



Child and Family Services Reviews

New Jersey Final Report 2017



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

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Final Report: New Jersey Child and Family Services Review

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of New Jersey. The CFSRs enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Federal law and regulations authorize the Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, to administer the review of child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSRs are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their child welfare practices and programs as well as institute systemic changes that will improve child and family outcomes.

The findings for New Jersey are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and submitted to the Children's Bureau on June 8, 2017. The statewide assessment is the state's analysis of its performance on outcomes and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan
- The results of case reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home) conducted via a Traditional Review process in Essex, Monmouth, and Warren counties, New Jersey, during the week of July 10, 2017
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Attorneys representing the agency and parents
 - Child welfare agency program managers
 - Child welfare agency senior staff
 - Child welfare agency supervisors and caseworkers
 - Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) staff
 - Court Appointed Special Advocates/Law Guardians
 - Foster and adoptive parent licensing staff
 - Foster and adoptive parents
 - Judges
 - Parents
 - Representatives from other state agencies managing federal programs
 - Representatives from the courts and Court Improvement Project (CIP)

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- Service providers
- State licensed/approved child care facilities
- Training staff
- Youth served by the agency

In Round 3, the Children’s Bureau suspended the use of the state’s performance on the national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. For contextual information, Appendix A of this report shows the state’s performance on the 7 data indicators. Moving forward, the Children’s Bureau will refer to the national standards as “national performance.” This national performance represents the performance of the nation on the statewide data indicators for an earlier point in time. For the time periods used to calculate the national performance for each indicator, see 80 Fed. Reg. 27263 (May 13, 2015).

Background Information

The Round 3 CFSR assesses state performance with regard to substantial conformity with 7 child and family outcomes and 7 systemic factors. Each outcome incorporates 1 or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed in the state. With two exceptions, an item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90% or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies to those items. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome.

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state’s substantial conformity with the 7 systemic factors. Each item reflects a key federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the statewide assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity.

The Children’s Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round of reviews and in response to feedback from the child welfare field. As such, a state’s performance in the third round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round. Appendix A provides tables presenting New Jersey’s overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about New Jersey’s performance in Round 2.

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I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

New Jersey 2017 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

None of the 7 outcomes was found to be in substantial conformity.

The following 5 of the 7 systemic factors were found to be in substantial conformity:

- Statewide Information System
- Quality Assurance System
- Staff and Provider Training
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Children's Bureau Comments on New Jersey Performance

The following are the Children's Bureau's observations about cross-cutting issues and New Jersey's overall performance:

A key finding of the review was New Jersey's commitment to continuous quality improvement (CQI) as evidenced by its functioning Quality Assurance System. The Children's Bureau believes that ongoing development and integration of CQI activities will serve as a solid foundation for developing improvement strategies for safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes in New Jersey.

The case review results found strong practice in New Jersey's performance in ensuring that children's educational, physical, and mental health needs are assessed and met. The state's investment in Child Health Units and its strong partnerships with the Department of Education and the Children's System of Care appear to have contributed to these positive outcomes.

Case review results also showed strong practice for ensuring the safety of children at the front end of New Jersey's system through timely and quality investigations and assessments. Although the overall performance in safety outcomes was positive, the Children's Bureau encourages the state to conduct additional analysis of the concerns noted in some cases regarding the quality of ongoing assessments of risk and safety, appropriateness of safety plans, and provision of safety-related services. In addition, the Children's Bureau believes that a concentrated review of how safety and risk assessments are guiding permanency decisions by the agency and courts could aid in developing Program Improvement Plan (PIP) strategies to improve permanency outcomes.

As demonstrated by the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1, practice improvements are needed in engaging parents and in ensuring they have comprehensive assessments and are provided adequate services. While improvement in engaging both

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parents is needed, review results showed greater challenges in performance with respect to fathers. Nearly half of the cases reviewed involved substance abuse by parents/caregivers. Stakeholders reported concerns availability and accessibility of substance abuse services, particularly inpatient treatment. The Children's Bureau encourages the state to develop PIP strategies to address the needs of families struggling with addiction. The review also found gaps and access issues in the state's service array and that services are not always individualized for families. The Children's Bureau encourages the state to consider how improvements in the service array could support achievement of positive well-being outcomes for families. Collaboration with court partners, including parent attorneys, may assist in identifying how parents can be more meaningfully engaged in developing case plans that are focused on resolving safety issues and addressing the well-being needs of families.

