

Fiscal Year 2021 QUALITATIVE CASE REVIEW and CASE PROCESS REVIEWS Annual Report

By statute (62a-4a-117(4)), the Utah Department of Human Services Office of Quality and Design conducts qualitative and quantitative annual performance reviews of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to gather information on how its practice impacts desired outcomes. The information gathered is used to inform child welfare practice improvements that promote safety, permanency and well-being.

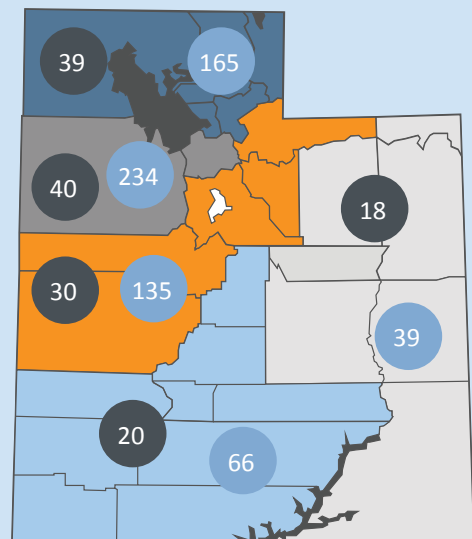
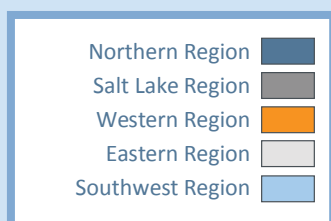


FY21 and the pandemic:

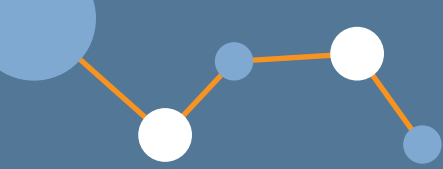
In FY21, the state of Utah and agencies within the Department of Human Services adjusted practice to meet recommended social distancing precautions. As a result, many of the requirements for face-to-face contact by agencies were adjusted to virtual contact. Consequently, these performance standards and measures were also adjusted to allow for virtual contact in place of the required face-to-face contact. It seems (anecdotally and statistically) this adjustment had some beneficial and detrimental impact on practice. One positive impact was the increased attendance/participation in team meetings by various parties. One negative impact was that in some instances the quality of events was hindered in the virtual environment.

The number of CPR cases reviewed is proportionately selected for review across all five DCFS geographic regions.

The number of cases reviewed in the QCR is a set number of cases (150). Cases are divided between each region with the largest proportion (40 cases) allocated to each of the two largest case-served regions- Salt Lake and Northern. The smallest portion (20 cases) is allocated to the two smallest case-served regions- Eastern and Southwest. The western region falls in the middle and is assigned 30 cases.



*150 cases were selected for review but three were dropped at the last minute due to the family being unable to participate

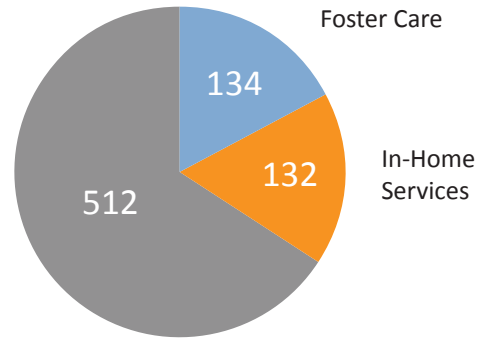


FY2021 Case Process Review (CPR): Impactful Focus Performance Areas

The CPR is a quantitative review of case records to determine whether key service activities were appropriately completed and recorded. Depending on the case type, activities include whether a child was seen within the required response time when an allegation of abuse or neglect was reported, or if a plan was developed within the required time frames that will allow the child(ren) to remain home or in another appropriate placement safely.

See Appendix A for all CPR scores.

778 CASES REVIEWED IN 2021



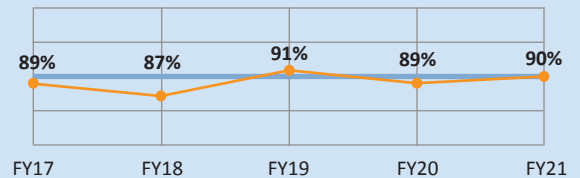
Child Protective Services (CPS)
(Includes CPS General, Unable to Locate, Medical Neglect, Removals)

CPS: Worker Interview with Children and Parents

Standard

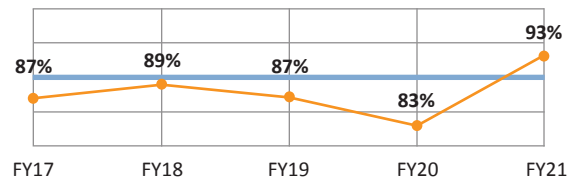
HIGHEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

Did the worker conduct the interview with the child outside the presence of the alleged perpetrator?



LOWEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

Did the worker interview the child's natural parents or another guardian when their whereabouts are known?



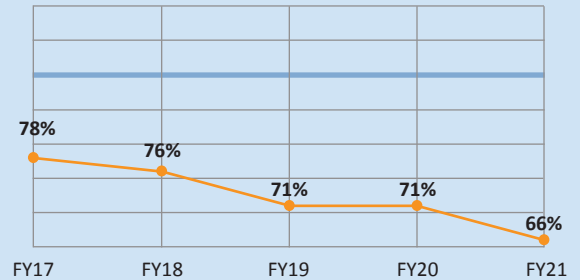
When conducting an abuse/neglect investigation, staff documented interviewing the child (92%) and parents (93%) of the time. Interviewing the child and parents is an essential component of assessing safety and gathering information about the nature of the child abuse report.

CPS: Worker Visits with the Child Following Removals

Standard

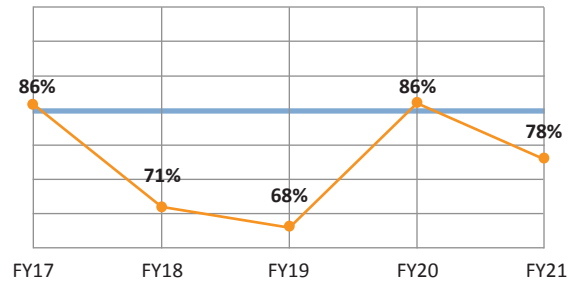
HIGHEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

After the first required visit, did the worker (CPS or ongoing worker) visit the child in the placement at least weekly for a total of three weeks?



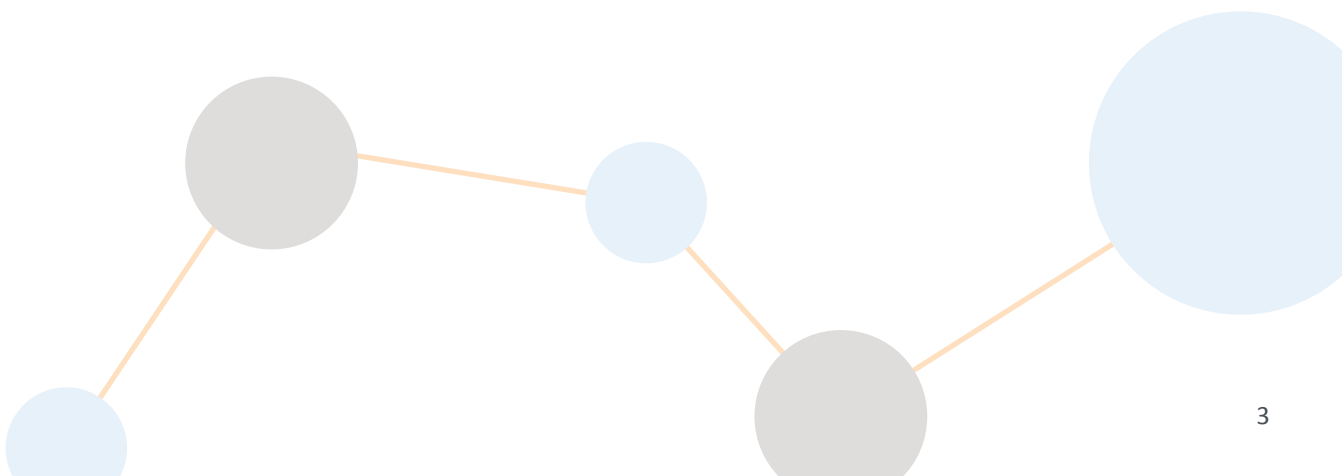
LOWEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

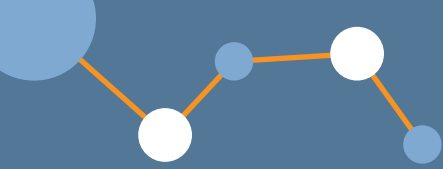
Within 24 hours of the child's placement in care, did the worker make reasonable efforts to gather information essential to the child's safety and well-being and was this information given to the care provider?



