

**Final Report
Maine Child and Family Services Review
August 2009**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau**

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Maine. The CFSR is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSR is implemented by the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families within HHS.

The Maine CFSR was conducted the week of May 18, 2009. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2008, through May 22, 2009. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period ending September 30, 2007
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 31 cases in Cumberland County, 17 cases in Kennebec County, and 17 cases in Washington County
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

All 65 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the children in the cases reviewed are presented in the table at the end of this section. For this table, and for other tables in the report, figures displayed may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specified outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. The second section of the report (Section B: Systemic Factors) provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

Case Characteristics	Foster Care	In-Home Services
Total Number of Cases	40	25
Date case was opened		
Open prior to the period under review	33 (82.5%)	12 (48%)
Open during the period under review	7 (17.5%)	13 (52%)
Child entered foster care during the period under review	11 (27.5%)	N/A
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than 10	26 (65%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	2 (5%)	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	5 (12.5%)	*
16 and older	7 (17.5%)	*
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic	1 (2.5%)	*
Asian Non-Hispanic	0	*
Black Non-Hispanic	1 (2.5%)	*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	0	*
Hispanic (of any race)	2 (5%)	*
White Non-Hispanic	34 (85%)	*
Unknown/Unable to Determine	0	*
Two or More Races Non-Hispanic	2 (5%)	*
Primary reason for opening case		
Physical abuse	4 (10%)	1 (4%)
Sexual abuse	1 (2.5%)	5 (20%)
Emotional maltreatment	0	1 (4%)
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	17 (42.5%)	11 (44%)
Medical neglect	1 (2.5%)	0
Abandonment	2 (5%)	0
Mental/physical health of parent	2 (5%)	1 (4%)
Substance abuse by parent	7 (17.5%)	5 (20%)
Child's behavior	0	0
Domestic violence in child's home	5 (12.5%)	1 (4%)
Child in juvenile justice system	1 (2.5%)	0
Other	0	0

*Information on in-home services cases is not available for these characteristics.

SECTION A: OUTCOMES

In the Outcomes Section of the CFSR Final Report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 items reviewed. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The item ratings are used to determine the performance of a State on the seven outcomes, each of which incorporates one or more of the individual items. The evaluation options for these outcomes are “substantially achieved,” “partially achieved,” and “not achieved.” For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern identified for that outcome.

The Children’s Bureau has established very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our nation’s most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. The standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being. This is consistent with the goal of the CFSR to promote continuous improvement in performance on these outcomes.

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95-percent standard established for the CFSR Onsite Review or the national standards for the six data indicators by the end of their Program Improvement Plan implementations. The Children’s Bureau recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often take time to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with the Children’s Bureau to establish a specified amount of improvement or to determine specified activities for their Program Improvement Plans. That is, for each outcome that is not in substantial conformity or item that is rated as an Area Needing Improvement, each State (working in conjunction with the Children’s Bureau) specifies the following: (1) how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the Areas Needing Improvement and (2) the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its Program Improvement Plan and still not perform at the 95-percent (for outcomes) or the 90-percent (for items) levels established for the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSR assesses a State’s current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continued Program Improvement Plans addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior Program Improvement Plan goals may have been achieved. The purpose is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the completion of a Program Improvement Plan.

The following sections provide information on how Maine performed on each outcome in the first round of the CFSR as well as the current CFSR. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round, the key concerns observed at that time and the strategies implemented in the Program Improvement Plan to address those concerns are discussed.

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State's performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of data indicators or percentages regarding Strength and Area Needing Improvement ratings. Key changes in the CFSR case review process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to enhance consistency and ensure an assessment of critical areas such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents in planning for their children

For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of Maine's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR report, which was held in FY 2003, the State's status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Performance of individual sites included in the Onsite Review is presented in the tables. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate.

I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	11	5	7	23	76.7
Partially Achieved	3	4	0	7	23.3
Not Achieved	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Cases	14	9	7	30	
Not Applicable Cases	17	8	10	35	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	79%	56%	100%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (%)	State's Percent	Meets Standards?
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6+	92.7	No
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68+	99.83	Yes

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Maine is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 76.7 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to the case review findings, the State did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence but met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- The State was not effective in responding to maltreatment reports in accordance with State-established timeframes.
- Policy regarding response timeframes was not in place to ensure children's protection.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- It developed policy and revised practice to require investigators to establish face-to-face contact with family members within 120 hours of the receipt of the child abuse/neglect referral. Timeframes were later changed as reflected in current policy.
- It changed the required response time for Community Intervention Programs (CIPs) to be consistent with the response times OCFS caseworkers are required to meet (in 2007 CIP was renamed Alternative Response Program [ARP]).
- It updated the Maine Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) to allow CIP/ARP access to MACWIS for electronic transfer of reports and ensure prompt responses to reports by CIP/ARP.

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 30 (46 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

Maine policy states that initial contact with the alleged abuse/neglect victim must occur within 72 hours of the approval of an appropriate report. However, policy also indicates that an alleged victim will be seen sooner—even immediately—if a more rapid response time is deemed necessary by relevant information in the report. Parents and children in cases referred for alternate response must be seen within 3 days of the referral from OCFS.

The results of the assessment of item 1 are presented in the table that follows.

Item 1 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	12	6	7	25	83
Area Needing Improvement	2	3	0	5	17
Total Applicable Cases	14	9	7	30	
Not Applicable	17	8	10	35	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	86%	67%	100%		

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 25 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy. It was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in five cases when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes. The State does not have a priority system for referrals.

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 83 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for rating of Strength. Item 1 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, casework and supervisory staff are available to respond immediately 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to referrals requiring an immediate response. Additionally, ARP coverage is provided by contracted ARP agencies in every district.

The following data are reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- The December 2008 OCFS Monthly Management Report indicates that during that month, 69 percent of initial contacts were made within 72 hours.
- A November 2008 MACWIS data query found that in a recent month:
 - 73 percent of children who were the subject of maltreatment allegations were seen within 72 hours of the approved report.
 - 4 percent of children who were the subject of maltreatment allegations were seen within 96 hours of the approved report.
 - 4 percent of children who were the subject of maltreatment allegations were seen within 120 hours of the approved report.
- Data from calendar year (CY) 2007 indicate that initial face-to-face contact with the child was made within the required timeframe in 1,856 (73 percent) of the 2,538 reports assigned to ARP agencies.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the following opinions:

- OCFS has improved in its timeliness in responding to referrals of child abuse and neglect, and generally responds in a timely manner.
- OCFS is cognizant of the importance of timely responding to ensure children's safety.

However, other stakeholders suggested that OCFS is less likely to respond in a timely manner to reports received on weekends than to reports received on a weekday. Also, a few stakeholders noted that caseworkers struggle with meeting the 72-hour response requirement due to high caseloads.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 27 (42 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine if there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review, and, if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. The results of the assessment of item 2 are presented in the table below.

Item 2 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	13	6	6	25	93
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	0	2	7
Total Applicable Cases	14	7	6	27	
Not Applicable	17	10	11	38	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	93%	86%	100%		

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 25 cases when there was only one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family within a 6-month period. Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases when there were at least two substantiated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period. In one case referrals were 1 month apart; in the other case the referrals were 6 months apart. In four cases reviewed during the Onsite Review, a new incident of child maltreatment occurred while the case was open. However, a formal report was not made, and therefore there was no formal investigation of the allegations.

In addition to the recurrence of substantiated maltreatment reports, reviewers reported the following findings with regard to the number of maltreatment reports on the family during the life of the case (“life of the case” refers to the time from the date of the first allegation of abuse or neglect to the time of the Onsite Review):

- In 26 cases, there were at least 4 reports but fewer than 10 reports.
- In 11 cases, there were between 10 and 14 reports.
- In 5 cases, there were 15 or more maltreatment reports including one case with 38 reports.

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 93 percent of the applicable cases, there was no recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month period. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 2 also was rated as a Strength in Maine’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

Data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that between 2006 and 2007, the rate of repeat maltreatment within a 6-month period increased by 1 percent. The Statewide Assessment also notes that, based on the available NCANDS data for the year ending December 2008, the Performance and Quality Improvement (PQI) Unit reviewed cases of children identified as having experienced repeat maltreatment. The findings indicate that children under age 6 were at an increased risk of repeat maltreatment if the Child Protection Assessment also found neglect, parental substance abuse, domestic violence, or untreated mental illness in the family.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions on the State’s effectiveness in preventing repeat maltreatment. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that there has been a decrease in maltreatment recurrence or that recurrence is not a problem. However, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that there has been an increase in maltreatment recurrence. Various stakeholders across the sites provided the following explanations for the increase in maltreatment recurrence:

- Cases that meet the criteria for an assessment by OCFS are referred inappropriately to APR.
- There have been decreases in the time allowed for provision of certain services due to budget cuts.
- There is a lack of services to meet the needs of the children and families, including substance abuse treatment services.
- There has been an increase in the number of families with substance abuse problems.

Safety Outcome 2

Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	17	9	9	35	53.8
Partially Achieved	4	5	1	10	15.4
Not Achieved	10	3	7	20	30.8
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	55%	53%	53%		

Status of Safety Outcome 2

Maine is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 53.8 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- The State did not consistently provide appropriate services to families to protect children in the home and prevent their removal.
- Inadequate assessments resulted in the delivery of services that were not appropriate to ensure the child's safety and reduce risk of harm.
- The State was not consistently effective in reducing the risk of harm to children.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Developed policy and training to improve the accurate identification of children's safety concerns and family needs and strengths
- Developed a statewide supervisory initiative to support supervisors in training, mentoring, and supervising caseworkers in providing timely services that would result in better outcomes for children and families
- Identified and made efforts to provide services that would prevent removal of children
- Provided training to caseworkers on how to conduct meaningful face-to-face contact with children and caregivers that would assess the safety of children who are in their homes or in out-of-home care
- Increased the number of families referred to the Community Intervention Programs
- Developed training for caseworkers that focused on identifying sexual victimization, recognizing family dynamics, and identifying the need for sexual abuse victim treatment

- Implemented family team meetings (FTMs) to ensure that the child and family case plans accurately assess issues related to the risk and safety of the child
- Established a protocol for the Out of Home (OOH) Institutional Unit (formerly the Institutional Abuse Unit [IAU]) that requires investigators to make face-to-face contact with alleged victims within 5 days of assignment

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or reentry into foster care

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 42 (65 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home, or if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For applicable cases, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families that would prevent placement of children in foster care and at the same time ensure their safety. The results of the assessment of item 3 are presented in the table below.

Item 3 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	12	9	4	25	60
Area Needing Improvement	7	4	6	17	40
Total Applicable Cases	19	13	10	42	
Not Applicable	12	4	7	23	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	63%	69%	40%		

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- Although no services were provided when the child was removed from the home, the removal was necessary to ensure the safety of the child (two cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal (15 cases).

- Services were provided after reunification of the child (one case).
- Efforts were made to provide services prior to removal and/or reentry (seven cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. This included, but was not limited to, the following: domestic violence services, substance abuse treatment, random drug screens, crisis stabilization, individual counseling, psychological evaluations, relapse prevention planning, parental capacity evaluations, transportation, child care, forensic interviews for children, play therapy for children, behavioral health services, sexual offender evaluation and treatment, family preservation services, intensive in-home services, and family reunification services.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Services were not provided to the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (three cases).
- Services were provided, but they did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home (seven cases).
- Services were not provided after reunification to ensure children's ongoing safety and to prevent reentry (three cases).
- Services were provided after reunification, but they did not adequately target the key concerns in the family (two cases).
- No services were provided to ensure the safety of the children who remained in the home (one case).
- Services were not provided to protect the children in the home, and the children were subsequently removed (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 60 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 3 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, service availability for in-home counseling and support services for child welfare clients has increased due to the establishment of an Administrative Service Organization for prior authorization and utilization review. This has resulted in more time-limited services and reduced waiting lists for all Maine families in need. However, the Statewide Assessment also reports that needed clinical evaluation and treatment services are not always accessible. Additionally, Maine's geography (e.g., remote areas, islands) and severe weather can, at times, render services less accessible.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, ARP increases and enhances Maine's capacity to provide services to families to protect children. District supervisors refer child abuse and neglect reports of low to moderate severity to ARP contract agencies for assessment. In CY 2007, ARP agencies completed 1,155 case plans with families within 35 days of receiving reports. District supervisors also refer a number of families that OCFS has already assessed for maltreatment, so that ARP can provide agreed-upon services and case management. In 2007, ARP agencies accepted 1,084 post-assessment cases from OCFS so that these families could receive services and case management.

The Statewide Assessment notes that FTMs are expected to occur before the removal of a child from home, after an emergency removal before the 14-day hearing, and before a return home to parents or kinship care. However, as indicated in the Statewide Assessment, PQI reviews found that FTMs are offered in accordance with policy 57 percent of the time.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the 2007 in-house site review provided the following information:

- Caseworkers struggle with identifying and reporting new safety issues that arose after the initial assessment.
- Thorough assessments were completed in 71 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Caseworkers conducted substance abuse screenings in 81 percent of the child protection assessments reviewed.
- The outcome of safely maintaining children in their homes (Safety Outcome 2, items 3 and 4) was substantially achieved in 49 percent of the cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in protecting children in their homes and preventing removal or reentry into foster care. Some stakeholders indicated that OCFS is effective in providing services to prevent removal. However, other stakeholders reported the following concerns:

- Although OCFS attempts to put services in place, the needed services are not available due to budget cuts.
- Children often remain in their homes, but the families do not receive the services necessary to ensure the children's safety.
- OCFS often places children with relatives to reduce risk instead of addressing and providing services to the family to reduce risk.
- A considerable amount of evidence is required in order to remove a child from the home. Consequently, removal generally occurs only after multiple referrals, even when an earlier removal was warranted.

Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. The results of the assessment of item 4 are presented in the table below.

Item 4 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	17	11	9	37	57
Area Needing Improvement	14	6	8	28	43
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	55%	65%	53%		

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 37 cases when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency by conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children's home or in the children's foster home and addressing all safety concerns identified through the assessment.

Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 28 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no initial safety or risk assessment (4 cases).
- There was no ongoing safety and risk assessment in the child's home during the period under review (14 cases).
- There was no ongoing safety and risk assessment in the foster home during the period under review (3 cases).
- There were continued risk concerns in the home that were not addressed and/or monitored by the agency, and the children were at risk in the home (7 cases).
- The case was closed without any safety and risk assessment (7 cases).
- There was no ongoing safety plan (8 cases).
- There was risk of harm or safety issues during visitation with parents and other relatives, and the agency did not address those issues (4 cases).
- Ongoing risk and safety issues in placement were not addressed (1 case).
- There was no safety and risk assessment of the parent's/relative's home prior to reunification (4 cases).
- Referrals alleging child maltreatment were inappropriately screened out (1 case).
- A new incident of child maltreatment occurred while the case was open, but a formal report was not made (4 cases).

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 57 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assess and address the risk of harm to the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 4 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Child Protection Assessment is completed in integrated, progressive steps that cover the investigation of maltreatment and the assessment of a family's strengths and needs. The level of safety is reviewed and assessed at the time of first contact, monitored during monthly contacts, and reviewed with the supervisor prior to case plan revisions or case closing. Safety plans are developed and updated whenever signs of danger are present. The Statewide Assessment notes that Maine does not use a formal risk assessment tool.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that State policy requires that caseworkers have face-to-face visits with the child and family at least monthly, or more often if necessary, and that all visits involve an assessment of the family's needs and an assessment of risk to the child. Additionally, policy requires frequent contact with newly placed foster children and their caregivers, and caseworkers must visit families and children in trial reunification placements weekly or biweekly, depending on the circumstances.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, PQI data indicate that children were safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate in 58 percent of the records reviewed. Although Maine has clear policy pertaining to reporting child abuse and neglect, this policy, according to the Statewide Assessment, is not always followed. The 2007 in-house site review found repeated instances of failure to formally report new incidents of child abuse and neglect in open cases. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the failure to report was due at times to a failure to identify the incident as maltreatment, and at times to a failure to consistently create a report of child abuse and/or neglect when it was identified.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that, in 2007, a PQI review of screened-out child abuse and neglect reports found a lack of consistency regarding reports that were designated as appropriate for Child Protective Services (CPS) assignment. As a result, the assignment protocol was revised and now requires the following:

- Child Protective Intake supervisors must document the basis for their decision that a report is not appropriate for investigation.
- Child Protective Intake staff must make collateral contacts to clarify information when reports lack specifics.
- District supervisors cannot make a “second-level decision” to screen out a report that was found by the Child Protective Intake Unit to be appropriate for assessment.

As a result of the finding of the 2007 review, the PQI Unit now is required to conduct annual reviews of screened-out reports to ensure that reports are appropriately assigned. The 2008 intake review found improved documentation of decision-making when reports did not meet the criteria for assignment.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, OCFS has a protocol that was developed collaboratively with the DHHS OOH Unit and Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine to address allegations of maltreatment in foster homes. The protocol requires that the following actions be taken when an allegation of maltreatment in a foster home is received:

- Reports are forwarded from Child Protective Intake to OOH.
- The OOH supervisor has 3 business days to assign a report received from Child Protective Intake.
- The response time can range from emergency response to 5 days from assignment.
- The investigation is to be completed within 90 days from the date the report was received.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on the issue of managing the risk to the child during the onsite CFSR addressed three issues. One pertains to the effectiveness of the agency in ensuring safety and managing risk for children in open cases. The other issue addressed concerns the agency’s response to reports of maltreatment of children in foster care by their foster parents. The third issue pertained to the decision-making process when maltreatment reports are determined to be appropriate for assignment or are screened out.

With regard to the effectiveness of the agency in ensuring children’s safety in open cases, stakeholders expressed different opinions. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that OCFS is effective in assessing risk and safety, and often engages extended family in a

safety plan that keeps the child safe. A few stakeholders indicated that safety and risk are assessed and discussed at every FTM and at every contact.

However, various stakeholders expressed the following concerns regarding the effectiveness of the agency in ensuring children's safety and managing risk:

- When a safety plan is violated, the agency often just writes another one rather than taking steps to reduce risk.
- Budget cuts are having a negative impact on the services associated with assessing and addressing safety and risk.
- Contracted visitation services agencies do not always provide adequate supervision for parent-child visits to ensure the child's safety.
- OCFS does not apply the same safety standards for relative placements as it does for licensed foster homes.
- The assessment tool used by OCFS is not thorough enough to address the underlying issues.

With regard to the investigation of maltreatment in foster homes, various stakeholders across the sites raised the concern that there is a lack of training, communication, coordination, and implementation around the OOH protocol. A few stakeholders voiced concern about the lack of access to OOH investigative findings by officers of the court as they relate to judicial actions regarding placement and safety of children.

Finally, with regard to the decision-making process at the time of referral, various stakeholders across the sites expressed the following opinions in reference to child abuse and neglect referrals:

- Some referrals to the call center are inappropriately screened out, and numerous referrals may be made on a family before one is assigned for investigation.
- Cases are not assigned for investigation unless the child is at extreme risk, so there is no way to prevent that event.
- Some child abuse and neglect referrals are determined to be of low to moderate risk and are sent to ARP when they are actually high risk cases that should be investigated by OCFS.
- Referrals involving older children are not always assigned for investigation.
- Mandated reporters do not consistently receive notification if referrals they made are accepted for investigation.

However, a State-level stakeholder expressed an opinion that if it is not clear that a referral is appropriate for assignment, the call center supervisor will call additional collaterals and research the case before making a screening decision.

II. PERMANENCY

Permanency Outcome 1

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	10	5	6	21	52.5
Partially Achieved	9	3	3	15	37.5
Not Achieved	1	2	1	4	10.0
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	50%	50%	60%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (Scaled Score)	State Score (Scaled Score)	Meets Standards?
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6+	100.6	No
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4+	82.5	No
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7+	95.7	No
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5+	96.9	No

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Maine is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 52.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, Maine did not meet the national standard for any of the national data indicators pertaining to permanency, as shown in the table above. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- The State did not ensure children's placement stability while in foster care.
- The State did not consistently establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The goal of reunification often was maintained for long periods of time by both the courts and the agency, even when the prognosis for reunification was low.

- The State did not make diligent efforts to achieve children’s permanency goals in a timely manner.
- There were extensive delays of up to 4 months in scheduling termination of parental rights (TPR) hearings and in the agency receiving the signed court order from the district court.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Increased the number of children placed in their own districts/communities to support and promote placement stability
- Created and maintained foster home recruitment and support workgroups
- Established a Guardianship Workgroup to develop a philosophy and goals for a guardianship program
- Mandated that each district office establish regular meetings with district court judges, assistant attorneys general (AAGs), and guardians *ad litem* to discuss the barriers to timely permanency
- Implemented Adoption Opportunities Grant services in three districts to facilitate adoptive placements of children age 9 and older
- Developed a protocol to address issues regarding the removal of a child from a foster home when appropriate
- Implemented concurrent planning in two districts during the Program Improvement Plan period with a goal of implementing it statewide
- Explored (and implemented in 2006) subsidized guardianship for relatives
- Increased reunification services to parents with substance abuse concerns through a drug court pilot program
- Reduced the length of the adoption home study process and streamlined other processes to promote more timely adoptions
- Collaborated with the probate court to address delays in adoption finalizations
- Provided training to staff and providers on the importance of lifelong connections for youth

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

Item 5. Foster care reentries

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 11 (27.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of the assessment of item 5 are presented in the table below.

Item 5 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	5	4	2	11	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	4	2	11	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	15	6	8	29	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	100%		

Item 5 was rated as a Strength when the child's entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode.

Rating Determination

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the cases reviewed. Item 5 also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Performance on the Composite 1 Measure Relevant to the Permanency of Reunification

The data below are presented to provide additional information about foster care reentry. There is no national standard for the measure of foster care reentry. National standards with regard to permanency have been established only for the scaled composite scores. The measure of foster care reentry is part of Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification. The State's performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

Maine's performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was the following: In the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period for the data indicators, 10.4 percent of children exiting foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is lower than the median of 15.0 percent but is higher than the 25th percentile of 9.9 percent. (For this measure, lower percentages reflect higher levels of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State may be effective at preventing reentries because of the screening and selection of relatives as placement providers and the permanency guardianship legislation and policy developed in 2005.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that reentry into foster care rarely occurs. However, they noted that when reentries do occur, they are generally children from families with multiple issues that need services from multiple systems (e.g., child welfare, mental health, substance abuse).

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 6. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child's most recent placement setting. The results of the assessment of item 6 are presented in the table below.

Item 6 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	13	7	9	29	72.5
Area Needing Improvement	7	3	1	11	27.5
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	65%	70%	90%		

Item 6 was rated as a Strength in 29 cases when reviewers determined that the child's current placement was stable and that the child either did not experience a placement change during the period under review or that the placement changes experienced were in the child's best interests (i.e., they were intended to further achievement of the child's permanency goal or to provide specialized services for the child).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 11 cases when reviewers determined that the child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review, and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to attain the child's permanency goal.

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 25 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in 10 cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in five cases experienced three or more placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 72.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 4: Placement stability

The data below are presented to provide additional information about placement stability. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 4 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Maine's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability was the following:

- C4.1: 87.6 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 86.0 percent.
- C4.2: 64.3 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national median of 59.9 percent for this measure but less than the national 75th percentile of 65.4 percent.
- C4.3: 28.5 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is less than the national median of 33.9 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State policy addresses the importance of appropriately matching children with providers to ensure stability and requires that caseworkers make monthly visits to the foster home in addition to having regular communication with the foster parents. The frequent contact is intended to promote placement stability by identifying and resolving problems in the home. The Statewide Assessment also reports that FTMs are required to avert placement disruptions or to plan the placement transition when disruption is unavoidable. Policy also provides guidance in selecting and assessing kinship homes to minimize the risk of placement disruption.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in providing stable foster care placements for children. Some stakeholders indicated that the State attempts to ensure stable placements. They noted that relative placements offer increased placement stability and that OCFS provides the necessary support services to resource families.

Other stakeholders, however, expressed the following concerns regarding placement stability:

- Resource families are not being provided with the support or services necessary to maintain placements.
- Children are placed with relatives when the relative either is not prepared or not thoroughly assessed.
- Placements are sometimes based on the availability of a bed rather than on the skills and training of foster parents.
- The high-level needs of children currently in foster care have had a negative impact on placement stability.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 7. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had established a permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and whether the most current permanency goal was appropriate. Reviewers also were to determine whether the agency had sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The results of the assessment of item 7 are presented in the table below.

Item 7 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	12	6	9	27	67.5
Area Needing Improvement	8	4	1	13	32.5
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	60%	60%	90%		

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 27 cases when reviewers determined that the child's permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and, if relevant, that the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.

Item 7 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 13 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child's permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (four cases). In two of these cases, this goal was assigned without exploration of other permanency options, and in two cases, this goal was established for children who were only age 5 and age 8 at the time the goal was established.
- The child's permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (10 cases). In two of these cases, establishment of the initial goal did not occur until 4 months after entry into foster care for one case and 20 months for the other case. In eight cases, the permanency goal was not changed when case circumstances warranted a change in goal.
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, particularly with regard to documenting compelling reasons in the case file for not seeking TPR (three cases).

ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 87.5 percent of 24 applicable cases.

The following case goals were identified for the 40 foster care cases:

- Adoption only (11 cases)
- Reunification only (including reunification with relatives) (15 cases)

- Guardianship only (three cases)
- OPPLA only (eight cases)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and reunification with parents (two cases)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and OPPLA (one case)

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 67.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 7 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods

The data below are presented to provide additional information about permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards were established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 3 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Maine's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods was the following:

- C3.1: 26.8 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is greater than the national median of 25.0 percent but less than the 75th percentile of 29.1 percent.
- C3.2: 89.8 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is less than the national median of 96.8 percent.
- C3.3: 71.2 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is greater than the national median of 47.8. (For this measure, lower percentages reflect higher levels of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCFS does not have policy pertaining to determining the appropriate permanency goal. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the State does not systematically monitor the timeliness of the permanency goal, the timeframes for changing goals, or the appropriateness of new goals.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, when a child enters foster care, the initial goal must be family rehabilitation and reunification unless the court finds an aggravating factor with regard to the parent or finds parental abandonment.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The key issues addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether a goal was appropriate to the needs of the child and whether a petition for TPR was filed in a timely manner.