In the foster care cases reviewed, New Jersey excelled in preserving connections for children in foster care with their siblings and relatives. There were practice concerns, however, that affected the state's performance in Permanency Outcome 1. Case review findings and stakeholder feedback found that improvements are needed in supporting resource families. Inconsistent notification of, and the right to be heard in, hearings; concerns about the adequacy of resource family training; a lack of appropriate assessments of resource families' needs; and a lack of provision of adequate services contribute to resource families not feeling adequately prepared or supported in their role as caregivers. This appears to contribute to placement instability in a number of cases. Despite evidence that court and administrative periodic reviews and permanency hearings are being held frequently, timely and appropriate permanency goals are not always established for children and timely permanency is not always achieved. Inadequate implementation of concurrent planning and not ensuring the timely filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings appears to have delayed the timely achievement of permanency for children. Collaborative work with the courts will be needed to identify successful strategies for improvement.

Case review findings also showed that the agency is challenged with respect to achieving safety and well-being outcomes in in-home services cases. A key, cross-cutting issue is the lack of frequent, quality worker visits with parents in in-home cases. New Jersey's PIP will require focused attention on in-home case practice to sufficiently ensure safety, prevent foster care placement, and support the well-being of these families.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide performance summaries from the case review findings. The CFSR relies upon a case review of an approved sample of foster care cases and in-home services cases. New Jersey provides an alternative/differential response to, in addition to a traditional investigation of, incoming reports of child maltreatment or children in need of services. Where relevant, we provide performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care and in-home services cases.

This report provides an overview. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to Department of Children and Families. The state is encouraged to conduct additional item-specific analysis of the case review findings to better understand areas of practice that are associated with positive outcomes and those that need improvement.

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Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Item 1.

State Outcome Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 89% of the 36 applicable cases reviewed.

Safety Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policies or state statutes.

State policy requires that CPS reports be assigned one of two time frames for response: immediate or 24-hour. CPS reports assigned for Immediate Response require the caseworker to make in-person contact with the child victim no later than the end of the work day in which the CPS report was assigned to the field office. Reports assigned for a 24-Hour response require the assigned caseworker to make in-person contact with the child victim within 24 hours of the assignment to the field office. Child Welfare Service (CWS) referrals are assigned one of two time frames for response: 72-hour or 5 working day. CWS referrals assigned for a 72-Hour Response require the caseworker to make in-person contact with the child and his or her family within 72 hours of referral to the field office for response. CWS referrals assigned for a 5 Working Day Response require the caseworker to make in-person contact with the child and his or her family within 5 work days of assignment of the referral to the field office for response. A timely response means that one of the above conditions has been met, or that the worker has made a "Good Faith Effort." Good Faith Effort means that when an assigned caseworker is unable to make in-person contact with a child within the assigned response time, the caseworker makes a minimum of three attempts to contact the child in person within the assigned response requirement.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 89% of the 36 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Safety statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 2 and 3.

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State Outcome Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 75% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 83% of the 40 foster care cases and 64% of the 25 in-home services cases.

Safety Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 2. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 67% of the 15 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 60% of the 10 applicable foster care cases and 80% of the 5 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 3. Risk and Safety Assessment and Management

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 77% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 85% of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 64% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 4, 5, and 6

State Outcome Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 15% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

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Permanency Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 4. Stability of Foster Care Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s).

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 80% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 5. Permanency Goal for Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 67% of the 39 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 6. Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 30% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Permanency statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

State Outcome Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 83% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

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Permanency Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 7. Placement With Siblings

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 87% of the 23 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 8. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father,¹ and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 78% of the 32 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 92% of the 12 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 86% of the 28 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 78% of the 18 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

Item 9. Preserving Connections

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 87% of the 39 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

¹ For Item 8, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification. The persons identified in these roles for the purposes of the review may include individuals who do not meet the legal definitions or conventional meanings of a mother and father.

