

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
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Final Report
Mississippi Child and Family Services Review
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Final Report: Mississippi Child and Family Services Review Executive Summary

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Mississippi. The CFSR assesses State performance on seven child welfare outcomes pertaining to children's safety, permanency, and well being and on seven systemic factors related to the State's capacity to achieve positive outcomes for children and families. The Mississippi CFSR was conducted the week of February 9, 2004 (in Federal fiscal year 2004). The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Family and Children's Services;
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides State child welfare data for the years 2000 through 2002;
- Reviews of 50 cases at three sites in the State (Adams County, Hinds County, and Washington County); and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, Tribes, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

A key finding of the Mississippi CFSR is that the State did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven child welfare outcomes assessed for safety, permanency, and well-being. Performance varied considerably across the seven outcomes.

One of the areas of greatest concern is the State's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations). This outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in only 36.0 percent of the 25 foster care cases reviewed. While performance on this outcome was low in all CFSR sites, there was considerable variation. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 60 percent of Adams County cases, compared to 38 percent of Hinds County cases and only 14 percent of Washington County cases.

Although information from the State Data Profile and the CFSR case reviews indicate that MDHS has achieved success in ensuring that children who leave foster care do not re-enter within 12 months, it is less consistent in achieving permanency for children. CFSR findings for Permanency Outcome 1 indicate that MDHS is not consistent in making diligent efforts to (1) establish appropriate goals in a timely manner; (2) achieve permanency for children (through adoption, reunification, or permanent placement with relatives) in a

timely manner; or (3) ensure that older children in long-term foster care receive appropriate services to assist them in making the transition from foster care to independent living. Case reviews and stakeholder interviews revealed common barriers to achieving timely permanency, such as maintaining the goal of reunification for too long in poor prognosis cases. Variations in agency and court practices also account for some differentiation in performance across the CFSR sites. Extended delays in meeting ASFA-mandated timeframes for filing and achieving termination of parental rights were identified as concerns in both Hinds and Washington County, which are the lower performing sites for this outcome. Another difference is that the court in Adams County requires concurrent permanency goals for all cases, whereas consecutive planning tends to be the practice in Hinds and Washington Counties. The stability of foster care placements is another concern. CFSR findings indicate that MDHS does not engage in adequate matching of children with foster care placements to ensure stability. Placement stability is also undermined by the lack of foster homes and agency support to foster parents and relative caregivers. Furthermore, case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicate that MDHS relies extensively on the use of emergency shelter facilities for the initial placement (even for very young children) or when placements disrupt (often due to children's behavior and foster parents' inability to manage behavior).

Another area of concern with regard to State performance on the child welfare outcomes pertained to Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs). This outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in only 36.0 percent of the 50 cases reviewed. Performance on this outcome was low, yet it varied significantly as a function of case type. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 48 percent of the foster care cases, compared to only 24 percent of the "in-home services" cases. Performance on this outcome also varied across CFSR sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 58 percent of Adams County cases, 37.5 percent of Hinds County cases, and 14 percent of Washington County cases. CFSR findings for this outcome indicate that MDHS is not consistent in (1) meeting the services needs of children, parents, and foster parents; (2) involving children and parents in the case planning process; and (3) establishing face-to-face contact with children and parents with sufficient frequency to ensure children's safety and well-being. Stakeholders in Adams and Hinds Counties reported that large caseloads have a negative affect on the quality of worker visits with children and the time that workers have to spend with the children.

CFSR findings demonstrate additional concerns regarding permanency and well-being. The State's performance with respect to Permanency Outcome 2 (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children) was low. This outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in only 56.0 percent of the 25 foster care cases reviewed. CFSR findings indicate that MDHS did not make concerted efforts to ensure that children in foster care are placed, when appropriate, in close proximity to their parents and communities of origin. Also, MDHS was not consistent in its efforts to (1) place siblings together; (2) establish frequent visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings; (3) preserve connections for children in foster care; (4) seek relatives as potential placement resources; and (5) promote or maintain a strong, emotionally-supportive relationship between children in foster care and their parents.