With regard to appropriateness of goals, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in establishing an appropriate goal for each child in foster care. Additionally, stakeholders noted that goals were changed in response to the circumstances of the case. Many stakeholders also indicated that the State generally establishes concurrent goals for cases.

With regard to the timeliness of filing for TPR, stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State generally is filing for TPR in a timely manner.

Additional stakeholder information pertaining to the TPR process is provided under item 9 and item 28 of this report.

Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 20 (50 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of the assessment of item 8 are presented in the table below.

Item 8 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	9	4	3	16	80
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	2	4	20
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	5	5	20	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	5	5	20	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	90%	80%	60%		

Item 8 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner. The following concerns were identified in the four cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement:

- Delays in completing guardianship paperwork

- Dual judicial jurisdictions having to approve guardianship
- Services not being provided to address the safety issues that were preventing reunification

Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of an Area Needing Improvement. In 80 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 8 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Pertaining to Timeliness Included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of reunification. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Maine's performance on the individual timeliness measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was the following:

- C1.1: 58.3 percent of the reunifications occurred in at least 8 days but less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 69.9 percent.
- C1.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification was 10.4 months. This length of stay is greater than the national median of 6.5 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C1.3: 29.1 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in more than 7 days but less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 39.4 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Family Reunification Program was implemented statewide in 2006 through a contract with a private agency. The purpose of the program is to achieve earlier and safer reunification for children who have been in foster care for less than 6 months and for whom familial bonds are very strong. In the program, reunification is supported by a team of caseworkers who provide 4 to 6 months of intensive in-home services.

The Statewide Assessment reports that permanency guardianship also was implemented in 2006 and allowed the district courts to appoint a permanent guardian for a child in foster care. This option was noted to be beneficial to children who might otherwise linger in foster care, including older children who are unwilling to be adopted. Subsidies are available to families who choose this option

based on the family's level of need and resources. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, in 2007, 50 children were placed in permanency guardianship; in the previous year, only 17 children were placed in permanency guardianship.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that there has been a 36-percent reduction in the number of children in the Maine foster care system from September 2003 to December 2008. Also, relative placements increased from 14 percent to 28.9 percent during that same time period.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in providing reunification services to families and that the agency usually achieves reunifications in a timely manner. Various stakeholders, however, expressed the opinion that service availability or accessibility sometimes is a concern to achieving reunification. Other stakeholders noted that the courts occasionally may allow families additional time past the ASFA requirements to complete their reunification case plans.

Stakeholders expressed the opinion that permanency guardianship is a beneficial goal for older children as it allows the youth to maintain a relationship with their families while having a permanent home. Additionally, stakeholders expressed the opinion that permanent placement with a relative allows children to maintain important connections. However, stakeholders suggested that because the agency no longer provides services to the child once the case is closed, reunifications with relatives are at high risk for disruption.

Item 9. Adoption

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 14 (35 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The results of the assessment of item 9 are presented in the table below.

Item 9 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	4	1	3	8	57
Area Needing Improvement	4	2	0	6	43
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	3	3	14	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	12	7	7	26	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	50%	33%	100%		

Item 9 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in six cases when reviewers identified one or more of the following:

- Delays in filing for TPR (three cases)
- Delays in the TPR process after filing (one case)
- Delays in completing or approving home studies (two cases)
- Delays in transferring to an adoption caseworker (one cases)
- Lack of effort to seek adoption resources or preparing the child for adoption (one case)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 14 children with a goal of adoption, 9 achieved the goal during the period under review.
- Of the nine children who had a finalized adoption during the period under review, five had been in foster care for 24 months or less.
- Of the five children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, two had been in foster care for at least 24 months.

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 57 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 9 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of adoptions. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 2 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Maine's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions was the following:

- C2.1: 22.6 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is lower than the national median of 26.8 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 35.2 months. This median length of stay is greater than the national median of 32.4 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflect a higher level of performance.)
- C2.3: 22.3 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the year. This percentage is greater than the national median of 20.0 percent but lower than the national 75th percentile of 22.7 percent.

- C2.4: 9.6 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is greater than the national median of 8.8 percent but lower than the national 75th percentile of 10.0 percent.
- C2.5: 37.5 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is lower than the national median of 45.8 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Maine policy has no timeframe expectations for accomplishing TPR and the State lacks data on the TPR process. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the district courts use a trailing docket for scheduling TPR hearings which allows a TPR hearing scheduled for one date to be moved to another date if the court does not have sufficient time to hear the case. A December 2008 PQI survey referenced in the Statewide Assessment indicates that six out of the eight districts in the State identified problems with timely TPR hearings on trailing dockets.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that Maine's policy has no timeframe expectations for finalizing adoptions. However, State policy does require that an approval decision on an adoptive resource be rendered within 90 to 120 days of the initial inquiry by the resource.

The Statewide Assessment notes that Maine's Adoption Assistance Program offers each adopted child ongoing medical coverage, including ongoing behavioral health services, until the age of 18 or until age 21 if the child has additional needs or is in a post-secondary education process. Additionally, OCFS will assist in paying for post-adoption services when eligibility criteria are met.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, a significant endeavor to increase adoptions of older children has been the Adoptions Created Through Relationships (ACTR) program that was funded by an Adoption Opportunities Grant to the State. A total of 82 youth received services through the ACTR program from May 2004 through September 2008 with 55 percent of those youth achieving permanency through adoption.

According to OCFS Information Unit data provided in the Statewide Assessment, in the 3 years prior to the Statewide Assessment, Maine has begun making timelier decisions in terminating parental rights and in achieving timely adoptions of children in foster care. These data are shown in the table below.

Time Period	Average Time From TPR to Adoption (months)	Average Time From Removal to TPR (months)
Oct. 2005–Sept. 2006	22.5	21.7
Oct. 2006–Sept. 2007	19.0	20.4
Oct. 2007–Sept. 2008	16.4	21.0

In addition, the findings of the PQI review for CY 2008 indicate that the child's adoption was to be finalized within 24 months of entry into care in 61 percent of applicable cases, which represents an increase from 28.5 percent of applicable cases in the 2007 review.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is filing for TPR in a timely manner, but that TPR hearings frequently are delayed up to 7 months due to the court's use of the trailing docket. Some stakeholders also said that the TPR process often is extended because TPR hearings are not a high priority for the courts and other types of hearings are given precedence.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in achieving timely adoptions. A few stakeholders said that the State has made improvements in achieving timely adoptions, although they noted that adoptions are more likely to be timely for younger children than for older children. Other stakeholders, however, identified the following barriers to the agency's timeliness with regard to finalizing adoptions:

- Delays in probate court
- Appeals by the biological parents to TPR decisions
- Pre-adoptive placement disruptions due to a lack of training and support services for pre-adoptive parents
- Limited availability of post-adoption services to support the family after adoption

Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

☐ Strength ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 9 (22.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. The results of the assessment of item 10 are presented in the table below.

Item 10 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	4	1	0	5	56
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	2	4	44
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	2	2	9	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	15	8	8	31	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	80%	50%	0%		

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in five cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and/or to provide the necessary service to prepare the child for independent living. Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in four cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency had not established a permanent placement for the youth (three cases). In these three cases one child was age 6, another child was age 16, and the third child was age 17.
- The agency had not provided adequate services to the youth to prepare for independent living (three cases). In these three cases, one child was age 15 and two were age 16.

The table below provides the ages of the children when the goal of OPPLA was established.

Age of Child When OPPLA Was Established	Number of Children
Ages 0–12	1
Ages 13–15	6
Ages 16 and older	6
Total	8

Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 56 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 10 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Maine does not have policy that defines OPPLA as a goal or provides guidance as to when to select it. However, State statute provides district courts with the authority to “adopt another planned permanent living arrangement as the permanency plan for the child only after the Department has documented a compelling reason for determining that it would not be in the best interests of the child to be returned home, be referred for termination of parental rights or be placed for adoptions, be cared for by a permanency guardian or be placed with a fit and willing relative.”

The Statewide Assessment reports that agency policy requires that all children in foster care, regardless of permanency goals, must have a life skills strengths and needs assessment and an Independent Living (IL) case plan as part of the Child Plan by age 16. An FTM is held 3 months prior to the youth’s 16th birthday to begin looking at areas of strengths and needs. The Statewide Assessment notes that the agency uses an assessment tool, located in MACWIS, to help staff determine the youth’s strengths and needs. A plan is then developed to address these needs that include mandated education and training services as well as mandated resource listing and training services. Additionally, policy enables a youth at the age of 18 to voluntarily remain in foster care under certain conditions, usually to continue his or her education.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State uses the OPPLA goal infrequently and only when more permanent options have been deemed unsuitable for the youth. A few stakeholders indicated that caseworkers attempt to establish a permanent connection for the youth even if the youth's permanency goal is OPPLA.

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in providing IL services to youth. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State is providing services to youth to assist in the transition to independence. For example, stakeholders noted the use of financial assistance for college and continued foster care payments through the age of 21 for youth who opt to remain in foster care. Other stakeholders reported that services are not consistently provided and that the State lacks adequate services for young people transitioning from foster care to independent living.

Permanency Outcome 2

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	15	8	7	30	75.0
Partially Achieved	5	2	3	10	25.0
Not Achieved	0	0	0	0	0
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	75%	80%	70%		

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Maine is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 75 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not consistently ensure that children were placed close to their parents or communities of origin.
- Although the agency made concerted efforts to place siblings together, when siblings were separated, visitation often was not sufficient to meet the children's needs and maintain their connection.
- Visitation between children and parents was not of sufficient quality or quantity to meet the needs of the child.

- Connections between children and their extended families were not consistently preserved.
- The State did not make concerted efforts to seek and assess relatives as placement resources.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Implemented FTMs to increase and improve children's contact with their parents; provided a forum through which children could maintain connections to family, community, and culture; and enhanced identification of potential relatives as placement resources
- Provided training to OCFS staff and foster parents on the importance of sibling visitation
- Implemented policy that focused on the importance of diligent searches for relatives as placement resources
- Trained staff on the importance of conducting thorough searches for relatives
- Revised policy to increase the frequency of caseworker face-to-face visits with children and their caregivers and conducted training for OCFS staff on the policy revision

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 34 (85 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if TPR was attained prior to the period under review, contact with parents was not considered to be in the child's best interests, and/or parents were deceased or their whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child's most current foster care setting was near the child's parents or close relatives. The results of the assessment of item 11 are presented in the table below.

Item 11 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	17	8	8	33	97
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	3
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	18	8	8	34	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	2	2	6	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	94%	100%	100%		

Item 11 was rated as a Strength in 33 cases when reviewers determined that the child was placed either in the same community as the parents or near the parents' community. The item also was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that even though the child was placed out of his or her community, the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the permanency goal. Item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that although the child was placed outside the community in a therapeutic setting, resources closer to the parents were not thoroughly explored.

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed children in locations close to their parents or relatives when appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 11 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCFS policy specifies that for foster family placements, a child should be placed in his or her home community or school district if possible, or at least within his or her OCFS district. If this is not possible, a child may be temporarily placed in another OCFS district, provided that the child welfare program administrator (PA) in the receiving district approves. According to the Statewide Assessment, the home district priority does not apply for kinship placements, residential care, or group care.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, as of January 2009, the statewide average of children placed in their own district was 70 percent.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in placing children in close proximity to their families.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 23 (57.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were currently, or had been, placed together, and if separated, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children. The results of the assessment of item 12 are presented in the table t.

Item 12 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	6	6	20	87
Area Needing Improvement	3	0	0	3	13
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	11	6	6	23	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	4	4	17	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	73%	100%	100%		

Item 12 was rated as a Strength in 20 cases when reviewers determined that the child was placed with siblings, or that the separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs or because placement with siblings was not in the child's best interests. Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together. In two cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement there were three siblings, and in the remaining case were two siblings.

Rating Determination

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 87 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 12 was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy mandates that the placement of siblings together be a priority in case planning. A valid reason must be identified and documented for not placing siblings together. Additionally, policy allows for exceptions to be made to the number of children in the home in order to allow siblings to be placed together.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, a November 2008 PQI query regarding siblings placed together showed that 68 percent of children with siblings in foster care are placed with their siblings. The Statewide Assessment also reports that PQI reviewers consistently found valid reasons for sibling separations when siblings were not placed together. The Statewide Assessment notes that the case record reviews indicate that caseworkers attempt to place siblings together whenever they can.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in keeping siblings together in foster care unless placement together is not in the best interests of one of the children or placement together compromises the safety of one of the siblings.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 31 (77.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child's life or were deceased; or visitation with a parent was not considered in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate sufficient visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care, and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The results of the assessment of item 13 are presented in the table below.

Item 13 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	14	5	5	24	71
Area Needing Improvement	6	2	2	10	29
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	20	7	7	34	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	3	3	6	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	70%	71%	71%		

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 24 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the mother (six cases). The quality of the visitation with the mother did not meet the needs of the family in any of these six cases.
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father (six cases). In one of these cases, although the frequency of visits with the father was sufficient, the quality of the visitation did not meet the needs of the family.
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings in foster care (one case). The quality of the visitation in this case did not meet the needs of the siblings.

Additional information about visitation frequency is provided in the table below.

Typical Frequency of Child's Visits During the Period Under Review	With Mother	With Father	With Siblings in Foster Care
Visits occurred at least once a week	15 (48%)	8 (35%)	3 (30%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	4 (13%)	2 (9%)	2 (20%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	5 (16%)	4 (17%)	3 (30%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	6 (19%)	7 (30%)	2 (20%)
There were no visits during the period under review	1 (3%)	2 (9%)	0
Total Applicable Cases	31	23	10

The data indicate that visits occur more frequently with siblings and mothers than with fathers.