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Item 10. Relative Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 82% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 11. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father² or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 64% of the 28 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 75% of the 28 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother.
- In 61% of the 18 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

State Outcome Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 40% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 48% of the 40 foster care cases and 28% of the 25 in-home services cases.

² For Item 11, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification.

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Well-Being Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 12. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents,³ and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 45% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 48% of the 40 foster care cases and 40% of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

Sub-Item 12A. Needs Assessment and Services to Children

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 85% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 90% of the 40 foster care cases and 76% of the 25 in-home services cases.

Sub-Item 12B. Needs Assessment and Services to Parents

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 44% of the 55 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 47% of the 30 applicable foster care cases and 40% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 63% of the 54 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 50% of the 46 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

³ For Sub-Item 12B, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable "mothers" and "fathers" for the period under review in the case.

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Sub-Item 12C. Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 76% of the 38 applicable foster care cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 13. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents⁴ and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 53% of the 60 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 66% of the 35 applicable foster care cases and 36% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 76% of the 37 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 83% of the 53 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 45% of the 44 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

Item 14. Caseworker Visits With Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 82% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 88% of the 40 foster care cases and 72% of the 25 in-home services cases.

⁴ For Item 13, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “mother” and “father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable “mothers” and “fathers” for the period under review in the case.

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Item 15. Caseworker Visits With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers⁵ of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 45% of the 53 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 54% of the 28 applicable foster care cases and 36% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 72% of the 53 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 45% of the 44 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Item 16.

State Outcome Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 89% of the 35 applicable cases reviewed.

Well-Being Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 16. Educational Needs of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if

⁵ For Item 15, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" is typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable mother and fathers for the period under review in the case.

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the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 89% of the 35 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 89% of the 28 applicable foster care cases and 86% of the 7 applicable in-home services cases.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 using the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

State Outcome Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 73% of the 56 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 73% of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 75% of the 16 applicable in-home services cases.

Well-Being Outcome 3 Item Performance

Item 17. Physical Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 80% of the 46 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 80% of the 40 foster care cases and 83% of the 6 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 18. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 83% of the 36 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 87% of the 23 applicable foster care cases and 77% of the 13 applicable in-home services cases.

III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

For each systemic factor below, we provide performance summaries and a determination of whether the state is in substantial conformity with that systemic factor. In addition, we provide ratings for each item and a description of how the rating was determined. The CFSR relies upon a review of information contained in the statewide assessment to assess each item. If an item rating cannot be determined from the information contained in the statewide assessment, the Children's Bureau conducts stakeholder interviews and considers information gathered through the interviews in determining ratings for each item.

Statewide Information System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 19.

State Systemic Factor Performance

New Jersey is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Statewide Information System Item Performance

Item 19. Statewide Information System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The statewide information system is functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state 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.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data and information provided in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that New Jersey's statewide information system can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for placement of every child who is in foster care. The system includes prompts and other mechanisms to support data quality and timeliness. Safe Measures, a case management reporting tool, is used by various levels of staff to monitor outcomes, which helps ensure data quality. Stakeholders described various data quality mechanisms that are in place to support timely and quality data entry.

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Case Review System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

State Systemic Factor Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Two of the 5 items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Case Review System Item Performance

Item 20. Written Case Plan

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data provided in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state is not effectively engaging parents in the development of case plans. Stakeholders said that engagement varies across the state. Although family team meetings (FTMs) are occurring, the quality of FTMs in ensuring parent engagement is not consistent across the state. Stakeholders were also concerned that case plans are not always developed based on the family's specific needs. Many plans include the same basic services for all families.

Item 21. Periodic Reviews

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that periodic reviews are held by the court in most jurisdictions every 90 days, and sometimes more frequently. In addition to court reviews, administrative reviews occur at the 5th and 10th month, prior to the initial permanency hearing.