With respect to the permanency and well-being of Native American children in foster care, MDHS policy and practice dictate active collaboration with the appropriate Indian Tribal Council. As indicated by stakeholder interviews, MDHS and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians jointly facilitate the placement of Choctaw and other Tribal children in foster care. Case coordination and service delivery is further facilitated by regular meetings between MDHS and the social services staff of the Mississippi Band of the Choctaw Indians. Despite these efforts, however, in the two cases involving Native American children, reviewers determined that the Tribe had not been appropriately notified and involved and that no efforts were made to place the children with extended family or with the Tribe.

The State's performance with respect to Well-Being Outcome 3 (Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs) was also low, with only 52.3 percent of applicable cases rated as having substantially achieved this outcome. A key concern identified was a general lack of mental health services throughout the State. Performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs) was substantially achieved in 75.9 percent of the applicable cases, with the finding that MDHS did not consistently address the educational needs of children in in-home cases where there was clear evidence that the child or children in the family had education-related needs. Stakeholders noted that when educational needs are not being met it is due primarily to large caseloads and/or a lack of effective collaboration between MDHS and local school systems.

In addition to the concerns pertaining to permanency and well-being, CFSR findings indicate that MDHS is not consistent in its efforts to address the safety of children who come into contact with the child welfare system. Safety outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) was substantially achieved in 84.4 percent of the applicable cases. A key finding was that MDHS is not consistent with regard to initiating investigations within the State's time frames, particularly in Hinds County. In addition, stakeholders expressed concern that the low rate of reported maltreatment recurrence may be due to a practice in many areas of the State of not substantiating maltreatment reports even when there is evidence to warrant substantiation. Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible) was achieved in 76.6 percent of the applicable cases reviewed, raising concerns that some children are not being sufficiently protected from risk of harm while in their own homes due to the insufficiency or lack of services provided. Ratings for Safety Outcome 2 varied substantively across CFSR sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 87.5 percent of Hinds County cases and 83 percent of Adams County cases, compared to 45 percent of Washington County cases.

With regard to the systemic factors, the CFSR determined that the State was in substantial conformity with the factors of Agency Responsiveness to the Community and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Statewide Information System; Case Review System, Quality Assurance System;

Training; and Service Array. Stakeholders reported that inadequate staff and large caseloads are having an adverse effect on several of the systemic factors. Large caseloads and inadequate support staff are prohibiting social workers from entering timely information into the State's statewide information system, MACWIS. Staff shortages within MDHS and the Attorney General's office are major constraints in the timely filing of Termination of Parental Rights petitions and the search for absent parents. These staffing issues are also influencing the agency's ability to meet the required monthly visits to foster homes. Stakeholders expressed concern that staff shortages are a barrier to implementing Quality Assurance efforts consistently throughout the State. High caseloads are also identified by stakeholders as a barrier to social workers being able to attend ongoing training. According to the Statewide Assessment, Mississippi will need to recruit and hire over 200 new social workers to bring caseloads in line with the staffing ratios recommended by the Child Welfare League of America. Another key concern identified regarding the systemic factors was that the State does not have a sufficient array of services in place to address the needs of children and families. Critical gaps in the service array include foster homes (for children of all ages), and substance abuse and mental health services for children, youth, and parents. CFSR findings further indicate that services are not accessible in all political jurisdictions of the State and that MDHS has limited ability to individualize services for the children and families served by the agency.

The overall findings with regard to the State's performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance relative to the national standards and table 4 provides information pertaining to the State's substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR. A summary of major findings is presented below.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

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

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two indicators. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to whether children experience a recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment (item 2).

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 84.4 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.
- The State did not meet the national standard for the percentage of children maltreated while in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

However, the State did meet the national standard for the percentage of children experiencing two or more substantiated or indicated child maltreatment reports within a 6-month period.