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 71 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 13 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy provides guidance on visitation for children in foster care with their parents, family members, and others with whom the child has a connection. Policy also highlights the responsibility of caseworkers to assess the extent to which supervision or facilitation is needed during visits of children with their family. Policy specifies that, as part of the child's assessment, information must be obtained in response to the following questions: "What contact has the child had with parents, siblings, and kin, and how has it worked out?" and "What contact is needed, and what steps are taken to ensure it?" Additionally, the Family Plan must include a visitation plan if the child is placed outside the home. Caseworkers are expected to develop and review visitation plans at FTMs. The Statewide Assessment notes that each district has access to contracted visitation services. At present, however, DHHS does not track visitation in its PQI reviews.

Also indicated in the Statewide Assessment, State policy requires that, when siblings cannot be placed together, contact is to be maintained through visitation, phone contact, letter writing, and/or e-mail. Also, the Youth Bill of Rights outlines for youth what they can rightfully expect regarding visitation with their siblings. The Statewide Assessment notes that a 2007 survey of 142 17-year-old youth in foster care resulted in the following findings with regard to sibling visitation:

- 27 youth (19 percent) reported that they saw siblings weekly or biweekly.

- 36 youth (25 percent) reported that they saw siblings monthly.
- 23 youth (16 percent) reported that they never saw their siblings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State is effective in promoting visitation with parents and siblings in foster care. A few stakeholders, however, suggested that the frequency is not sufficient to meet the needs of the children and families due to limited visitation resources. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported that visitation with siblings who have been adopted generally does not occur. Many stakeholders also indicated that visits between parents and children are always supervised even when the circumstances of the case do not require it.

Item 14. Preserving connections

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 14 was applicable for 38 (95 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Two cases were not applicable for this item because the child was in foster care fewer than 30 days. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child's connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 14 are presented in the table below.

Item 14 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	16	7	9	32	84
Area Needing Improvement	4	1	1	6	16
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	20	8	10	38	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	2	0	2	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	80%	87.5%	90%		

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 32 cases when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends. Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections to extended family (three cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain any connections for the child (three cases).

None of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement involved Native American children.

Rating Determination

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 84 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family, culture, religion, community, and school. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 14 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that children placed in family foster homes and therapeutic foster homes are to be placed in their home community or school district, or at least in the home OCFS district. However, this policy does not apply when children are placed in kinship placements, sibling placements, or residential placements. Additionally, the policy specifies that, if possible and at the parent's request, OCFS should place children with a family of the same general faith as their parents. Child assessment and plan policy requires the identification of relationships important to the child and the connections that the child wishes to maintain. Policy also requires that exploration of whether the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applies to a case must begin at intake; when ICWA applies to a case, the Tribal representative must be invited to the FTM.

During the 2007 in-house site reviews, a stakeholder focus group identified concerns about caseworkers failing to follow ICWA mandates and reported that staff needed to be more culturally sensitive to the Native American community.

The Statewide Assessment reports the findings of a 2008 survey administered to youth participating in the Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT). The youth provided the following responses:

- 48 percent gave OCFS an A (excellent) grade for maintaining connections with school.
- 50 percent gave OCFS an A grade for maintaining connections with friends.
- 17 percent gave OCFS an A grade for maintaining connections with siblings.
- 18 percent gave OCFS an A grade for maintaining connections with extended families.
- 29 percent gave OCFS an A grade for maintaining connections with their community.
- 44 percent gave OCFS an A grade for maintaining connections with their religion.
- 30 percent gave OCFS an A grade for maintaining connections with Tribes.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, PQI measures from monthly case record reviews indicate that the continuity of family relationships and connections was preserved in only 37 percent of the cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in preserving connections for children in foster care. Stakeholders indicated that OCFS attempts to preserve connections to extended family, friends, and school. Additionally, some stakeholders suggested that the State generally is effective in determining if a child has Native American heritage and notifies the Tribes in the beginning stages of the case.

Item 15. Relative placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 34 (85 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 15 are presented in the table below.

Item 15 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	14	4	7	25	74
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	2	9	26
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	17	8	9	34	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	3	2	1	6	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	82%	50%	78%		

Item 15 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed with relatives (12 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable (13 cases).

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (six cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (nine cases).

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of an Area Needing Improvement. In 74 percent of cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 15 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Maine's statutory and policy priority is to place with relatives or fictive kin when possible. Procedural guidelines require that Child Protective Intake staff attempt to obtain information on relatives and that caseworkers ask

parents for names of people who might care for their children if they became unable to do so. By policy, the assigned caseworker is required to document a complete review of maternal and paternal relative resources who could potentially meet placement or other needs. Caseworkers also are expected to review potential relative resources periodically to determine whether previously identified relatives have become resources.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the percentage of Maine relative placements has increased steadily during the past 6 years. At the time of the 2003 CFSR, Maine's relative placement rate was 14.1 percent. The December 2008 Monthly Management Report indicated that 28.9 percent of the 1995 children in foster care were placed with relatives. Quarterly PQI findings indicate that in 2007 and 2008 relative resources were explored in 59 percent to 80 percent of cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the survey of 142 17-year-olds in foster care resulted in the following findings with regard to relative placements:

- 77 youth (54 percent) reported that family members were considered as a placement option.
- 50 youth (35 percent) reported that no family members were considered.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in searching for relatives when children enter foster care and placing with relatives whenever possible. A few stakeholders, however, expressed concern about situations in which relatives are identified late in the case and children are then removed from stable placements and placed with relatives whom they often do not even know.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 30 (75 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child; a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child's best interests throughout the period under review; or both parents were deceased. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of the assessment of item 16 are presented in the table that follows.

Item 16 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	13	4	1	18	60
Area Needing Improvement	5	3	4	12	40
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	18	7	5	30	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	3	5	10	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	72%	57%	20%		

Item 16 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother (six cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father (eight cases).

Specific findings pertaining to this item are shown in the table below.

Efforts Made	With Mother (Number of Cases)	With Father (Number of Cases)
Encouraging the parent's participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	8	5
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments	3	1
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	13	9
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them	8	9
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	1	2
Total Applicable Cases	23	15

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 60 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 16 was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCFS policy addresses the need to encourage parents to maintain their parental role. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's daily lives with the goal of preserving their relationships.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, PQI case record review findings were the following:

- In 80 percent of cases reviewed, "appropriate efforts are made to promote a meaningful relationship between child and mother."
- In 79.5 percent of cases reviewed, "appropriate efforts are made to promote a meaningful relationship between child and father."

The Statewide Assessment reports that if a child is placed a distance away from parents, transportation tends to be a problem as public transportation does not exist in rural areas of the State.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that generally the agency does not actively seek to involve parents in children's lives apart from visitation. Some stakeholders noted that even if parents are encouraged to participate in the child's activities or medical appointments, the lack of transportation frequently prevents them.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	11	10	7	28	43.1
Partially Achieved	16	5	8	29	44.6
Not Achieved	4	2	2	8	12.3
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	35%	59%	41%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Maine is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 43.1 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The

outcome was substantially achieved in 50 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 32 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The State was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in assessing needs and providing services to children, parents, and foster parents.
- Parents and children were not consistently included in the case planning process.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with children and parents was not of sufficient quality or quantity to ensure the children's safety or well-being.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Initiated the use of FTMs to identify the strengths and needs of family members, improve the assessment of needs, and ensure that appropriate services were provided to families
- Increased foster parent involvement in case planning
- Clarified the policy regarding caseworker contacts with parents to ensure frequent and meaningful face-to-face visits

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents and provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of children's (but not parents') needs pertaining to education, physical health, and mental health. These areas are addressed in later items. The results of the assessment of item 17 are presented in the table that follows.

Item 17 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	12	10	8	30	46
Area Needing Improvement	19	7	9	35	54
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	39%	59%	47%		

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 52.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 36 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. Item 17 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met. Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was an inadequate assessment of children's needs (seven cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of mothers' needs (12 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of fathers' needs (16 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of foster parents' needs (six cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address children's needs (10 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address mothers' needs (21 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address fathers' needs (22 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address foster parents' needs (nine cases).

Additional case review findings pertaining to needs assessments and service provisions are shown in the table below.

Target Person for Needs Assessment and Services	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable	Yes	Applicable
Mother's needs assessed and met	19 (63%)	30	14 (58%)	24
Father's needs assessed and met	12 (57%)	21	10 (42%)	24
Foster parents' needs assessed and met	27 (75%)	36	N/A	N/A
Child's needs assessed and met	35 (87.5%)	40	19 (76%)	25

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of an Area Needing Improvement. In 46 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 17 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCFS assesses the needs of the children throughout the case, including during the investigation, when the children are in the home, and when the children are in foster care. Caseworkers are expected to engage and interview children, parents, caregivers, collateral contacts, and potential family team members to achieve the following goals:

- Identify signs of safety, risk, and danger
- Assess children's well-being (educational, physical and mental health) and developmental needs
- Identify the strengths of caregivers in meeting children's needs and identify necessary supports

The Statewide Assessment reports that an FTM completes the assessment process with the development of a case plan to address the identified needs. Following the FTM the caseworker makes referrals for services outlined in the Family Plan. The child's caseworker also is responsible for completing an IL needs assessment for older youth in foster care and for convening an FTM to develop a plan of services to meet identified needs.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that, to assess the needs of the foster parents, policy requires contact with the child's caregivers for both assessment and monitoring purposes. Foster parents are to be included in this FTM to conclude the assessment and develop the Child Plan. Under the Permanency and Stability Issues section, the Child Plan must address the following questions:

- What was done to meet the caregivers' needs?
- What does the caregiver now need in order to care for the child?

The Statewide Assessment reports that monitoring of service delivery is done by the caseworker, casework supervisor, quality assurance (QA) reviews of contracts, and through PQI case record reviews. It was noted that PQI record review data on effectiveness of assessment practices and services provision are not presently available because these factors currently are tracked in combination with other factors.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in assessing and addressing the needs of children, parents, and foster parents. Some stakeholders noted that FTMs are used to identify and coordinate appropriate services for families. A few stakeholders reported that services to address parent's substance abuse and mental health issues are not always available. A few stakeholders also indicated that although OCFS has very specific policy pertaining to domestic violence cases, it is not always followed. Additionally, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that domestic violence services are not adequate and/or not used in all applicable cases. A few stakeholders reported that, due to budget cuts, stipends for foster parents have been reduced and respite care payments are no longer available from the State. A few stakeholders indicated that new foster parents or relative providers are not always told how the agency can assist them financially.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable for 62 (95 percent) of the 65 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, parents were not involved with the child in any way, and/or the child was too young or had cognitive delays or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (when appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process, and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child's best interests. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. The results of the assessment of item 18 are presented in the table below.

Item 18 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	18	9	9	36	58
Area Needing Improvement	12	7	7	26	42
Total Applicable Cases	30	16	16	62	
Not Applicable Cases	1	1	1	3	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	60%	56%	56%		

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 62 percent of the 37 applicable foster care cases and 52 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process.

Specific information about involving mothers, fathers, and children in case planning is shown in the table below.

Person Involved in Case Planning	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable Cases	Yes	Applicable Cases
Mother involved in case planning?	24 (80%)	30	22 (88%)	25
Father involved in case planning?	14 (64%)	22	14 (58%)	24
Children involved in case planning?	15 (75%)	20	9 (69%)	13

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 58 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 18 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, PQI reviews of case records indicate that in 58 percent of cases reviewed, the Family Plans and the Child Plans were developed based on assessments and in those cases, signatures of both parents and the child were obtained. PQI record reviews also indicate that in 57 percent of the cases reviews, FTM's were offered according to policy (which would also include other occasions in addition to case planning).

According to the Statewide Assessment, parents and children age 6 or older in the in-home services cases are expected to be involved in case planning, which occurs during the FTM. Children in the foster care cases who are age 12 or older are expected to be involved in case planning, which is to occur during the FTM that takes place with the parents and foster parents. Caseworkers are to meet with younger children individually to discuss case planning.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, in a 2008 well-being survey administered to youth participating in the YLAT, 74 percent gave OCFS an A/B (excellent/good) grade in terms of involvement in case planning. These youth indicated that caseworkers are asking them for their input on their case plans and that they have good communication with their caseworkers. However, 13 percent of the youth gave OCFS a D (poor) grade in this area. These youth suggested that caseworkers assume they know what youth need and are not working with youth on issues relevant to the youth.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the agency's effectiveness in engaging parents and children in case planning. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that FTM's facilitate meaningful engagement of parents and older youth in case planning. Additionally, stakeholders in Kennebec County reported that incarcerated parents attended case reviews and that parents who resided out of State could participate via a speakerphone.

However, other stakeholders maintained that case plans are developed with minimal or no involvement of parents even if there is an FTM. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that children generally are not involved in case planning although older youth may have some input into their case plans.

Additional information on stakeholder perceptions of the case planning process is provided under item 25 in the Systemic Factors section of this report.

Item 19. Caseworker visits with child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 19 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the frequency of visits between the caseworkers and children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's safety and well-being, and whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. The results of the assessment of item 19 are presented in the table below.