After a child is removed, it is best practice to visit the child to assess how they are adjusting to the situation, and while 89% of the children were visited within 48 hours of the removal, only 68% of the weekly visits were documented in the case record thereafter.

It is also important to gather essential information regarding the child when that child is taken into state custody and share that information to substitute caregivers at the time of placement, and the record indicates that this is occurring 79% of the time.



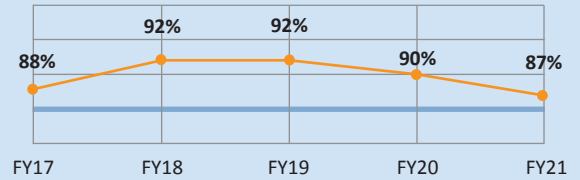


In-Home: Caseworker Contacts and Private Conversations

Standard

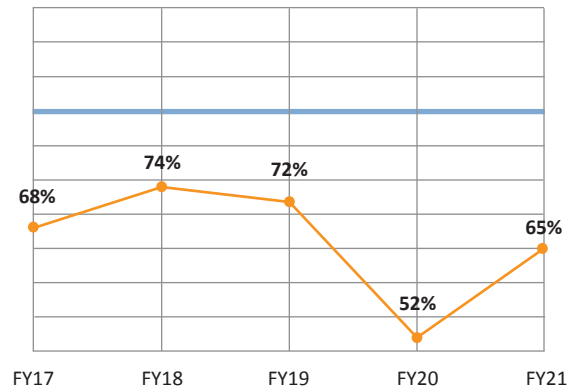
HIGHEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the child at least once during each month of this review period?



LOWEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

Did the worker have a face-to-face conversation with the child outside the presence of the parent or substitute caregiver at least once during each month of the review period?

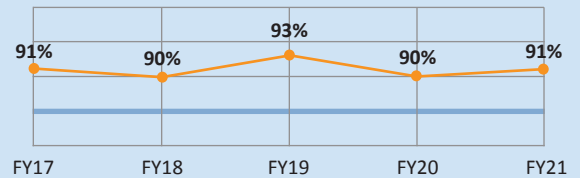


Foster Care: Caseworker Contacts and Private Conversations

Standard

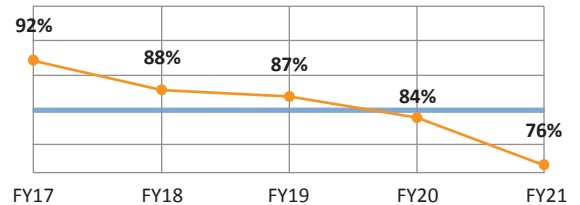
HIGHEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the child/youth inside the out-of-home placement at least once during each month of this review period?



LOWEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

Did the worker have a face-to-face conversation with the child outside the presence of the caregiver at least once during each month of the review period?



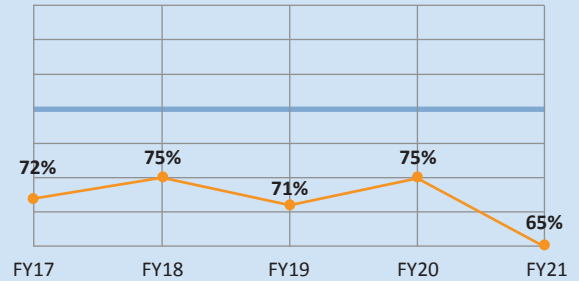
The agency is required to make monthly contact with the child receiving foster care or family preservation services and conduct a private conversation with the child away from the caregiver. According to the documentation, the agency conducts monthly caseworker contacts regularly in both in-home (87%) and in foster care (92%) but documents the private conversations in (65%) of in-home cases and (77%) of the foster care cases.

In-Home: Child Involvement in Case Planning

Standard

HIGHEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

Was the child involved in the development of the current child and family plan?

