 2007 Children's Administration implemented criminal background policies related to the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act and requirements for procedures on conducting FBI fingerprint-based checks for all prospective foster and adoptive licensees as well as biological and adopted children age 18 and older. This requirement was extended to include relative caregivers and other adults new to the home having unsupervised access to foster children, exceeding the federal ASFA requirements.

Criminal background policies related to the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act legislation were updated in July 2008 so that select staff have direct access to the NCIC database. In emergent circumstances that do not allow for a national fingerprint check to be completed prior to placement, authorized staff at Central Intake may process requests from social workers to get immediate criminal history data from the NCIC database prior to placing a child with unlicensed individuals.

The Department accesses state child abuse registry checks as required by the Adam Walsh Act.

Impact on Practice
The Department has adopted a standard manner for evaluating criminal history and other negative actions and uses a standard list of disqualifiers' agency wide. In regions that are centralized, DLR has established staff positions that specialize in completion of background checks, which maintains consistency in practice across the region. Completion of background checks for all individuals in the home are reviewed by a supervisor prior to

licensing. Background checks are processed for new applicants and adult members of the home as well as staff at child placing agencies and group care facilities. Background checks are also processed at time of renewal, every three years, for foster parents, adults living in the home, and staff at child placing agencies and group care facilities.

In July 2007 a new web-based background check system was designed to allow licensing staff to process backgrounds more efficiently and to provide data reports in order to monitor workflow and establish timeframes. The Background Check Central Unit that processes fingerprint submissions continues to work with the Washington State Patrol in order to refine processes for rejected fingerprints. The rejection rate has been reduced from 25%-30% to 4%-8%. This number has been reduced since services were contracted out in 2008. Background clearances should be completed within the 90 day licensing process. Times may vary depending on criminal history, child abuse & neglect information, and other registry check information from out of state applicants. Foster parents and other adults living in the home must receive WSP background clearance for each 3-year renewal period. Foster parents and other persons living in the home are not required to obtain an FBI clearance at renewal unless they have had a break in service. Children in the home who are not dependent must obtain FBI clearance at age 18 Other adults moving into the home must obtain WSP and FBI fingerprint clearance prior to unsupervised access to children. This must occur if the adult is in the home for more than 14 days.

DLR processes approximately 900 to 1200 background checks per month. WSP can process background checks through BCCU in approximately 1 to 3 days. Fingerprint checks can be processed from approximately 3 days to 3 weeks. Roughly 4% - 8% may be delayed due to rejection of prints by WSP and FBI. Rejected fingerprints may take up to three months or longer to process.

There is no fee for licensing applicants, foster parents renewing their license, and other adults living in the home. There is a fee for staff persons at licensed facilities ($47.50) - $17 if only needing a WSP check. All checks are processed through “L-1”, the contracted provider. Prints are electronically forwarded to WSP and FBI and results are processed through the Background Central Check Unit with DSHS.

DLR has an electronic web-based application which provides quicker turn-around times and service to clients. DCFS maintains a manual process which results in a lengthy time-frame. Relative, adoption, and emergent placement are within the DCFS range of 56 days for name and date of birth, and up to 5 months for FBI checks that need to be resubmitted due to rejection of prints.

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges

Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children’s Administration’s ability to comply with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances.

Strengths

- Positive customer feedback from stakeholders regarding the reduction of time needed to complete background checks as well as enhanced capacity to track the process
- Washington passed a federal Title IV-E eligibility review in September 2007, which included a review of licensing and criminal background check procedures
- State Auditor’s Office is conducting an audit of paid providers to verify that background clearances are appropriately conducted prior to payment

Challenges

- Washington has sought to address many of the challenges regarding cultural issues with reference to background clearances, ICPC checks regarding relative placements, and barriers to licensing when family members cannot be cleared
- Individuals who have illegible fingerprints, that have been rejected by the FBI, sometimes require multiple submissions of new prints which substantially increases the time required for clearance
- DLR continues to work with Background Central Check Unit, WSP, FBI, and community partners to remedy these concerns and address the necessary changes to improve timeliness for all licensed applicants

Summary
Federal requirements for criminal background checks are met prior to licensure for all members of a foster family who are 16 and older and for all staff of residential facilities. In certain circumstances (such as placement with relatives or a suitable person) and in order to expedite placement, children can be placed with persons who have a name-only criminal background check, as long as a fingerprint-based check is submitted within 10 days.