Item 19 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	25	15	14	54	83
Area Needing Improvement	6	2	3	11	17
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	81%	88%	82%		

Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of the foster care cases and 80 percent of the in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, and if visits did occur, they did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (three cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits with children was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur, they were substantive (two cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (six cases).

Specific information regarding the frequency of visitation is provided in the table that follows.

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)	In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)
Visits occurred at least once a week	2 (5%)	1 (4%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	2 (5%)	1 (4%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	35 (87.5%)	19 (76%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	1 (2.5%)	4 (16%)
Total Cases	40	25

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of an Area Needing Improvement. In 83 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 19 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers providing services to in-home service cases are required to see children every month. For foster care cases, policy requires that caseworkers have a face-to-face contact with a newly placed child at least once within the first 2 weeks of placement and then once a month thereafter. There caseworker must ensure that there is opportunity for the child to have a private discussion with the caseworker as part of that contact. Foster care policy makes the school "off limits" for these contacts, so that foster children's education can take place uninterrupted by caseworker visits.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following data:

- PQI data from the fourth quarter of 2008 indicate that policy guidelines for the frequency of visits with children were followed in 63 percent of the cases reviewed.
- The December 2008 Monthly Management Report indicated that 96 percent of children in custody were seen during the prior month.
- In FFY 2008 the State reported to ACF that 73 percent of the children in its care were seen every month during that year and these visits occurred in the home 67 percent of the time.
- 52 percent of YLAT survey respondents gave OCFS an A/B (excellent/good) grade for caseworkers having monthly contact with them.
- 34.3 percent of YLAT survey respondents gave OCFS grades of C/D/F (average/poor/failing) for caseworkers having monthly contact with them.
- 52 percent of YLAT survey respondents gave OCFS an A (excellent) grade for the quality of visits meeting the youth's needs.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the frequency of caseworker contacts is generally sufficient to meet the needs of the child. However, stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the quality of the caseworker contacts. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that caseworkers address issues pertinent to safety, case planning, and goal attainment and that caseworkers spend individual time with the child in their home. In comparison, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that visits are perfunctory and do not address issues relevant to the case.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)

☐ Strength ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 55 (85 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, and parents were no longer involved in the lives of their children. All cases that were not applicable are foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker's face-to-face contact with the children's mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and ensure the children's safety and well-being. The results of the assessment of item 20 are presented in the table below.

Item 20 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	15	8	7	30	54
Area Needing Improvement	11	7	8	26	46
Total Applicable Cases	26	15	15	56	
Not Applicable Cases	5	2	2	9	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	58%	53%	47%		

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 52 percent of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 56 percent of the in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency or quality (eight cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency or quality (13 cases).
- Visits with the mother were of sufficient frequency but did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning or service delivery (three cases).
- Visits with the father were of sufficient frequency but did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning or service delivery (two cases).

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency, although when they did occur they were of sufficient quality (one case).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency, although when they did occur they were of sufficient quality (one case).
- There were no visits with mother (five cases).
- There were no visits with father (four cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the table below. The data in the table indicate that caseworkers visited with mothers at least once a month in 67 percent of both the applicable foster care cases and in-home cases. Caseworkers visited with fathers at least once a month in 50 percent of the foster care cases and in 43 percent of the in-home cases.

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	2 (7%)	2 (10%)	1 (4%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	4 (13%)	1 (5%)	0	0
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	14 (47%)	7 (35%)	15 (62.5%)	10 (43%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (23%)	7 (35%)	6 (25%)	12 (52%)
There were no visits during the period under review	3 (10%)	3 (15%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)
Total Applicable Cases	30	20	24	23

Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 54 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child and promote attainment of case goals. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 20 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are expected to see a child's parent monthly if the permanency goal is reunification. Caseworkers providing in-home services should also have monthly contact with the parents.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following findings of the 2008 PQI review:

- Policy guidelines were followed for frequency of visits with the mother an average of 64.8 percent of the time.
- Policy guidelines were followed for frequency of visits with father an average of 54.5 percent of the time.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the frequency of caseworker visits with mothers is generally sufficient. However, stakeholders indicated that the frequency of caseworker visits with fathers and absent parents usually is not sufficient. Stakeholders did not comment on the quality of visits.

Well-Being Outcome 2

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	17	11	6	34	94.4
Partially Achieved	0	0	1	1	2.8
Not Achieved	1	0	0	1	2.8
Total Applicable Cases	18	11	7	36	
Not Applicable Cases	13	6	10	29	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	94%	100%	86%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Maine is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 94.4 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 93 percent of the 29 applicable foster care cases and 100 percent of the 7 applicable in-home services cases. The State was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

Findings pertaining to the single item assessed under Well-Being Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

___ Strength __X__ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 36 (55 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if either of the following applied: Children were not of school age, or children in the in-home services cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs. The results of the assessment of item 21 are presented in the table below.

Item 21 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	17	11	6	34	94
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	1	2	6
Total Applicable Cases	18	11	7	36	
Not Applicable	13	6	10	29	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	94%	100%	86%		

Item 21 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child's educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one of the following:

- The child had identified educational needs that were not addressed (one case).
- The child was discharged from foster care without ensuring that appropriate educational services were in place (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 94 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95-percent standard is established for this item because it is the only item assessed for this outcome. Item 21 was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, OCFS policy requires an initial and periodic assessment of the child's "developmental issues (well-being)," including what the child's education has been and what educational needs the child may have. Each need is to be documented in the Child Plan, as well as services and supports to be provided, the purpose of each service, and how these services will be accessed. Additionally, policy requires that if a child is unable to remain in his or her own school system, the child needs to have a planned, supported transition to the new school.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that no specific policy exists regarding education issues for in-home services cases. Current needs with respect to child safety, permanency, and well-being are identified in the Family Plans, which include an educational plan if it is

related to the circumstances of the case. However, the Statewide Assessment indicates that educational needs should be included in the case plan to the extent that educational issues are relevant to the reason for child protective involvement with the family and/or it would be reasonable to expect that the department should address educational issues given the circumstances of the case.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following data pertaining to this item:

- PQI reviews for CY 2008 indicate that children received appropriate services to meet their educational needs in an average of 83.5 percent of the cases.
- The 2007 in-house site review found that of the 64 cases that were reviewed for this item, 50 (78 percent) were substantially achieved, 1 (2 percent) was partially achieved, and 13 (20 percent) were not achieved.

The Statewide Assessment also reports the following opinions expressed by caseworkers with regard to barriers to meeting children's educational needs:

- There is a lack of cooperation between school districts when children change placements.
- There is a lack of knowledge among school administrators/special education staff about the role of the OCFS legal guardian.
- Schools often try to cut back on special education services to students to meet budget requirements.
- School personnel, even those who consider themselves to be providing day treatment, often do not understand the needs of children with trauma issues.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the agency generally is effective in meeting children's educational needs. A few stakeholders indicated that the agency makes every attempt to maintain children in the same school; however, transportation sometimes is an issue. A few stakeholders also noted that caseworkers are generally present at Individualized Education Plan meetings.

Well-Being Outcome 3

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	22	8	12	42	71.2
Partially Achieved	5	3	1	9	15.3
Not Achieved	3	2	3	8	13.6
Total Applicable Cases	30	13	16	59	
Not Applicable Cases	1	4	1	6	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	73%	62%	75%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Maine is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 71.2 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 72.5 percent of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 68 percent of the 19 applicable in-home services cases. The State was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- The State was not consistently effective in meeting children's mental health needs.
- There was a lack of accessibility to mental health services.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- It developed training for caseworkers that focuses on identifying sexual victimization, family dynamics, and need for sexual abuse victim treatment.
- It piloted the Child Abuse and Neglect Evaluators Project (CANEP), a forensic child maltreatment evaluation conducted by a specially trained psychologist.

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

Findings pertaining to the items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 3 are presented and discussed below.

Item 22. Physical health of the child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 48 (74 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of the assessment of item 22 are presented in the table that follows.

Item 22 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	20	8	12	40	83
Area Needing Improvement	4	3	1	8	17
Total Applicable Cases	24	11	13	48	
Not Applicable Cases	7	6	4	17	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	83%	73%	92%		

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 75 percent of the 8 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children's medical and dental needs were routinely assessed and necessary services were provided. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child's physical health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (three cases).
- The child's dental needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (five cases).
- The child's dental health needs were not adequately addressed (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 83 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children's physical health needs. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy specifies that the child must be given a health screening by a medical provider within 72 hours of placement. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that State law requires that a child ordered into custody receive a full medical examination within 10 working days. Children in the custody of OCFS are to participate in the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program. Regarding in-home cases, the reason for agency involvement or circumstances of the case is to dictate whether the department will address physical health issues for any children in the family.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, PQI case record reviews found that children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs in 51.7 percent of the cases reviewed. In the 2007 in-house reviews, documenting health information was noted as an issue across the State. Additionally, during the 2007 in-house site reviews, concerns were occasionally mentioned by reviewers regarding inadequate dental care.

In a 2008 Well-Being Survey administered to youth participating in YLAT, 82.5 percent gave OCFS an A/B (excellent/good) grade on meeting youths' physical and dental needs. Youth commented that dental care is not always timely, which, according to the Statewide Assessment, is a systemic issue that is well known to OCFS management.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State is generally effective in routinely assessing and addressing the medical and dental needs of children. However, a few stakeholders indicated that it is difficult to find dental care providers who accept MaineCare.

Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 46 (71 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The results of the assessment of item 23 are presented in the table below.

Item 23 Ratings	Cumberland County	Kennebec County	Washington County	Total	Percent
Strength	18	8	7	33	72
Area Needing Improvement	6	3	4	13	28
Total Applicable Cases	24	11	11	46	
Not Applicable Cases	7	6	6	19	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	75%	73%	64%		

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 77 percent of the 30 applicable foster care cases and 62.5 percent of the 16 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children's mental health needs were appropriately assessed and the identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were neither assessed nor addressed (five cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but services were not provided to address identified needs (eight cases).

Rating Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 72 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 23 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires that when a child is ordered into OCFS custody and is not expected to return home within 21 days, OCFS shall obtain counseling for the child as soon as possible unless counseling is not indicated. Additionally, policy requires the following:

- Caseworkers are to administer a comprehensive behavioral health psychosocial screening for children ages 4–16 in cases opened for services.
- Children and youth between ages 11–16 are to be encouraged by the caseworker to complete the Youth Pediatric Symptom Checklist themselves.
- In families where abuse or neglect is found, caseworkers are required to refer children under age 4 to Child Development Services for developmental screening.
- As indicated by screenings, and in consultations with parents and DHHS Children’s Behavioral Health staff, child welfare caseworkers refer children to mental health professionals to assess mental health needs.
- Either directly or indirectly, the agency provides funding, referrals, and transportation for assessment, evaluation, and treatment services.
- Following a physical examination, if the attending physician determines that a psychological assessment of the child is appropriate, the caseworker ensures the appointment is made within 30 days of the physical examination.
- Children placed in OCFS foster homes or contracted agency foster homes will be assigned a level of care (LOC) ranging from A-E based on their individual assessments. Mental and behavioral health needs of children frequently justify a higher LOC.
- For children entering foster care, an assessment of the child’s mental health needs and a plan to address those needs are completed and included in the Child Plan. Although Maine policy is not explicit on this, a reasonable expectation is that substance abuse issues for a child are addressed under mental health needs.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment and according to PQI case record reviews, 54 percent of the children in the 72 cases reviewed received adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. The following are the findings relevant to mental health services of the 2008 Well-Being Survey administered to youth participating in YLAT:

- 73.8 percent gave OCFS an A/B (excellent/good) grade for meeting youths’ emotional and mental health needs.
- 17 percent of youth gave OCFS grades C/D/F in this area.
- A key comment from youth was that some caseworkers insist on youth being prescribed medication without their agreement.

According to the Statewide Assessment, it is a challenge to develop certain mental health services in sparsely populated rural areas, and even the populated areas often lack clinicians with knowledge and expertise to provide consistent services to children who have experienced trauma. Maine also has scarcity of child psychiatrists.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in assessing and addressing children's mental health needs. Some stakeholders indicated that if a mental health need is identified for a child, services are available. However, according to some stakeholders, it is very difficult for families without MaineCare or other insurance coverage to obtain mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the CFSR Final Report provides information regarding the State’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors examined during the CFSR. Information on the items included under each systemic factor comes from the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFSR. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. The overall rating for each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

Rating the Systemic Factor

Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
1	2	3	4
None of the CFSP or program requirements is in place.	Some or all of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, but more than one of the requirements fail to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, and no more than one of the requirements fails to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement.

It should be noted that ratings for the items included in each systemic factor are not based on single comments from an individual stakeholder; however, these comments are included in the report when they provide important insights or clarification on the State’s performance on a particular systemic factor.

If a State is not in substantial conformity with a particular systemic factor, then that factor must be addressed in the State’s Program Improvement Plan. For each systemic factor, information is provided about the State’s performance in its first CFSR as well as in the current CFSR. If the systemic factor was part of the State’s Program Improvement Plan, the key concerns addressed in the Program Improvement Plan and the strategies for assessing those concerns are noted.

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4X

Status of Statewide Information System

Maine is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in the 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Statewide Information System are presented and discussed below.