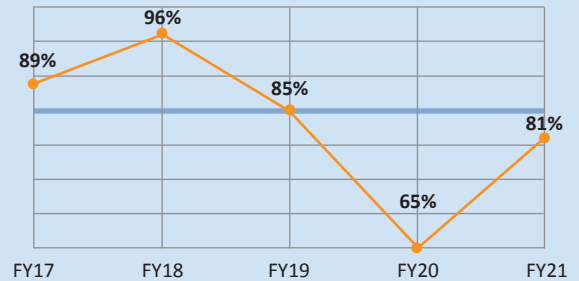


Foster Care: Child Involvement in Case Planning

Standard

HIGHEST IMPACTFUL FOCUS AREA

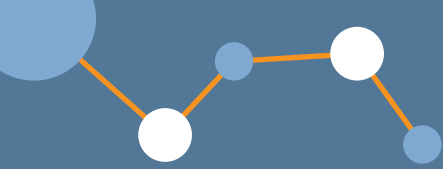
Was the child involved in the development of the current child and family plan?



The agency does a much better job of involving age-appropriate youth in the development of the plan in foster care cases (83%) than in-home cases (65%).

Case Process Review Performance Summary

In FY21, 639 cases were reviewed. This included examining over 22,500 records, entries, or activities conducted by child welfare staff. When looking at all measures collectively, the agency completed required action items 80% of the time. These include activities like CPS workers seeing an alleged child victim within a required timeframe or staff making monthly contact with foster children or children remaining at home in family preservation service settings. These also include action items like foster children visiting medical and dental professionals or seeing mental health providers after entering care and annually thereafter. This also includes documenting things like service plans.

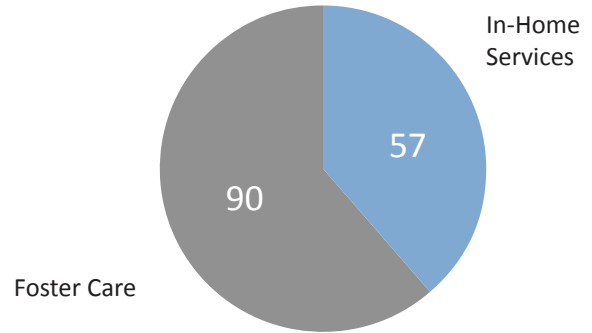


FY2021 Qualitative Case Review (QCR): Impactful Focus Performance Areas

The QCR is a review of case records combined with qualitative interviews with key case participants, who may include the child, siblings, parents, substitute caregivers, therapists, legal parties, healthcare professionals, teachers and other members of the child's extended family or Child and Family Team.

See Appendix B for total score.

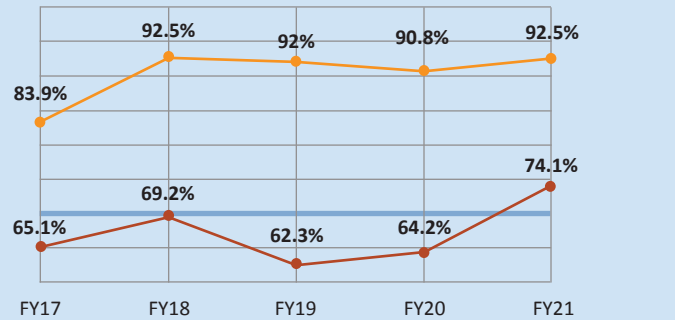
150 CASES REVIEWED IN 2021



Practice Strengths

INDICATOR

- Engagement —
- Teaming —



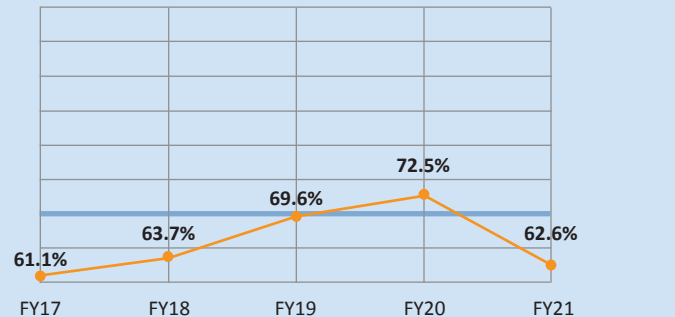
The agency continues to achieve high performance by engaging families.

The results of teaming improved from last year (64%) and achieved (74%) this year this is also the 5-year high for teaming.

Practice Improvement Focus

INDICATOR

- Child & Family Plan —




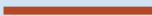
Child and Family Plan declined this year (63%) which is below the standard (70%).