Item 22. Permanency Hearings

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

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- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data in the statewide assessment and information collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that statewide, permanency hearings are occurring no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and that subsequent hearings occur no less frequently than every 12 months.

Item 23. Termination of Parental Rights

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the filing of TPR proceedings is not occurring as required in a consistent manner across the state. Stakeholders reported some inconsistencies in understanding the process for filing when the court does not first order a goal of adoption at the permanency hearing.

Item 24. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, New Jersey described the process for providing notice of court hearings to caregivers. However, stakeholders said that the process is not consistently happening and sometimes resource parents are discouraged from participating in hearings. There is no clear process in place for providing notice to caregivers about administrative reviews and their right to be heard in those reviews. Stakeholders also reported that there is variability across the state about whether caregivers are afforded the right to be heard in court hearings.

Quality Assurance System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 25.

State Systemic Factor Performance

New Jersey is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

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Quality Assurance System Item Performance

Item 25. Quality Assurance System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that New Jersey has a quality assurance (QA) system that is effectively functioning statewide. The state's QA system includes all of the key components that are required. Stakeholders consistently reported that the QA system is effectively functioning and is working to improve outcomes over time.

Staff and Provider Training

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

State Systemic Factor Performance

New Jersey is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. Two of the items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Staff and Provider Training Item Performance

Item 26. Initial Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that staff complete all required pre-service training and that there is a mechanism in place for evaluating the quality of the training and its adequacy in preparing staff with the skills and knowledge required for their positions. Data provided showed that trainees find the content relevant to their work responsibilities and helpful in building knowledge and skill. Although the state meets the basic

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requirements for initial training, stakeholders said that training units are beneficial in ensuring transfer of learning, but they are not operating consistently across the state.

Item 27. Ongoing Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff⁶ that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the staff, including supervisors, meet the requirement for 40 hours of ongoing training. Hours are monitored by local or area offices. Stakeholders reported that the quality of training has improved and most training is relevant and useful for staff. Data from the state's QA system is used to assess needs and inform the development of training.

Item 28. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during stakeholder interviews showed that although initial and ongoing training requirements are in place for foster and adoptive parents and staff of facilities, the state did not provide data to demonstrate whether training requirements are met for licensed foster homes or staff of other state licensed or approved facilities. The state did provide recent data showing that only approximately three-quarters of staff in group homes have met training requirements. A wide variety of ongoing training for resource parents is accessible online, and ongoing training provided through Foster and Adoptive Family Services was regarded as useful. However, stakeholders said that training may

⁶ "Staff," for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP. "Staff" also includes direct supervisors of all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.

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not be adequate to fully prepare foster and adoptive parents, especially to prepare them to meet the needs of children affected by trauma.

Service Array and Resource Development

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

State Systemic Factor Performance

New Jersey is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Service Array and Resource Development Item Performance

Item 29. Array of Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state does not have an adequate array of services accessible to children and families statewide. Although there have been some improvements in the available array of services for children through the Children's System of Care, service gaps and waitlists exist for inpatient substance abuse treatment (particularly for programs that allow mothers and fathers to keep their children with them), mental health services, in-home prevention services, housing, post-adoption services, visitation services, transportation, supportive services for resource families, and mentors for youth. There are barriers to accessing services in neighboring counties, and the quality of some contracted services is a concern.

Item 30. Individualizing Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

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- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state does not ensure that services can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families. Stakeholders reported that most families are referred to the same set of services, and that services are not tailored to meet the unique needs of families. Stakeholders said there is an overreliance on psychological evaluations to drive service planning for families, and that such evaluations are typically requested for all cases rather than when a parent's needs warrant it. There was concern about the quality of some of these evaluations. Stakeholders also said that there was a need for more service providers to work with families served by the agency who speak Spanish, Korean, or Pacific-Rim languages, or use sign language.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 31 and 32.