Item 24. The State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as a Strength because MACWIS can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for every child in foster care. The system features reliable data entered in a timely manner. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, MACWIS was implemented in May 1998 and was designed to meet Federal Automated Child Welfare Information System requirements as well as support State child welfare policies and procedures. All data elements of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System are captured within MACWIS. The Statewide Assessment reports that MACWIS provides immediate access to case information 24 hours a day to all DHHS offices. MACWIS services also are made available to contract agencies so that case-specific information and narratives may be entered into the system. Some of Maine's Native American Tribes also have access to the system.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, locations of children in OCFS custody are available in MACWIS. This includes children in relative care, unlicensed placements, voluntary placements, and unpaid placements. Additionally, many tracking tools within

MACWIS, which are accessible to supervisors and caseworkers, generate data related to case management and judicial reviews. MACWIS also generates monthly reports that are sent to each district and contain information on overdue case plans, court hearings, children who are about to age out of the system (as a prompt to close the case), children in foster care without a primary placement, and children in placement but who lacking a per diem payment for board and care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that MACWIS is effective in identifying the legal status, demographics, location, and goals of children in foster care. The system can identify the placement location of the child, even those who are placed with a private agency. The system, according to stakeholders, relies heavily on caseworkers entering the required data. For example, caseworkers are responsible for ensuring that placement information is entered into the system by 4:30 p.m. on the date of placement or placement change. Stakeholders reported that other information must be entered within 10 days. Most stakeholders indicated that the data are current and reliable.

Most stakeholders commenting on MACWIS reported that it is available 24 hours a day in OCFS offices. MACWIS can be accessed remotely by staff who have a laptop computer and a data card. Stakeholders also noted that MACWIS has many reminders that are beneficial to agency staff including reminders of court hearings and due dates for case plans. Stakeholders reported that staff are trained on MACWIS and that IT assistance is readily available.

Additionally, many stakeholders indicated that most administrators and supervisors use MACWIS reports to monitor caseloads, completion of case-related tasks, and staff performance and as a guide for monthly staff conferences. Some stakeholders also reported that caseworkers refer to reports daily. Additionally, the State is now using a Results Oriented Management (ROM) approach that allows management to view raw data and then view the children referenced in the data. Stakeholders reported that ROM reports are useful for comparing performance across the districts. A few stakeholders voiced concern that some reports have to be initiated through the central office as opposed to the local site.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Status of Case Review System

Maine is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- Case plans were not routinely developed in collaboration with parents.
- Although a process was in place for holding permanency hearings as required, the effectiveness of the hearings was insufficient to promote the timely achievement of permanency for children in foster care.
- Procedures were in place to pursue TPR for children in foster care in accordance with the provisions of ASFA; however, many barriers to these procedures resulted in frequent delays in achieving TPR.
- The State was inconsistent in notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers about reviews and hearings.
- The courts were inconsistent in ensuring opportunities for caretakers to provide input into reviews or hearings.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Implemented FTMs to promote engagement of parents and relatives in case planning and provided training to staff on conducting an FTM
- Provided training to judges and AAG staff on permanency options, timeframes, and best practice in conducting permanency hearings to increase the number of timely permanency hearings and improve the quality of permanency hearings
- Worked with the courts to develop guidelines for meeting ASFA requirements with regard to TPR
- Provided training to OCFS staff addressing the right of caregivers to have active input into court processes regarding children in their care

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Case Review System are presented and discussed below.

Item 25. The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State provides a process to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is routinely reviewed and updated, data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that parents are not routinely involved in case planning. In addition, during the onsite CFSR, case reviewers determined that OCFS made diligent efforts to involve mothers in case planning in 84 percent of the applicable cases and to involve fathers in 61 percent of the applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Family Plans and the Child Plans are to be developed at FTMs with the custodial parent and are to be updated every 6 months. The Statewide Assessment reports that both the Family Plan and the Child Plan include all federally required content. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the State requires a case plan within 60 days of the date of the child's removal from the home in accordance with Federal requirements.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that caseworkers receive reminders in MACWIS 30 days before Family Plans and Child Plans are due. Supervisors also receive reminders at the time plans are due if the plans have not been submitted by caseworkers. Each month, the OCFS Information Unit forwards reports to the district child welfare PA on case plans that are overdue, not approved by the supervisor, and not submitted for supervisory approval. These reports facilitate corrective action by district management.

The following data were reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- FTMs were convened in accordance with policy, and mothers and fathers were included in case plan development in about 60 percent of the cases reviewed in the State's 2007 QA reviews.
- PQI reviews found that Family Plans and Child Plans were developed based on assessments, and signatures of both parents and children were obtained.
- An October 1, 2008, report indicates that 1.55 percent of case plans were not completed timely (the Statewide Assessment does not indicate whether parental involvement occurred).

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that case plans are routinely prepared in a timely manner for all families, including those receiving in-homes services and out of home services. Additionally, stakeholders expressed the opinion that case plans are reviewed and updated at regular intervals. Stakeholders reported that there are two plans prepared by the agency for children in foster care and their families, the rehabilitation/reunification plan and the Child Plan. The case plan for in-home services is referred to as the Family Plan.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the State effectiveness in engaging parents in case planning. Most stakeholders expressed that FTMs facilitate meaningful engagement of parents in case planning, and that meaningful engagement results in individualized plans that guide parents and the agency in achieving case goals. Stakeholders also indicated that FTMs are held

throughout the life of the case at designated times or when case decisions need to be made. A few stakeholders indicated that FTMs are not held in all cases.

However, other stakeholders maintained that case plans are developed with minimal or no involvement of parents even if there is an FTM. Additionally, according to some stakeholders, the quality of the case plan varies across caseworkers.

Item 26. The State provides a process for 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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength. The State provides for the periodic review for each child in foster care. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that periodic reviews generally are held in a timely manner. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires that cases of children in foster care be reviewed by the court at least once every 6 months. The court is responsible for scheduling reviews. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, judges are actively involved and ask questions of all parties. In most jurisdictions, the same judge conducts hearings and reviews on the same family throughout the life of the case.

Although PQI record reviews explore whether permanency and judicial reviews occur as required, this information is not tracked. A PQI query of all foster care cases reviewed since November 2007 found that judicial reviews were conducted in a timely manner 93 percent of the time.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State generally ensures that a periodic review of the status of each child is held at least every 6 months if not more often. Stakeholders, however, expressed different opinions on the quality of the periodic reviews and whether the reviews expedite permanency for the child.

Most stakeholders indicated that the judicial reviews are helpful and assist children in achieving permanency faster because everyone maintains focus on the goal. Some stakeholders also indicated, however, that case management conferences are held before court hearings and that decisions about the cases are made in these conferences. They noted that the actual court hearing is a formality that lasts only a few minutes while the judge reviews and approves the agreement made during the case management conference.

Other stakeholders expressed the opinion that the judicial review is not time efficient, and it does not assist in moving a child to permanency. However, some stakeholders suggested that the effectiveness of the hearings depends on the judge assigned to the case. It

was reported that some judges are very engaged in the process and ask for parent, child, foster parents, and OCFS input, while others are not as engaged.

Item 27. The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that a permanency hearing is held within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care and usually every 6 months thereafter in conjunction with the 6-month periodic review. It should be noted that the 2007 Maine Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review found that judicial reviews are held timely and generally are effective in assessing the State's progress in achieving the child's permanency plan. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Maine State law conforms to the Federal requirement that permanency hearings occur for each child within 12 months of entering care and annually thereafter. Caseworkers receive notification through MACWIS of upcoming permanency reviews. Additionally, Maine Supreme Court case management procedures are in place to ensure that the court meets its obligation under State and Federal law to provide timely and thorough attention to child welfare cases.

According to the Statewide Assessment, since the 2003 Maine CFSR there have been concerted efforts to educate all stakeholders on the importance of timely and effective permanency hearings. The State and court provided joint training for judges and child welfare AAGs on permanency options and best practice in conducting permanency hearings. The State also sponsored the Child Welfare Symposium on Permanency, which was attended by many judges, attorneys, service providers, and other stakeholders.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The majority of stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are generally held timely, they are effective, and they focus on permanency. Additionally, most stakeholders commented that both the State and the court are aware of the importance of conducting timely and effective hearings and that timeframes are met consistently. Most stakeholders reported that permanency is reviewed within 12 months of the child entering foster care and every 6 months thereafter and combined with the 6-month review, which ensures timely permanency hearings.

There were some stakeholders, however, who expressed concern on the effectiveness of the permanency hearings due to a lack of services available to parents to complete reunification case plans.

Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as a Strength. The State has a process for filing a petition for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that OCFS generally is filing for TPR in a timely manner and meets the ASFA requirements with regard to documentation of reasons for not filing for TPR. Additionally, during the onsite CFSR, case reviewers determined that ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 87.5 percent of the 24 applicable cases. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State lacks data on the TPR process. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that OCFS recognizes the ASFA requirement to file for TPR when a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months unless a statutory exception applies.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the agency generally is filing for TPR in a timely manner. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that OCFS actually files for TPR too quickly and that parents often need more time to complete their case plans. Some stakeholders reported that the court sometimes delays the filing for TPR and provide parents with extensions to continue to work toward reunification.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions on whether OCFS provides compelling reasons when TPR is not filed. Most stakeholders expressed that compelling reasons are documented in case plans and presented to the court when TPR is not filed.

Various stakeholders identified the following as frequent reasons for not filing for TPR:

- The child is placed with a relative.
- The child has a relationship with his or her biological family and does not wish to be adopted.
- The parents are working diligently toward reunification but will not complete the case plan within 15 months.

However, a few stakeholders reported that agency documentation and presentation of compelling reasons to the court is inconsistent.

Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. According to the Statewide Assessment and stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR, courts across the State do not consistently allow the caregiver to be heard in hearings. Although stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review indicated that caregivers are routinely notified of hearings for children in their care, a PQI query referenced in the Statewide Assessment of foster care cases reviewed between November 2007 and November 2008 found that foster parents and caregivers were notified of upcoming court proceedings in 75 percent of the cases reviewed. This item was also rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute specifies that the foster parent of a child in State custody and any pre-adoptive parent or relative providing care for a child in foster care must be provided notice of and the right to be heard in any proceeding to be held with respect to that child. This includes the right to testify but does not include the right to present other witnesses or evidence. A copy of the notice must be filed with the court by the caseworker before the review or hearing.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following data relevant to this item:

- A PQI review of foster cases from November 2007 to November 2008 found that foster parents and caregivers were notified of upcoming court proceedings in 75 percent of the cases reviewed.
- In an annual survey of foster parents in which they were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 their level of agreement with the statement "I am given the opportunity to participate in court hearings," the mean response was 3.8.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that both judges and caseworkers influence foster parents' participation. Stakeholders interviewed as part of the Statewide Assessment indicated that judges regularly offer the opportunity to be heard to all foster parents in attendance and regularly inquire whether DHHS notified foster parents of the court event.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review indicated that OCFS is responsible for ensuring that caregivers are notified of hearings. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency does an excellent job of ensuring that caregivers receive written notice of hearings involving children in their care. It was reported that during the hearing, the judge will inquire if the caregiver was notified.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions on whether caregivers are provided opportunities to be heard in court. Many indicated that it depends on the judge hearing the case. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that caregivers have the opportunity to be heard in hearings involving children in their care. Many judges, according to these stakeholders, will solicit information from the caregiver. Some stakeholders reported that caregivers have been called to testify in hearings.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4X

Status of Quality Assurance System

Maine is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The State was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 review was that the safety of children in foster care was compromised by the lack of a formal process and timeframe for responding in a timely manner to reports of child maltreatment by foster parents or facility staff.

To address this concern, the State implemented the following strategies:

- To ensure consistency, it mandated that the district office conduct random reviews on well-being and safety for 95 percent of children in foster care.
- To improve timeliness of response, it developed a protocol establishing timeframes for face-to-face contact with children who were identified as victims in a report of maltreatment in foster care.
- To increase the quality of assessments by OOH, it developed a work plan and a tracking tool for OOH to monitor face-to-face contacts.

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under QA System are presented and discussed below.

Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as a Strength. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, since the 2003 CFSR, OCFS has upgraded and clarified standards for quality services to ensure the safety of children in foster care. The Statewide Assessment reports that new policy specifies that contacts with children in foster care are to be conducted at least monthly with the majority of the visits occurring in the child's placement to monitor children's well-being and safety needs. For children placed in therapeutic foster homes, policy requires that treatment agency caseworkers communicate weekly in person or by telephone with the treatment foster parents. At least two visits are made to the home each month by the treatment agency caseworker, with at least one visit to include the foster child. In weekly team meetings, treatment agency staff oversees child safety, service appropriateness and delivery, and verifies that these are in accordance with permanency plan goals. The OCFS caseworker is invited to participate in these meetings.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that OCFS requires foster parents to develop a disaster response plan that is reviewed in the licensing and renewal process. Additionally, foster parents are given written instructions on what to do in the event of a disaster.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the Maine LOC system is a comprehensive assessment process for determining the service needs of children currently in foster care, as well as those entering foster care. The goal of the process is to ensure that these children are regularly and consistently assessed so that they receive the LOC and service they need. Additionally, children in foster care receive EPSDT services. Policy also requires that youth receive age-appropriate support and education in pregnancy prevention, responsible parenthood, and prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. The utilization review process ensures that children are receiving therapy that is time-limited and appropriate for meeting their individual needs. The caseworker's supervisor monitors the health policies and procedures. Some monitoring is also done through PQI case record reviews.