Ratings for this outcome differed substantively across the CFSR sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 100 percent of Adams County cases and 83 percent of Washington County cases, compared to 76 percent of Hinds County cases.

A key CFSR finding was that MDHS is not consistent with regard to initiating investigations within the State's required time frames, particularly in Hinds County. In addition, although there was little evidence of repeat maltreatment in the cases in any of the CFSR sites, stakeholders expressed concern that the low rate of reported maltreatment recurrence may be due to a practice in many areas of the State of not substantiating maltreatment reports even when there is evidence to warrant substantiation.

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

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two indicators. One indicator (item 3) addresses the issue of the child welfare agency's efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing services to the families that ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other indicator (item 4) pertains to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in reducing risk of harm to children.

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 76.6 percent of the applicable cases reviewed, which does not meet the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.

Ratings for this outcome varied substantively across CFSR sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 87.5 percent of Hinds County cases and 83 percent of Adams County cases, compared to 45 percent of Washington County cases.

A key CFSR case review finding was that MDHS is inconsistent in its efforts to provide services to families to prevent removal. Although in most cases, appropriate services were provided to prevent removal and address risk of harm, there were many cases in which MDHS either did not provide services to ensure the child's safety while remaining in the home, or provided services that were insufficient to address risk of harm to the child in the home.

The Statewide Assessment notes Mississippi was the first State to pilot the new federal strategy for the Child and Family Services Reviews in June of 1995. For the pilot review, the federal team conducted on-site reviews in three counties. The pilot review found that there was an insufficient array of preventive services available to protect children within their own families and homes. Because

of these pilot review findings, the Family Preservation Program was increased from two social workers in Hinds County to a statewide program of family preservation specialists and homemakers. Stakeholders during the CFSR conducted in February 2004 expressed the opinion that the statewide Family Preservation Program provides effective services in preventing children from being removed from their homes. However, stakeholders voiced concern that the supply of these services is not sufficient to meet the demand.

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

There are six indicators incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in preventing foster care re-entry (item 5), ensuring placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency's success in achieving permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or whether children who have "other planned living arrangements" as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 36.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for fiscal year (FY) 2002, the State did not meet the national standards for (1) the percent of children reunified who were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care, (2) the percent of children adopted who achieved a finalized adoption within 24 months of entry into foster care, or (3) the percentage of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experienced no more than 2 placements.

The FY 2002 data provided in the State Data Profile indicate that the State met the national standard for the percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior discharge.

Although performance on this outcome was generally low in all CFSR sites, there was considerable variation. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 60 percent of Adams County cases, compared to 38 percent of Hinds County cases and 14 percent of Washington County cases.

A key CFSR finding was that both case reviews and State data indicate that MDHS is effective in preventing children's re-entry into foster care within 12 months from a prior foster care episode. However, all other indicators for Permanency Outcome 1 were identified as Areas Needing Improvement. One concern identified was that MDHS is not consistent in its efforts to achieve

permanency for children in a timely manner. Another concern was that MDHS does not engage in adequate matching of children with foster placements to ensure placement stability while in foster care.

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

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six indicators that assess the child welfare agency's performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and close relatives (item 11); (2) placing siblings together (item 12); (3) ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13); (4) preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14); (5) seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15); and (6) promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 56.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

Although performance on this outcome was low in all CFSR sites, there was variation across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 69 percent of Hinds County cases and 57 percent of Washington County cases, compared to 20 percent of Adams County cases.

A key CFSR finding is that all indicators for Permanency Outcome 2 were rated as Areas Needing Improvement. Areas of particular concern pertained to the inconsistency of MDHS practice with regard to ensuring sufficient visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care, seeking relatives as placement resources, and promoting the parent-child relationship while children are in foster care.

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

Well Being Outcome 1 incorporates four indicators. One pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator examines the child welfare agency's effectiveness with regard to actively involving parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworker's contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children's parents (item 20).