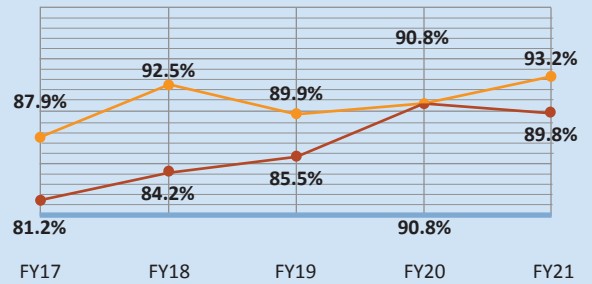
Overall QCR Performance

Standard

INDICATOR

Overall Status 

Overall System 

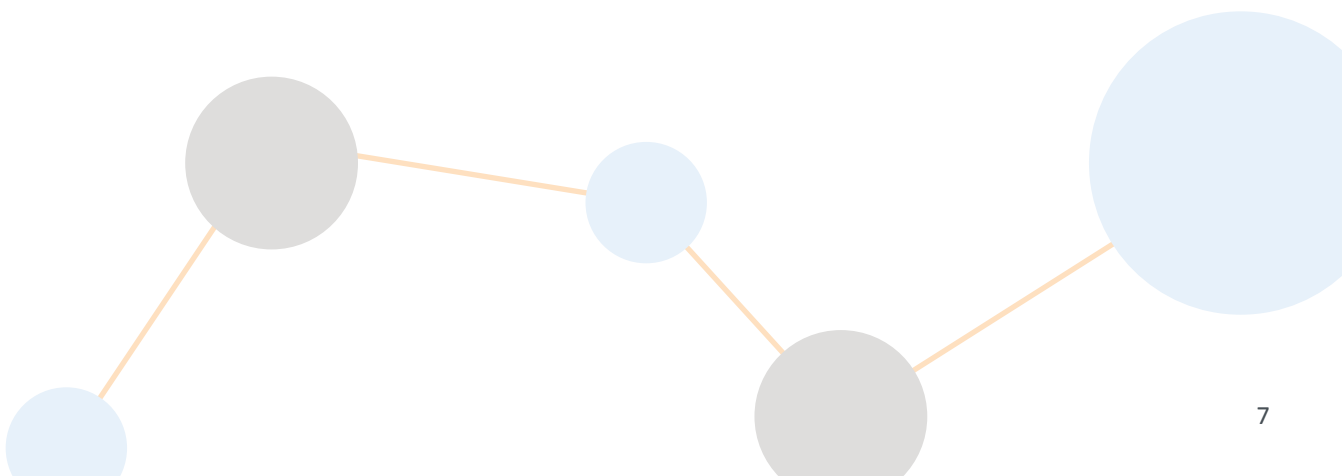


The agency performed well in the overall QCR performance in Status (93%) which measures how the child is doing and system (90%) which measures how the system is doing.

Qualitative Case Performance Summary

In FY21, 150 cases were selected for review but 147 reviews were completed due to three cases being dropped when key participants were unable to participate in interviews. In FY21, overall child status improved slightly from FY20 going from 90.8% to 93.2%. This measure includes a composite of all child status measures reflecting child safety, stability, and several indicators of well-being including physical, emotional and educational status. The overall child status score of 89.1% is above the standard of 85%.

The overall system performance measure dropped by 1% going from 90.8% last year to 89.8% this year. The drop in score is not significant and the score of 89.1% still exceeds the standard of 85% for overall system performance. System performance includes key areas of practice including engaging families, assessing needs, developing plans and interventions, and monitoring services.



Division of Child and Family Services Response



State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX
Governor

DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
Lieutenant Governor

Department of Human Services

TRACY S. GRUBER
Executive Director

NATE CHECKETTS
Deputy Director

DAVID LITVACK
Deputy Director

DCFS Response to the FY 2021 OQD Annual Report

Thank you to the Office of Quality and Design for their efforts on behalf of DCFS and all those we serve. The information in this report is extremely valuable in ensuring our services are well calibrated, effective, and in compliance with community, state, and federal expectations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact our work of safe children and strengthened families. Provisions were made to allow virtual home visits and video conferencing whenever safely possible to promote the health of those we serve, as well as our providers and caseworkers. Visits by Child Protective Services (CPS) workers to assess a child's safety, however, continued in person for the most part. These adjustments were made in concert with DHS administration and informed by national best practices as well as the expectations and needs of our local communities. We recognize and appreciate that OQD adjusted their review guidelines temporarily to give credit to virtual visits when properly documented and in compliance with COVID-19 policies. Qualitative Case Review (QCR) results shifted from in-person interviews and in-office visits to all online reviews.