Item 44: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes. Does the State have in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed in the State?

Previous Item Rating
In CFSR-1 Item 44 was rated as an **Area Needing Improvement** because the State recruitment and retention efforts were not meeting the need for an adequate stable pool of foster and adoptive homes that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in care.

Changes 2005-2010
Beginning in 2004, CA created a statewide newsletter, The Caregiver Connection, to all foster parents and established a ListServ for electronic communication with both caregivers and members of the larger child welfare community. The newsletter provides information about issues and stories relevant to foster parents, and contact information for individuals and programs who can help and support caregivers in their day-to-day work.

Beginning in mid- 2006 regionally based contracts for recruitment and retention have required contractors to hire staff who were either current or former foster parents. These changes also required contractors to conduct both recruitment and liaison (retention) activities. Previously, contractors pursued these functions separately. The merger of the two functions has led to more than 50 contracted staff working throughout the state as both recruitment and retention specialists.

In addition to recruiting potential foster parents and guiding them through the application and licensing process, they build and maintain “hubs” to support caregivers after licensing, as well as mediating issues between foster parents and staff. They are able to establish relationships with potential foster parents and existing foster parents, thus increasing the likelihood of identifying and resolving issues.

Contracted recruitment and retention staff, located throughout the state, are now included with the Family To Family (F2F) strategy of Recruitment, Development and Support of Caregivers. That approach places an emphasis on recruiting in “neighborhoods of focus.” These are neighborhoods with the highest removal rate of children and often the fewest number of foster homes or other placement resources. Combined with the F2F strategy, Building Community Partnerships, the approach is designed to identify and utilize community leaders within neighborhoods of focus to partner in the work of recruiting and supporting foster parents and other caregivers. Often, the very neighborhoods having the highest rates of African American and Native American families are those who are experiencing the highest removal and placement rates and practices that may be contributing to Disproportionality.

Children's Administration has a contract with Northwest Resource Associates to process all online inquiries regarding becoming a foster parent, approximately 300 a month. The contractor also processes the 75-80 recruitment calls that come in through the toll free number. E-mail inquiries are automatically routed to the appropriate recruitment and retention contractor based on zip code. Phone calls are manually entered into the system. The potential foster parents then are guided through the process by one of the contracted recruiter/liaisons, all of whom are current or former foster parents. All information is entered into a data base maintained by Northwest Resource Associates. CA will gather information from the data base to help guide recruitment efforts. An initial effort to measure how many potential foster parents make it to licensure in late 2007 and early 2008 showed that between 11-13% of potential foster parents became licensed, which is believed to be above the national average.

Impact on Practice
There are approximately 5,800 licensed foster homes throughout the state. That total has remained fairly consistent over the past five years. Each year about 1200-1400 homes both becoming licensed and closing their licenses. The number one reason for homes leaving is adoption; adoptions have been completed and the family to is no longer available for on-going foster care. The second reason is a change in life circumstance; death, separation, job loss, or families simply no longer able to be a resource for economic reasons.

Through Recruitment and Retention contractors, Children's Administration has developed a system that integrates three types of recruitment activities: general, child-specific, and targeted. A greater emphasis is now being placed on targeted recruitment within "neighborhoods of focus". Since 2005, general recruitment efforts have included reaching mass audiences through media and outreach programs such as public events and public service announcements.

Children's Administration developed a recruitment campaign with the theme "Foster Parenting – You Can Too." Child-specific recruitment efforts have involved individualized plans for particular children based on their background and needs. These plans often include finding relatives or close friends who will provide a home for a child or teen they already care about.