State Systemic Factor Performance

New Jersey is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. One of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community Item Performance

Item 31. State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that the state participates in numerous collaborative meetings with various stakeholders. However, information collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state does not actively engage key stakeholders in ongoing consultation in the development of the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP. Although some internal stakeholders reported providing input in the state's strategic planning efforts, external stakeholders were not familiar with these efforts or the state's CFSP and Annual Progress and Services Report.

Item 32. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

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- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population. Examples of this coordination include efforts with the state's Department of Education to support educational stability, with the Department of Community Affairs to access housing and transitional living services, and with the Department of Health to ensure early intervention services.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

State Systemic Factor Performance

New Jersey is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Three of the four items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Item Performance

Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state is ensuring that state standards are applied equally to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds. Monitoring processes are in place for all resource homes to ensure that standards are being met.

Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

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- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders and data received from the state showed that New Jersey complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances for foster care and adoptive families and staff at groups homes and residential child care facilities. The state has systems in place to monitor compliance with federal requirements for criminal background clearance.

Item 35. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Strength for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information provided in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders described localized recruitment efforts that focus on recruiting foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in care. Stakeholders reported that relevant data are used at the local level to inform recruitment activities.

Item 36. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

- New Jersey received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data in the statewide assessment and information collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although the state has a process for using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely permanent placements for children through the Adoption Resource Exchange and child-specific recruitment efforts, only about one-quarter of referred children have exited to adoption. In addition, New Jersey's response to requests by other states to complete home studies to facilitate permanent placement of children in New Jersey met time frames in less than half of the cases.

Appendix A

Summary of New Jersey 2017 Child and Family Services Review Performance

I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcome Achievement: Outcomes may be rated as in substantial conformity or not in substantial conformity. 95% of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the state to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

Item Achievement: Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement. For an overall rating of Strength, 90% of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of Item 1 and Item 16) must be rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies.

SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 1 Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	89% Substantially Achieved
Item 1 Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	89% Strength

SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 2 Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	75% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	67% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of New Jersey 2017 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	77% Strength

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 1 Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	15% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	67% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	30% Strength

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 2 The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	83% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	87% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	78% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	87% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	82% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of New Jersey 2017 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	64% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 1 Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	40% Substantially Achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	45% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	44% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	76% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	53% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	82% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	45% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 2 Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	89% Substantially Achieved

Appendix A: Summary of New Jersey 2017 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	89% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 3 Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	73% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	83% Strength

II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The Children’s Bureau determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The Children’s Bureau determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined on the basis of ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the Children’s Bureau must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the Children’s Bureau must find that the item is functioning as required.

STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 19 Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of New Jersey 2017 CFSR Performance

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Case Review System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 20 Written Case Plan	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21 Periodic Reviews	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 22 Permanency Hearings	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 23 Termination of Parental Rights	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 24 Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 25 Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Staff and Provider Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 26 Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 27 Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of New Jersey 2017 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 28 Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Service Array and Resource Development	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 29 Array of Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30 Individualizing Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 31 State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 32 Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of New Jersey 2017 CFSR Performance

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 33 Standards Applied Equally	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 34 Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 35 Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 36 State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators⁷

The state's performance is considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator and provides contextual information for considering the findings. This information is not used in conformity decisions. State performance may be statistically above, below, or no different than the national performance. If a state did not provide the required data or did not meet the applicable item data quality limits, the Children's Bureau did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.1%	Lower	9.0%	8.4%–9.6%	FY14–FY15
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	8.50	Lower	4.86	3.96–5.98	15A–15B, FY15

⁷ In October 2016, the Children's Bureau issued Technical Bulletin #9 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-technical-bulletin-9>), which alerted states to the fact that there were technical errors in the syntax used to calculate the national and state performance for the statewide data indicators. The syntax revision is still underway, so performance shown in this table is based on the 2015 Federal Register syntax.