We feel very relieved to see that our child welfare performance has primarily remained strong through such major changes, reflecting our continued dedication to ensuring best practices were not compromised. For example, children suspected of being victims of child abuse were seen by a CPS worker within the required priority times in 89% of the cases, and were interviewed about the alleged abuse outside the presence of the alleged perpetrator, as documented in the file, 92% of the time. Children were visited by their caseworker in their foster home at least monthly in 92% of the cases, and in 87% of in-home services cases. These numbers are comparable to previous years and above the target, which indicates that despite the restrictions and adjustments to our practice, child safety and positive family outcomes have remained a top priority.

That said, challenges remain in both making sure that children in in-home cases are involved in the development of the plan, and that caseworkers have private conversations with them during home visits. The fact that some home visits were done virtually may have contributed to the low score on private conversations (it is difficult to ascertain that a conversation is done in private when using video conferencing). These are challenges we will continue to clarify and address.

We were pleased to see our overall strong performance continuing in the QCR, with 97% of children reviewed deemed safe from others, and 95% with an acceptable safety rating overall. Video conferencing during the pandemic has provided new ways to involve family members and professionals in team meetings, and encouraged more robust involvement. We plan on continuing virtual access to child and family team meetings to promote robust family and team involvement in the planning process.

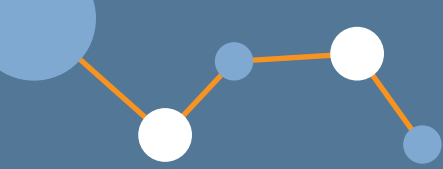
Throughout this next year we will be bolstering our efforts on quality client contacts and effectively assessing and planning around safety and permanency issues. This will be accomplished through the tactics such as the use of safety staffing guides, hearing quality bench cards, and a focus on developing family driven plans within the context of the child and family team and meetings. These efforts are directly targeted at promoting positive outcomes for the children and families we work with.

As always, our agency is grateful for the work involved in these reviews, and is committed to continuous quality improvement within our child welfare system so that we can ensure we are providing the services and supports needed for safe children and strengthened families within our communities.

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Appendix A: FY21 Case Process Review (CPR) Results

CPS General								
Item	Question	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
CPSG.1	Did the investigating worker see the child within the priority time frame?	90%	89%	87%	91%	89%	90%	
CPSG.2	Was a youth suicide screener completed and entered into SAFE?	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%	
CPSG.3	Was the investigation completed within 30 days of CPS receiving the report from intake or within the extension period granted?	90%	86%	89%	96%	91%	90%	
CPSG.4	Did the worker conduct the interview with the child outside the presence of the alleged perpetrator?	90%	92%	95%	83%	85%	93%	
CPSG.5	Did the worker interview the child's natural parents or another guardian when their whereabouts are known?	90%	87%	89%	87%	83%	93%	
CPSG.6	Did the worker interview third parties who have had direct contact with the child, where possible and appropriate?	90%	94%	98%	98%	100%	96%	
CPSG.7	Did the CPS worker make a scheduled or an unscheduled home visit during the investigation period?	90%	83%	84%	89%	88%	83%	
CPSG.8	Were the case findings of the report based on facts/information obtained/available during the investigation?	85%	96%	96%	94%	96%	95%	
CPSH.2	If this case involves an allegation of medical neglect, did the worker obtain a medical neglect opinion from a health care provider prior to case closure?	90%	87%	73%	42%	73%	71%	



CPS - Unable to locate

Item	Question	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
CPSUL.1	Did the worker visit the home at times other than normal work hours?	85%	83%	86%	96%	93%	92%	
CPSUL.2	If any child in the family was school age, did the worker check with local schools for contact/location information about the family?	85%	63%	83%	71%	90%	82%	
CPSUL.3	Did the worker send the name and any other information regarding the family to the CLEAR (kin locator) license holder in the region for an internet search for additional address information?	85%	N/A	85%	86%	79%	93%	
CPSUL.4	Did the worker check eRep (Utah's electronic eligibility system) for additional address or contact information?	85%	78%	88%	91%	90%	87%	
CPSUL.5	Did the worker check with the referent for additional address information?	85%	68%	76%	79%	80%	81%	