Most recently recruitment efforts have targeted neighborhoods that may have a high proportion of referrals to the agency, or children already placed in out-of-home care or areas with the highest level of minority populations. It is believed that this strategy of recruiting in the neighbor hoods of focus with the contracted frontline foster parents "recruiter/liaisons" helping develop community resources will make strides in meeting the goals of minority recruitment and address Disproportionality. Although recruitment services are performed by contractors it is a highly collaborative effort. Contractors around the state work closely with staff at the region level, and in some cases , where Family to Family (F2F) – Recruitment, Development and Support of Caregivers (RDS) strategy groups are active, at the local office level in the identified neighborhood(s) of focus.
In targeted, as opposed to general, recruitment F2F experience indicates that applicants may be unwilling or unable to respond to the ethnic and racial needs of the children who are placed most often. Targeted recruitment focuses on the specific kinds of children and teens in the community who need temporary or permanent homes, as well as the pool of available families. Regions have developed, largely via hand counts, data and information which informs them as to where the greatest need for resource homes is, as well as, where specific types of homes, such as Native American foster homes are needed within zip codes.

These new strategies for recruitment of resource homes are still in developmental and early stages of implementation. It is too early to measure for effectiveness in developing specific types of homes to specific children. It is also too early in the process to measure for effect on the ability to place children in close proximity of their homes/communities.

At present there are approximately 1700 children legally free with the plan of adoption. Currently there are no specific plans or strategies for the specific recruitment of adoptive homes, although there are a number of child specific contracts with private agencies to find adoptive placements.

Percentage of children in care by race as of January 1, 2009:

Caucasian	53.20%
Native American	16.60%
African American	15.00%
Hispanic	11.80%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.10%
Other	0.60%
Unreported	0.40%
Unknown	0.40%

The racial/ethnic breakdown of licensed homes data is collected in FamLink, but is not easily accessible at this time

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to recruit potential foster and adoptive homes.
Strengths
- Targeting foster home recruitment efforts in neighborhoods where removal rates are highest
- Development of strong partnerships with foster parents and the communities in which they live
- Foster parents support hubs provide both on-going support and continuing education for caregivers - More than 50 hubs or support groups now exist in the state
- Support hubs mentor potential foster parents, inviting them to come even before a child is placed with them, to learn what it is like to be a foster parent, and to form mutually supportive relationships with others who will continue to help them when a child does join their family

Challenges
- Children's Administration continues to face challenges recruiting potential Foster/Adopt parents that reflect and support the diversity of children/youth in care, within their own diverse communities
- Children's Administration does not have a breakdown of current foster homes by ethnicity.
- Specialized recruitment efforts with focus on Native American families in specific communities must be developed

Summary
Since 2005, recruitment and retention efforts have become more coordinated and focused among the contractors and staff in each region. The contracted recruiter/liaisons serving as the field staff in each region have been equipped with new strategies that will recruit and support more homes in areas where they are needed most. They are getting both training to help recruit and support in the neighborhoods and the coordination that comes from working with staff to reach the common goal or more quality, satisfied caregivers. The key challenge moving ahead is building on the foundation that has been created since 2005.

Item 45: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements.
Does the state have in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children?

Previous Item Rating
In CFSR-1 Item 43 was rated as **Strength** because reviewers found that the State did have a process in place that promotes use of cross-jurisdictional resources.

Policy and Practice
Interstate Compact Cases/Referrals - Practices and Procedures
Interstate Compacts addressing the Placement of Children (ICPC) are in place to address children sent to another state and children who are placed in Washington from another state.

Indian Child Welfare Manual - ICPC
Whenever the social worker considers placement of an Indian child in another state, the social worker must follow both the Children's Administration and ICWA provisions. The social worker must provide such consideration for all Indian children, including Canadian First Nations and Recognized Indian Children, whether under Tribal or state jurisdiction.

Interstate Compact - Practices and Procedures
Prior to sending, bringing, or causing any child to be sent or brought into a receiving state for placement in foster care, or as a preliminary to a possible adoption, the sending agency shall furnish the appropriate public authorities in the receiving state written notice of the intention to send, bring, or place the child in the receiving state – and

shall notify the sending agency, in writing, that the proposed placement does not appear to be contrary to the interests of the child.

Changes 2005-2010

Children's Administration continues to build upon its strength in the area of ICPC by striving to improve working agreements with other states. Children's Administration has also developed a statewide Background Check Unit so as to increase both efficiency and thoroughness of the background check process

Regions have also developed specialized Permanency/Adoptions units to expedite legally free cases and identified Regional leads to assign ICPC home studies. In addition Children's Administration is implementing Family to Family strategies such as Family Team Decision Making meetings to develop possible relative placements / resources.