Appendix A: Summary of New Jersey 2017 CFSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	Higher	41.4%	40.0%–42.9%	13B–16A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	43.6%	Higher	40.5%	38.5%–42.4%	15B–16A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	30.3%	Higher	32.6%	31.0%–34.1%	15B–16A
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.3%	Lower	11.4%	9.8%–13.3%	13B–16A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.12	Lower	4.04	3.88–4.21	15B–16A

* Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) is derived from a multi-level statistical model and reflects the state's performance relative to states with similar children and takes into account the number of children the state served, the age distribution of these children and, for some indicators, the state's entry rate. It uses risk-adjustment to minimize differences in outcomes due to factors over which the state has little control and provides a more fair comparison of state performance against national performance.

** 95% Confidence Interval is the 95% confidence interval estimate for the state's RSP. The values shown are the lower RSP and upper RSP of the interval estimate. The interval accounts for the amount of uncertainty associated with the RSP. For example, the CB is 95% confident that the true value of the RSP is between the lower and upper limit of the interval.

*** Data Period(s) Used for State Performance: Refers to the initial 12-month period and the period(s) of data needed to follow the children to observe their outcomes. The FY or federal fiscal year refers to NCANDS data, which spans the 12-month period October 1 – September 30. All other periods refer to AFCARS data. "A" refers to the 6-month period October 1 – March 31. "B" refers to the 6-month period April 1 – September 30. The 2-digit year refers to the calendar year in which the period ends.

Appendix B

Summary of CFSR Round 2 New Jersey 2009 Key Findings

The Children’s Bureau conducted a CFSR in New Jersey in 2009. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children’s Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a state’s performance in the third round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round.

Identifying Information and Review Dates

General Information
Children’s Bureau Region: 2
Date of Onsite Review: March 30–April 3, 2009
Period Under Review: October 1, 2007, through April 3, 2009
Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued: August 25, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: November 25, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: April 1, 2010

Highlights of Findings

Performance Measurements
A. The State met the national standards for four of the six standards.
B. The State achieved substantial conformity for none of the seven outcomes.
C. The State achieved substantial conformity for four of the seven systemic factors.

Appendix B: New Jersey 2009 CFSR Key Findings

State's Conformance With the National Standards

Data Indicator or Composite	National Standard	State's Score	Meets or Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence (data indicator)	94.6 or higher	95.9	Meets Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.7	Meets Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	117.7	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	95.5	Does Not Meet Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	133.6	Meets Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	105.5	Meets Standard

State's Conformance With the Outcomes

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: New Jersey 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

State's Conformance With the Systemic Factors

Systemic Factor	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Statewide Information System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Case Review System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Quality Assurance System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Staff and Provider Training	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Service Array and Resource Development	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Achieved Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: New Jersey 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Key Findings by Item

Outcomes

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 2. Repeat Maltreatment	Strength
Item 3. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry Into Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
Item 4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	Area Needing Improvement
Item 5. Foster Care Re-entries	Strength
Item 6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 7. Permanency Goal for Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives	Area Needing Improvement
Item 9. Adoption	Area Needing Improvement
Item 10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	Strength
Item 12. Placement With Siblings	Area Needing Improvement
Item 13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
Item 14. Preserving Connections	Area Needing Improvement
Item 15. Relative Placement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 16. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents	Area Needing Improvement
Item 17. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: New Jersey 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	Area Needing Improvement
Item 19. Caseworker Visits With Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 20. Caseworker Visits With Parents	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21. Educational Needs of the Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 22. Physical Health of the Child	Strength
Item 23. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement

Systemic Factors

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 24. Statewide Information System	Strength
Item 25. Written Case Plan	Area Needing Improvement
Item 26. Periodic Reviews	Strength
Item 27. Permanency Hearings	Strength
Item 28. Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
Item 29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Strength
Item 30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services	Strength
Item 31. Quality Assurance System	Area Needing Improvement
Item 32. Initial Staff Training	Strength
Item 33. Ongoing Staff Training	Strength
Item 34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength
Item 35. Array of Services	Strength
Item 36. Service Accessibility	Area Needing Improvement
Item 37. Individualizing Services	Area Needing Improvement
Item 38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: New Jersey 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Strength
Item 40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength
Item 41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Strength
Item 42. Standards Applied Equally	Strength
Item 43. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Strength
Item 44. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Strength
Item 45. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Strength