CPS- Intake

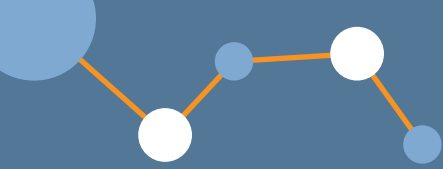
Item	Question	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
CPSUA.1	Was the nature of the referral documented?	85%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	
CPSUA.2	Did the intake worker staff the referral with the supervisor or other intake/CPS worker to determine the non-acceptance of the report?	85%	100%	98%	89%	80%	97%	
CPSUA.3	Does the documentation adequately support the decision not to accept the referral?	85%	99%	98%	97%	98%	100%	

Protective Custody Removals

Item	Question	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
R.2	Did the worker visit the child in the placement by midnight of the second day after the date of removal from the child's home?	85%	89%	83%	84%	83%	89%	
R.3	After the first required visit, did the worker (CPS or ongoing worker) visit the child in the placement at least weekly for a total of three weeks?	85%	78%	76%	71%	71%	66%	
R.4	Within 24 hours of the child's placement in care, did the worker make reasonable efforts to gather information essential to the child's safety and well-being, and was this information given to the care provider?	85%	86%	71%	68%	86%	78%	
R.5	During the CPS investigation, were reasonable efforts made to locate possible kinship placements?	85%	96%	99%	96%	98%	98%	

In-Home Services

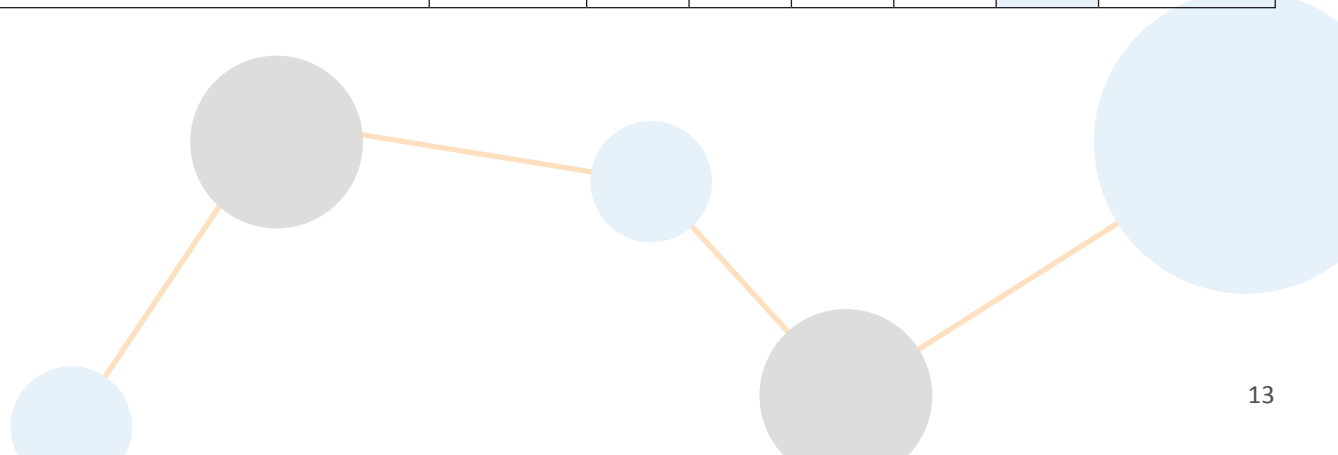
Item	Question	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
IH.1	Is there a current child and family plan in the file?	85%	89%	88%	85%	80%	88%	
IH.2	Was the initial child and family plan completed for the family within 45 days of the case start date?	85%	83%	78%	81%	76%	79%	
IH.3	Was the mother, father, child, and other caregivers, involved in the development of the current child and family plan?	85%	84%	83%	82%	84%	82%	
IH.4	Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the child at least once during each month of this review period?	85%	88%	92%	92%	90%	87%	
IH.5	Did the worker have a face-to-face conversation with the child outside the presence of the parent or substitute caregiver at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	68%	74%	72%	52%	65%	

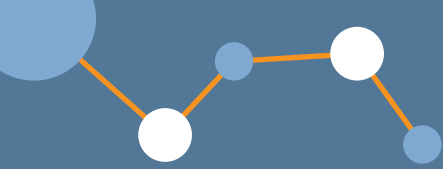


Item	Question	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
IH.6	Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the substitute caregiver at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	83%	82%	71%	82%	89%	
IH.7	Did the caseworker enter the residence where the child is living at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	91%	88%	92%	94%	84%	
IH.8	Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the mother of the child at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	91%	97%	93%	96%	87%	
IH.9	Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the father of the child at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	78%	84%	81%	72%	69%	