Additionally, in 2004 OOH protocol was developed. According to the Statewide Assessment, this protocol established that the assigned IAU caseworker has to see the child who is the subject of the report within 5 days of case assignment. The investigation must be completed within 90 days of assignment.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State has effective standards in place to address the quality of services provided to children in foster care. Several stakeholders expressed the opinion that standards regarding quality of care and qualifications of staff are applied to contracted services. Several stakeholders reported that for children residing in congregate care, services are monitored through a treatment team meeting every 90 days. Additionally, services to children in foster care are evaluated through FTMs.

OOH, according to several stakeholders, assesses possible policy and licensing violations. These stakeholders expressed the opinion that OOH does not respond timely to referrals and that the 90 days allotted to complete an investigation is too long. However, stakeholders reported that the safety of the children named in the investigation is assessed by their OCFS caseworker when the referral is received.

Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength because the State has a clearly identifiable and functioning QA system that addresses key practice areas and provides feedback on key findings. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, PQI is a component of the continuous quality improvement plan. One PQI staff position is assigned to each of the eight OCFS districts. These specialists review six to eight randomly selected child protective and foster care cases each month within their district. After review of the records, each PQI specialist completes a standardized instrument derived from the Federal CFSR tool. This review process combines ratings of the Federal outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being as well as ratings of adherence to relevant DHHS child welfare policies. In-house reviews conducted by each casework supervisor and DHHS's Child and Family Services augment the case review process. The PQI program manager aggregates the data from these reviews, completes a report highlighting the trends and patterns that led to the overall outcome rating, and provides the report to child welfare senior management on a quarterly basis. These reports are used in annual performance appraisals of staff by district PAs.

The Statewide Assessment notes that PAs and central office management use PQI quarterly reports to assess progress, district performance, and efforts to improve practice. This group also relies on Monthly Management Reports for quantitative measures, such as timely response to maltreatment reports or percentage of children seen per month by caseworkers.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, PQI specialists provide technical assistance to the districts specific to case review findings. In addition, the PQI Unit administers satisfaction surveys to all licensed foster parents and disseminates those findings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

State-level stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that the PQI process is currently under revision. According to these stakeholders, the State decided to change the QA process in order to gain a new perspective on the changes needed within the State. The State will begin the revised process after the onsite CFSR.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the PQI process was effective, constructive, and recognized the strengths and the challenges within the child welfare system. The process provided data that allowed OCFS to obtain an accurate picture of what was occurring in practice. Stakeholders reported that supervisors used the data from the review process to guide caseworkers to effective change in practice. Although most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the PQI findings drove change in policy and resulted in improvements to the child welfare system in Maine, a few stakeholders reported that OCFS did not take advantage of what was learned during the PQI reviews to make effective change to policy and practice.

IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4X

Status of Staff and Provider Training

Maine is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Staff and Provider Training are presented and discussed below.

Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as a Strength. The State provides comprehensive child welfare training to new caseworkers and ensures that caseworkers are fully trained on relevant issues prior to assuming a caseload. Caseworkers are required to pass a knowledge test at the completion of new caseworker training. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers must have a license to practice social work when they are hired and before they are allowed to begin work. Prior to cases being assigned, all new caseworkers must also participate in an 8-week pre-service training

program through the Child Welfare Training Institute (CWTI) of the University of Southern Maine (USM), Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service. Pre-service training is held four times a year to accommodate new employees. This program includes 5 weeks of classroom training and 3 weeks of structured field practice provided by supervisors and senior casework staff using the *Field Practice Manual*.

As part of pre-service training, caseworkers are required to meet with staff from other State programs to learn about benefits and entitlements for children and families. Caseworkers also are required to complete worksheets to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of how to refer clients to these services.

Pre-service training is monitored by the lead CWTI training supervisor and the two DHHS child welfare district operations managers. Typical monitoring issues include training performance concerns, trainee absences, and decisions to individualize training in exceptional cases. Additional monitoring of training participants includes the following:

- Skills assessment monitored by pre-service trainers
- Completion and evaluation of the *Field Practice Manual*
- Performance on the knowledge test designed by USM Evaluation Research Services

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, CWTI maintains records of all trainings it offers.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State is generally effective in providing comprehensive training for new caseworkers. Various stakeholders identified the following factors as facilitating the State's training efforts:

- New caseworkers cannot assume a caseload until the successful completion of pre-service training.
- New caseworkers are initially assigned less complex cases.
- New caseworkers shadow tenured caseworkers as part of the training process.
- Supervisors monitor field training and ensure that tasks are completed.
- CWTI provides the training.

However, a few stakeholders expressed concern that new caseworkers may have to wait several months before attending pre-service training because it is offered only four times a year.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as a Strength. The State requires ongoing training for all caseworkers and supervisors. Ongoing training is provided primarily by the CWTI and DHHS Staff Education and Training Unit (SETU), and tracked by the CWTI or the SETU. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, after the completion of pre-service training, caseworkers are required to attend core trainings on various topics over the following 2 years. Additionally, all licensed social work staff (caseworkers, supervisors, program specialists, PAs, and most program directors) are required by Maine social worker licensing rules to complete 25 hours of training for licensing renewal every 2 years, including 4 hours of training in ethics. For those holding conditional social work licenses, 4 of the required hours must be in social work ethics and 6 hours in psychosocial assessment. Training in ICWA and the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act is required of staff every 2 years.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in order to monitor completion of the ongoing training requirement, the Social Work Licensing Board regularly audits a portion of license renewal applications it receives. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, records of all trainings offered through the CWTI are maintained by CWTI. Records of completion of all trainings offered by the SETU are maintained by SETU. Casework supervisors monitor their staff's completion of core trainings through employee development plans in annual performance appraisals.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that new supervisors receive required training in employment and labor laws. In addition, supervisors are trained in competency-based screening of caseworker candidates and on using a list of standardized questions when interviewing potential caseworker candidates.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ongoing trainings are evaluated using satisfaction surveys completed by participants at the end of each workshop. The Statewide Assessment notes that most participants indicate satisfaction with the workshops.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review were in agreement that 25 hours of ongoing training are required for caseworkers and supervisors and that staff are completing the required training. However, stakeholders expressed different opinions about the availability of ongoing training for caseworkers and supervisors. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that ongoing training is readily available for new caseworkers who are required to attend mandated core trainings and annual trainings offered by SETU and CWTI that are required for licensing renewal. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that there are multiple, new training opportunities through CWTI, SETU, and other community and State resources for all caseworkers and supervisors. Additionally, funding is available for training through other sources.

Despite these positive views, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that new trainings are not available for supervisors or veteran caseworkers and sometimes, in order to obtain the required 25 hours biennially, veteran caseworkers will repeat a training course in a different licensing period.

Item 34. The State provides 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 that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength. The State provides initial and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents, including licensed relative caregivers. The training is provided prior to the placement of a child and generally is perceived as practical and accessible. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, families must begin a 24-hour pre-service Adoptive and Foster Family Training (AFFT) before initiating the home study process. The Statewide Assessment notes that this training is delivered in each of the districts throughout the State at a variety of dates, times, and locations. Prospective foster parents and adoptive parents must complete all 24 hours of the pre-service training. Prospective foster parents must complete the training whether they accept placements from DHHS or from a private agency. Prospective adoptive parents who apply for adoptive home approval from DHHS are required to complete AFFT training, but those who apply through private adoption agencies are not. The foster home licensing caseworker verifies that the training has been completed before the home is licensed. The AFFT program issues a retrospective pre-test on the last day of pre-service training. This test requires the prospective foster and adoptive parents to rank their level of knowledge before and after the class in 13 crucial areas and then to state, in writing, the most important items learned.

The department or other child-placing agency must verify that the AFFT pre-service training has been completed prior to approving the home as an adoptive placement resource. The training requirement is waived when a child is placed with a relative or a person with whom the child already has a relationship. In these situations training is still encouraged and a reduced board rate is paid until the home is licensed. The State has a pre-service training curriculum specifically geared for relatives providing foster care.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, ongoing training is required for licensed foster parents but not for adoptive parents. Foster parents are required to complete at least 18 hours within the 2-year licensing period with 6 hours completed by the secondary caregiver. Although the CWTI maintains records of the trainings attended by the foster parent, it is the responsibility of the foster parent to maintain a log of the training hours and to provide this log to the licensing worker at the time of renewal.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the CWTI maintains a list of available online training opportunities for foster parents and in addition offers the following options:

- Ten toolboxes of in-service core training curricula offered at district locations throughout the State during the year

- Correspondence courses for foster parents, with foster parents required to take a written test after course completion in order to earn credit
- Access to www.fosterparent.com, which has more than 100 courses available

Licensed family foster parents with requisite experience are eligible to apply for licensing as a specialized foster home, providing care to moderately to severely handicapped children having mental, physical, or emotional problems to the extent that the child needs specialized care, supervision, training, and/or therapy. Licensing requirements for specialized foster homes requires 36 hours of ongoing training that is related to the special needs of moderately to severely handicapped children within the 2-year licensing period. The DHHS licensing worker is responsible for monitoring and setting specific training requirements.

The Statewide Assessment reports that training of facility staff is conducted by residential institutions as specified by licensing rules. Monitoring of staff training is done by Division of Licensing staff as part of the licensing process.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State provides initial training for foster and adoptive parents through a 24-hour curriculum facilitated by the CWTI. Most stakeholders noted that the initial training is readily available across the State and is offered on weekends and evenings. Initial training hours are tracked through the CWTI.

Opinions about the quality of the training varied among stakeholders. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the training was practical, useful, and assisted prospective foster parents in understanding the policies that govern their practice. Other stakeholders expressed the opinion that although the information provided in the training is practical, the initial training did not prepare foster parents adequately for the realities of fostering.

Most stakeholders commenting on ongoing training for foster parents expressed the opinion that ongoing training is readily available to foster parents through various forums. In addition to the resources indicated in the Statewide Assessment, stakeholders also reported that A Family for Me (AFFME) conducts a conference and that foster parents who participate in it can complete all of the required ongoing training requirements.

V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Status of Service Array and Resource Development

Maine is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003:

- Many services were available, but there were service gaps in key areas, particularly mental health services, that affected the achievement of permanency and well-being for children.
- Accessibility to services varied by geography and the willingness of physical, dental, and mental health providers to accept Medicaid payments.
- Long waiting lists for some services hindered the timely delivery of services to parents and children.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- It conducted a Statewide Assessment of its service array. The assessment included a review of contracted services, input from provider groups and district staff, and a survey of birth and foster parents.
- It developed a report based on the information from the Statewide Assessment and shared it with provider groups and other State agencies to solicit feedback.

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Service Array and Resource Development are presented and discussed below.

Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that 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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although the State has established effective services to promote reunification, the amount of overall services has diminished due to budget cuts, and this has affected the State's ability to achieve permanency for some children. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Maine is experiencing a budget shortfall due to revenue reduction across the State.

Reductions to the budget thus far have resulted in:

- Frozen or eliminated OCFS caseworker and supervisor positions
- Reductions in foster board rates
- Reduction in adoption subsidies
- Elimination of paid respite for foster families
- Reductions in funds available for services to reduce abuse and neglect
- Elimination of contracted home studies
- Reduced funding for training

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the proposed budget for the coming biennium contains further significant reductions in services in response to an anticipated \$800 million decline in State revenue during the upcoming 2 years.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the State now provides or contracts for the following essential services to ensure their availability:

- Visitation
- ARPs
- Mental health crisis services
- Homemaker services
- Public health nursing services
- Family violence advocacy services
- Domestic violence services from an advocate in each child welfare district office
- Intensive family reunification services
- Wraparound services
- Employment services
- Child System and Treatment Enhancement Projects (STEPs)
- 2-1-1 Maine, a statewide information and referral call center

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative is available statewide. This collaborative between DHHS and USM offers older youth in foster care the opportunity to develop job skills through various initiatives, financial literacy classes, and a savings account.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the State has family-based treatment and support services available through MaineCare. Additionally, MaineCare is provided to 18-year-old youth exiting care and extends their coverage to age 21, based on their applying

and meeting eligibility requirements. If a young adult is denied MaineCare, then OCFS will cover his or her medical expenses to ensure medical coverage for transitioning youth.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed different opinions about the adequacy of the array of services available to assess and address the needs of children and families in the State. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that services are not available to meet the needs of families and children. Many of these stakeholders indicated that services have been drastically reduced due to budget cuts resulting from the current economic situation. The budget cuts result in families and children not receiving the services needed to achieve permanency for children through reunification or other permanency options. A few stakeholders indicated, for example, that permanency hearings do not promote permanency due to a lack of services available to the parents to meet reunification plan goals. Stakeholders also reported that budget cuts have limited the services available for in-home cases, including services offered through ARP. Other stakeholders expressed the opinion that services are available but accessibility is sometimes a problem (this will be discussed further in item 36).

Despite these concerns, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that services are available to meet the needs of children and families and promote timely reunification and maintain children safely in their homes. These services include:

- Intensive in-home rapid reunification services
- High Fidelity Wraparound services
- Home-based therapy services
- Trauma-based mental health services

A number of stakeholders commenting on this item indicated that when children enter foster care, mothers are no longer eligible for MaineCare, which, in their opinion, often delays and/or limits the needed services. A few stakeholders indicated that transportation services to medical appointments are available only to MaineCare recipients. Additionally, it is very difficult for families without MaineCare or other insurance coverage to obtain services such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and medication management. Stakeholders also noted that MaineCare is slow to pay providers and expressed the opinion that because MaineCare rates have been cut, providers are less willing to serve MaineCare participants.