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 36.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 58 percent of Adams County cases, 37.5 percent of Hinds County cases, and 14 percent of Washington County cases.

A key CFSR finding is that MDHS is not consistent in its efforts to assess the service needs and provide services to children, parents, and foster parents; involve children and parents in the case planning process; and establish sufficient face-to-face contact with children and parents. Also, for all indicators except “worker visits with child” (item 19), over 50 percent of the cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

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

There is only one indicator for Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to the child welfare agency’s effectiveness in addressing and meeting the educational needs of children in both foster care and in-home services cases (item 21).

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. This determination is based on the finding that the outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 75.9 percent of the cases reviewed, which does not meet the 90 percent required for substantial conformity. A key CFSR finding was that MDHS is not consistently effective in meeting children’s educational needs, particularly children in the in-home services cases.

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

This outcome incorporates two indicators that assess the child welfare agency’s efforts to meet children’s physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs.

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 52.4 percent of the 42 applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

Although performance on this outcome was low in all CFSR sites, there was considerable variation across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of Adams County cases and 61 percent of Hinds County cases, compared to 27 percent of Washington County cases.

A key CFSR finding with regard to this outcome was that MDHS is not consistent in its efforts to meet children's physical or mental health needs. Identified concerns pertained to a lack of dentists who will accept Medicaid and a general lack of mental health services throughout the State.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating a Statewide information system that can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care (item 24).

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System because the data quality is compromised due to poor data entry. Information available from MACWIS does not consistently reflect a child's current situation that will enable MDHS to readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals for the placement of every child.

Case Review System

Five indicators are used to assess the State's performance with regard to the systemic factor of Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the timeframes established in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).

The State of Mississippi is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. This determination is based on the following CFSR findings:

- Case plans are not developed jointly with the child's parent on a consistent basis.
- The State is unable to consistently implement a process to insure the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.
- The State and the courts are not consistently ensuring that each child in foster care has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- The State does not consistently provide a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.
- The State does not consistently provide a process for foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be in, any review or hearing with respect to the child.

Quality Assurance System

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System is based on whether the State has developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30), and whether the State is operating a statewide quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Mississippi is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The CFSR determined that although the State has developed and implemented procedures to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children, the State's Quality Improvement system is not fully operational. Quality Improvement was launched in January 2003 in seven of the nine regions and is limited to the review of case records for newly opened in-home cases.

Training

The systemic factor of Training incorporates an assessment of the State's new caseworker training program (item 32), ongoing training for child welfare agency staff (item 33), and training for foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. The CFSR determined that although the State provides initial training for staff who deliver services under titles IV-B and IV-E, the State is unable to provide ongoing training that addresses all the skills and knowledge base needed by staff to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP. The CFSR also found that the State's training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E does not adequately address the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

Service Array

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array addresses three questions: (1) Does the State have in place an array of services to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? (2) Are these services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? (3) Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and family served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The CFSR determined that the State does not have in place a sufficient array of services to assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency. Critical gaps in the service array are foster homes for children of all ages, substance abuse services for adolescents and adults, and mental health services for children and families. In addition, services are not accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP. Finally, the CFSR found that county staff have a limited ability to individualize services for all children and families served by the agency.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the Child and Family Services Plan (items 38 and 39), and the extent to which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Mississippi is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The CFSR determined the State engages in consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies. The agency develops, in consultation with representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP. CFSR findings indicate 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.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State's

efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children (item 45).