Foster Care Services								
Item	Question	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
IA.2	Were reasonable efforts made to locate kinship placements?	85%	86%	92%	100%	83%	67%	
IA.5	Before the new placement was made, was basic available information essential to the child's safety and welfare and the safety and welfare of other children in the home given to the out-of-home care provider?	85%	78%	78%	67%	79%	67%	
IB.1	Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the substitute caregiver at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	95%	94%	96%	93%	93%	
IB.2	Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the child/youth inside the out-of-home placement at least once during each month of this review period?	85%	91%	90%	93%	90%	91%	
IB.3	Did the worker have a face-to-face conversation with the child outside the presence of the caregiver at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	92%	88%	87%	84%	76%	
IB.4	Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the mother of the child at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	73%	75%	81%	80%	61%	

Item	Question	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
IB.5	Did the worker have face-to-face contact with the father of the child at least once during each month of the review period?	85%	63%	66%	64%	68%	50%	
II.1	Was an initial or annual Well Child CHEC conducted on time?	85%	87%	86%	87%	84%	76%	
II.2	Was an initial or annual mental health assessment conducted on time?	85%	87%	88%	84%	81%	84%	
II.3	Was an initial or annual dental assessment conducted on time?	85%	86%	87%	91%	84%	85%	
III.2	If there was reason to suspect the child may have an educational disability, was the child referred for assessments for specialized services?	85%	96%	96%	86%	86%	79%	
IV.1	Is there a current child and family plan in the file?	85%	90%	91%	91%	89%	88%	
IV.2	Was an initial child and family plan completed for the family within 45 days of the case start date?	85%	84%	83%	75%	85%	60%	
IV.3	Was the mother, father, child, and other caregivers, involved in the development of the current child and family plan?	85%	88%	90%	86%	74%	83%	
IV.5.a	Was the child provided the opportunity to visit with his/her mother weekly, OR is there an alternative visitation plan?	85%	93%	84%	95%	88%	89%	
IV.5.b	Was the child provided the opportunity to visit with his/her father weekly, OR is there an alternative visitation plan?	85%	69%	80%	83%	81%	77%	
IV.6	Was the child provided the opportunity for visitation with his/her siblings weekly OR is there an alternative visitation plan?	85%	88%	87%	91%	100%	86%	





Appendix B: FY21 Qualitative Case Review

Status Indicators	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
Safety Overall	N/A	90.6%	93.2%	89.9%	91.7%	94.6%	
Child Safe from Others*	N/A	99.3%	96.6%	95.7%	96.3%	97.3%	
Child Risk to Self*	N/A	91.3%	94.6%	94.2%	94.5%	95.9%	
Stability	70%	77.2%	82.2%	81.9%	82.6%	87.1%	
Prospect for Permanence	70%	61.7%	63.7%	71.7%	78%	82.3%	
Health/Physical Well-being	70%	97.3%	97.9%	96.4%	95.4%	96.6%	
Emotional/Behavioral Well-being	70%	87.2%	93.2%	88.4%	94.5%	93.2%	
Learning	70%	87.9%	93.2%	94.2%	87.2%	93.9%	
Family Connections	70%	82.2%	82.2%	92.3%	87.1%	88.1%	
Satisfaction	70%	86.5%	87.7%	87.7%	85.2%	89.8%	
Utah Child %	85%	87.9%	92.5%	89.9%	90.8%	93.2%	

Status Indicators	Standard	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Graph
Engagement/Participation	70%	83.9%	92.5%	92%	90.8%	92.5%	
Teaming/Coordination	70%	65.1%	69.2%	62.3%	64.2%	74.1%	
Assessment	70%	80.5%	79.5%	81.9%	79.8%	88.4%	
Long-term View	70%	62.4%	56.8%	68.8%	72.5%	74.1%	
Child & Family Plan	70%	61.1%	63.7%	69.6%	72.5%	62.6%	
Intervention Adequacy/Implementation	70%	75.2%	84.2%	81.9%	89%	89.1%	
Tracking & Adaptation	70%	91.3%	87%	86.2%	91.7%	89.8%	
Utah System %	85%	81.2%	84.2%	85.5%	90.8%	89.8%	

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