Washington State also accesses the following agencies to facilitate adoptions / permanent homes for children:

- Northwest Resource Associates
- Families like Ours
- Adopt U.S. Kids

Northwest Resources Associates is the parent agency of the Northwest Adoption Exchange (NAE) and Washington Adoption Resource Exchange (WARE) who operate an online application process and telephone helpline for prospective foster and adoptive parents:

- Statewide Recruitment and Information Center - when an applicant completes an online application to become a foster or adoptive parent for children entering care the application is simultaneously routed to DSHS Children's Administration – Division of Licensed Resources for processing of the application and recruiting purposes. In addition the Information Center provides applicants with telephone helpline in the application process.
- WARE – Provides online information and resources to match children/youth with families. Families can view the waiting child profiles by contacting their adoption worker and reviewing the profiles in the WARE photo listing book. In addition, over half of the children featured on this site are also featured on the Northwest Adoption Exchange website. Each year WARE registers approximately 200 to 250 children for adoption each year.
- Specialized Adoption Recruitment Program (SARP) provides child specific recruitment for over 60 children per year. A child's file is reviewed to identify child strengths and needs and to develop recruitment plan based upon child's needs.

In order to access the above services the social worker submits a child's profile with one of these agencies and potential placements submit their home study for considerations as an adoptive home for a specific child or sibling group. If the family is selected by the social work and is out of state an ICPC request is submitted.

Impact on Practice

Previously, there were no rules regarding the completion time for ICPC home studies. With the passage of the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006, Federal law requires that states complete ICPC home study requests within 60 days.

Washington State currently completes ICPC home study requests from other states in an average of 90-120 days; some are completed within much longer time frames.

Practice changes were made in the state ICPC office and in the field offices to increase the opportunity for completing home studies within the required timeframes. An electronic assignment process was implemented for incoming home study requests to reduce the amount of time required for home study referrals to reach assigned social worker. HQ now accepts completed home studies by way of email or fax. These changes in practice have eliminated five-seven days of delay in the home study process. These changes were implemented to allow the social worker to have the maximum amount of time to complete an interstate home study.

An ICPC training module was developed and added to the permanency section of the social worker academy. Social worker academy is required training for all new social workers. The training module was also added to the

adoption social workers training curriculum. All adoption workers must complete this training module. ICPC curriculum was incorporated into these training modules to educate and familiarize social workers with cross jurisdictional placement options.
Washington ICPC staff provided training to field staff on the use and requirements of ICPC. Thirty-four (34) offices received ICPC training in 2009-2010. Region 1, 3, 4, and 6 Division of Licensing Resources (DLR) was included in these training. DLR is responsible for ensuring homes meet licensing standards.

Information regarding the ICPC process and forms was added to the Children's Administration Intranet home page. This page was added to provide social workers with a central location for accessing information about ICPC and staff.

During calendar year 2009 Washington ICPC:
- Requested **1084** home studies from other states
- Completed **1103** home studies for other states

Strengths/Ongoing Challenges
Based on information obtained through multiple work sessions with the Statewide Assessment Team and regional-local staff and community focus groups the following is concluded concerning the Children's Administration's ability to effectively use cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements.
Strengths
- Education has helped with ICPC for Social Workers and Families.
- ICPC works well in Washington
- Promising practices - System Integration, Collaborative Efforts, F2F & FTDM
- Practice changes were made in the state ICPC office and in the field offices to increase the opportunity for completing home studies within the required timeframes.

Challenges
- Current data indicates that 40% of incoming home studies are completed with the required 60 day timeframe. The primary challenge in this area is the time it takes to receive FBI fingerprint results
- ICPC Differs State to State – resistance to high needs children
- Many states are moving toward electronic transmission of ICPC documents to increase timeliness and reduce costs. This is an area that Washington ICPC continues explore as ICPC documents are very large and currently slow down our email system.
- Maintaining sibling contact

Summary
Washington has a process that responds in a timely manner to promote cross-jurisdictional resources for permanent placements and has assertively acted to improve internal referral and home study processing procedures and the criminal background check process. Improvements to the ICPC process, as well as continued education of staff have assisted with the flow of cross jurisdictional processes. Washington State continues to work with other states to efficiently complete home studies and conclude permanent plans.