Mississippi is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor pertaining to Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention. The CFSR determined that Mississippi has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards. Also, the standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds. CFSR findings indicate that the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements. In addition, the State has a process to use cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. However, the CFSR also found that there is no comprehensive process to ensure the adequate recruitment of potential and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Table 1. Mississippi CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings		
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved*</i>	<i>Met National Standards?</i>	<i>Rating**</i>	<i>Percent Strength</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>
Safety Outcome 1-Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	84.4	Met 1, did not meet 1			
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				ANI	76	
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				Strength	98	Yes
Safety Outcome 2 - Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	76.6				
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				ANI	75	
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	79	
Permanency Outcome 1- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	36.0	Met 1, did not meet 3			
Item 5: Foster care re-entry				Strength	100	Yes
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	60	No
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	64	
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship and placement with relatives				ANI	42	No
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	20	No
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				ANI	75	
Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	56.0				
Item 11: Proximity of placement				ANI	84	
Item 12: Placement with siblings				ANI	77	
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	55	
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	84	
Item 15: Relative placement				ANI	68	
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	47	

*90 percent 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.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

Table 2. Mississippi CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings			
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved*</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>	<i>Rating**</i>	<i>Percent Strength</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>
Well Being Outcome 1 - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	No	36.0				
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents				ANI	42	
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning				ANI	38	
Item 19: Worker visits with child				ANI	56	
Item 20: Worker visits with parents				ANI	39	
Well Being Outcome 2 - Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	75.9				
Item 21: Educational needs of child				ANI	76	
Well Being Outcome 3 - Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs are met	No	52.4				
Item 22: Physical health of child				ANI	74	
Item 23: Mental health of child				ANI	50	

*90 percent 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.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

Table 3: Mississippi Performance on the Six Outcome Measures for Which National Standards have been Established

Outcome Measure	National Standard	Mississippi Data FY 2002
Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report in the first 6 months of CY 2001, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?	6.1% or less	4.6%
Of all children who were in foster care in the first 9 months of CY 2001, what percent experienced maltreatment from foster parents or facility staff members?	0.57% or less	0.59%
Of all children who entered foster care in FY 2001, what percent were re-entering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?	8.6% or less	4.6%
Of all children reunified from foster care in FY 2001, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care?	76.2% or more	56.7%
Of all children who were adopted from foster care in FY 2001, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into foster care?	32.0% or more	19.0%
Of all children in foster care during FY 2001 for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7% or more	55.0%

Table 4: Mississippi CFSR Ratings for the Seven Systemic Factors

Systemic Factors	In Substantial Conformity?*	Rating**
IV. Statewide Information System	No (2)	
Item 24: System can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals of children in foster care		ANI
V. Case Review System	No (2)	
Item 25: Process for developing a case plan and for joint case planning with parents		ANI
Item 26: Process for 6-month case reviews		ANI
Item 27: Process for 12-month permanency hearings		ANI
Item 28: Process for seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA		ANI
Item 29: Process for notifying caregivers of reviews and hearings and for opportunity for them to be heard		ANI
VI. Quality Assurance System	No (2)	
Item 30: Standards to ensure quality services and ensure children’s safety and health		Strength
Item 31: Identifiable QA system that evaluates the quality of services and improvements		ANI
VII. Training	No (2)	
Item 32: Provision of initial staff training		Strength
Item 33: Provision of ongoing staff training that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge.		ANI
Item 34: Provision of training for caregivers and adoptive parents that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge		ANI
VIII. Service Array	No (1)	
Item 35: Availability of array of critical services		ANI
Item 36: Accessibility of services across all jurisdictions		ANI
Item 37: Ability to individualize services to meet unique needs		ANI
IX. Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Yes (3)	
Item 38: Engages in ongoing consultation with critical stakeholders in developing the CFSP		Strength
Item 39: Develops annual progress reports in consultation with stakeholders		Strength
Item 40: Coordinates services with other Federal programs		Strength
X. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention	Yes (3)	
Item 41: Standards for foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 42: Standards are applied equally to all foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 43: Conducts necessary criminal background checks		Strength
Item 44: Diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect children’s racial and ethnic diversity		ANI
Item 45: Uses cross-jurisdictional resources to find placements		Strength

*Systemic factors are rated on a scale from 1 to 4. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates “Not in Substantial Conformity.” A rating of 3 or 4 indicates Substantial Conformity.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).