Stakeholders across the three review sites noted the following concerns with regard to the service array:

- There is a lack of child psychiatrists in the State.
- There are insufficient transportation services to assist parents in accessing services.
- There is a lack of affordable housing.
- There is a lack of reimbursed respite care for foster parents.

Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP

☐ Strength ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Services provided by the State are not accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions. There are waiting lists for such key services as psychiatric evaluations, dental services, substance abuse treatment, and in-home services. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, there are no measures of effectiveness specifically related to service accessibility. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that distance and transportation issues frequently present problems for families seeking services and that Maine's geography (remote areas, islands) and severe weather can restrict service accessibility. Public transportation is limited or lacking in most areas of the State. Caseworkers transport or arrange transportation of case members to locations in the State where the service is available; however, this adds cost and sometimes results in service delays.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that a significant number of families struggle with substance abuse, domestic abuse, and mental health issues, yet accessible services to meet those needs are limited. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the following services are not always accessible to children and families throughout the State:

- Inpatient psychiatric facilities
- Inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment
- CANEP evaluators
- Treatment for youth sex offenders
- Inpatient substance abuse treatment that allows children to remain with the parents
- Clinical evaluation services
- Mental health professionals trained to work with children and families involved in the child welfare system
- Dentists who will accept MaineCare
- Psychiatric evaluations

The Statewide Assessment notes that the department will pay for dental and orthodontic care for children in custody to be seen by non-Medicaid dentists if there are no providers within 50 miles willing to accept Medicaid.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the accessibility of services is better in urban areas of the State than it is in rural areas. Families living in rural areas frequently have to drive several hours to access needed services and that lack of transportation restricts access to these services. Various stakeholders across the three sites indicated that many services available in the State frequently have a wait list of several months, including the following:

- Dental providers who accept MaineCare
- Substance abuse treatment
- In-home services
- Section 8 housing
- Child care
- Parenting education services
- Vocational rehabilitation services for youth

Stakeholders also identified the following additional services as insufficient to meet the need:

- Child care
- Parent educators
- Post-adoption services
- Pediatricians
- Foster homes including homes for older youth and children with special needs
- Mental health services for adults and children
- Substance abuse evaluation and treatment
- Evaluation and treatment for sexual abuse victims and offenders
- In-home services
- Flexible funding
- Visitation services
- Domestic violence advocate (Cumberland County)
- Transition services for youth aging out of foster care

Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency

 X **Strength** **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 37 is rated as a Strength. The State has the ability to individualize services despite the limitations attributable to service availability and accessibility. The State individualizes services through FTMs and the practice model. Additionally, the State has implemented several initiatives, such as the Family Reunification Program, Wraparound Maine, and Child STEPs, that allow for individualization of services to meet the unique needs of children and families. Although in practice caseworkers are not consistently meeting the needs of children and families (as shown under item 17), the State has the capacity to individualize services to families. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that in conducting assessments, caseworkers must focus on areas of child and family strengths as well as needs and must conduct the assessment together with the family. During the FTM, the caseworker, with the family, develops the case plan based on the assessment. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that although the adequacy of services is rated in case record reviews, there is no rating as to whether services are individualized to meet unique needs.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, family-based treatment and support services can be individualized. Time-limited reunification services, geared toward addressing individual family needs, are available in all districts through the Family Reunification Program. Maine's High Fidelity Wraparound initiative has improved the spectrum of individualized services offered to families. Additionally, the Child STEPs implementation model combines clinical training and supervision of evidence-based treatment with an electronic information system to guide treatment and add interventions to address key family and organizational factors. Elements of the program include family engagement and empowerment, and a system that monitors progress and outcomes.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that the State is generally effective in individualizing services to meet the needs of children and families. Some stakeholders indicated that the use of FTMs and the case practice model assist the agency in designing and providing services to meet individual needs. Some stakeholders indicated that language-specific services are available, and interpretation services are available statewide upon request, although it may be several days before an interpreter is available. One concern noted by various stakeholders is that if a family does not have MaineCare, certain services are restricted, which limits the ability to individualize services.

VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3X	4

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Maine is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Agency Responsiveness to the Community are presented and discussed below.

Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, 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 and objectives of the CFSP

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength. The State has worked cooperatively with many stakeholders to implement the goals and objectives of the CFSP. The State has, through numerous standing groups, forums, and other efforts, been effectively engaging its partners and other stakeholders across the State in identifying and resolving issues and concerns. This item also was rated as a Strength in the 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State does not have policy requirements with respect to implementation of the CFSP, nor does the State have specific measures of effectiveness that demonstrate Maine's functioning on this item. However, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, there are 24 standing groups and forums that promote State engagement, including:

- Future Search
- Maine Wraparound
- The Foster, Adoptive, Kinship Parent Advisory Committee
- The YLAT
- The Maine Justice for Children Task Force
- The Maine Reentry Network Steering Committee
- The CFSR Steering Committee (formerly the PIP Steering Committee)
- Maine Child Abuse Action Network
- Maine Youth Transition Collaborative
- The ICWA workgroup
- The Community Partnerships for Protecting Children
- The Maine Association of Group Care Providers
- The Maine Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel
- ARP Coalition

According to the Statewide Assessment, the quality of State and Tribal relationships varies. Tribal participation in planning efforts has occurred most successfully through the ICWA workgroup, which is composed of child welfare representatives from the four federally

recognized Tribes in the State and the OCFS liaison. This workgroup meets monthly and has dealt with many issues, including Tribal and State relations, Tribal inclusion in cases, new State initiatives, and Tribal inclusion and dissemination of new policy. The OCFS youth transition program specialist also participates in the workgroup to ensure Tribal youth are heard and considered in policy and practice for older youth in foster care. A Tribal member of the ICWA workgroup has participated in the CFSR Steering Committee. Additionally, two ICWA Summits have been convened to educate staff and improve relationships between the State and the Tribes.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The majority of stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that OCFS has made efforts to engage their providers, other agencies, the courts, foster and adoptive parents, and youth to address concerns. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that OCFS has been proactive with the community, and there seems to be a better relationship with many of the families and providers at the local level. Several stakeholders mentioned the positive collaboration through Future Search, the Children's Cabinet, and the Justice for Children Task Force.

However, some stakeholders indicated that the State does not always engage the Tribes in the development and implementation of goals. According to some State-level stakeholders, the State's perception is that the Tribes are consulted. However, from the Tribe's perspective, according to these stakeholders, the Tribes are not truly consulted. These stakeholders expressed the opinion that communication between the State and the Tribes was more open in the past. However, a few State-level stakeholders expressed the opinion that the relationship between the State and the Tribes has improved in recent years. Additionally, stakeholders reported that agreements and plans were made during the two ICWA summits; however, nothing has come to fruition.

Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that OCFS is not engaging other key partners in the development and implementation of goals. Communication among OCFS central office and key partners, according to some stakeholders, is not as open as in recent years. A few stakeholders also noted that engagement is occurring locally but not at the State level.

Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports pursuant to the CFSP

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), according to the Statewide Assessment, are completed by OCFS State personnel and are not routinely distributed. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHHS complies with Federal requirements for APSRs. The Statewide Assessment notes that APSRs have been drafted each year with different sections updated by different State program specialists. As indicated in the

Statewide Assessment, the department has not been distributing its annual report routinely. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, OCFS plans to distribute the 2009 CFSP and subsequent APSR to external stakeholders and OCFS staff.

According to the Statewide Assessment, there are no measures of effectiveness to demonstrate Maine's functioning in this item.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders did not comment on the APSR during the Onsite Review.

Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength. The State coordinates services with other Federal and federally assisted programs. The State has established a single system of care via the integration of Child Welfare Services, Children's Behavioral Health Services, and Early Childhood Services into one office with a single OCFS management team. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the OCFS has interagency agreements and policies that facilitate the coordination of services with the following departments, agencies, or groups:

- Department of Corrections
- DHHS Adult Services
- Office of Public Health Nursing
- Department of Education
- Penobscot Indian Nation
- Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
- Maine ICWA workgroup
- Maine Children's Trust, Inc.
- Local and State law enforcement
- Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
- Maine State Housing Authority
- Municipal housing authorities
- The Thrive Initiative

- Child STEPs
- Maine Child Welfare Services and Children’s Behavioral Health Services
- USM’s Muskie School of Public Service

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the integration of Child Welfare Services, Children’s Behavioral Health Services, and Early Childhood Services into one office with a single OCFS management team and strategic plan greatly improves coordination of services. Additionally, the co-location of staff at the Central Office and district levels has also improved coordination of services.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State is generally effective in coordination services of Federal and federally assisted programs for children and families. Several stakeholders indicated that coordination of behavioral and mental health services has improved greatly since the State integrated Child Welfare Services, Children’s Behavioral Health Services, and Early Childhood Services into one single system of care. Coordination with the TANF program has improved, according to some stakeholders, since allowing mothers to retain their TANF benefits when children are in foster care and the goal is reunification. Many stakeholders mentioned that the lack of funding for services for families is an issue with most programs at this time. Therefore, coordination increases the likelihood that families will receive the needed services.

VII. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4X

Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Maine is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2009 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention are presented and discussed below.

Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards

 X **Strength** **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 41 is rated as a Strength. The State has standards for resource family homes and child care institutions that are reflected in OCFS and DHHS licensing procedures respectively. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, a combination of requirements and standards for foster and adoptive homes and institutions are found in Maine statute, foster home licensing rules, and OCFS policy. Family foster homes and child care institutions are subject to licensure and are included in the general licensing category of children's homes. The OCFS licenses family foster homes and also approves adoptive homes, which must meet the same standards as foster homes. The Maine DHHS Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services licenses children's residential care facilities, child-placing agencies, emergency shelters, and shelters for homeless children.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the family standards policy and procedures combine the inquiry, informational, application, and home study process. These standards include age, health/functioning, background checks (including criminal history), and physical plant requirements (including a fire inspection and water test) in addition to a home study. The home study includes the applicant's life experiences, family relationships, support systems, family beliefs, and values. The home study also includes an assessment of applicant's ability to parent safely and successfully and meet the needs of the children served by OCFS, as well as their ability to work with OCFS and service providers. Foster and adoptive parents are required to attend introductory AFFT and to participate in ongoing training as a condition of license renewal.

Foster and adoptive home approvals and licenses for facilities and programs last 2 years, with the exception of child-placing agencies, which are licensed for 1 year. Foster home licenses are generated centrally and the district foster home licensing supervisor approves licensing recommendations and ensures that licensing standards and policies are followed. Children's residential programs receive a site inspection and a licensing survey every 2 years. Monitoring is done by licensing staff and, to some extent, casework staff during monthly contacts with foster children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State's standards regarding safety in foster homes are in place and are reflected in licensing procedures. A State-level stakeholder indicated that the foster home standards are promulgated rules and that stakeholders were involved in the revision of the rules. Additionally, according to this stakeholder, some foster parent requirements are mandated through State statute. Another stakeholder noted that standards are updated every 3 years. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the standards currently in place are adequate to maintain children's safety in foster homes.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength. The State applies standards to all licensed residential facilities and foster and adoptive homes, including licensed relative homes. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, Maine has three types of licenses for both family and specialized foster homes: full, conditional, and temporary.

According to the Statewide Assessment, a Relative Placement Kinship Care Assessment is completed before a child is placed in a relative's home that is not licensed or formally approved. This assessment includes a request for a criminal history report from the State Bureau of Identification, a criminal history check with local law enforcement, and a State Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) check. The caseworker is to provide the completed assessment with the documented request for this information to the district licensing unit within 3 days of placement. Temporary or conditional licenses are not issued to these homes. Fingerprint-based criminal histories are requested if and when a relative applies for foster home licensure. Federal funds are claimed only for placements in homes that meet the full standard for licenses.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, Maine successfully passed title IV-E reviews in 2004 and in 2007. The 2007 IV-E review found Maine to be in substantial compliance with the Federal title IV-E Foster Care Program eligibility requirements.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions on whether standards are equally applied to licensed providers. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that standards are applied equally to relative and non-relative licensed homes. However, other stakeholders expressed the opinion that standards are not applied equally and that relatives are not held to the same licensing standards as non-relatives. Standards that have to be maintained by non-relatives, such as space requirements, may be waived for relatives. Additionally, training is encouraged for relatives but can be waived in order for a relative to be licensed. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that OCFS works diligently with relatives to help them maintain licensure and waives standards for relatives in order to maintain placement stability of children with relatives. In December 2008, according to the Statewide Assessment, 29 of the 1,238 licensed homes were overdue for license renewal, and 67 licensed homes had fire inspection compliance issues. Of the 29 overdue homes, 26 had children placed in them.

Stakeholders did not comment on child care institution standards during the Onsite Review.

Item 43. 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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength. The State provides for background checks and fingerprinting as a component for all licensed foster and adoptive placements, including relatives and child care institution staff. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State requires all applicants for foster home licensing or adoptive home approval to complete fingerprint-based background checks through national crime information databases. All adult members of the home and persons who may have unsupervised access to the foster children also must also complete background checks. DHHS family standards require criminal history checks with the State Bureau of Investigation, Maine Department of Public Safety, as well as background checks with the BMV and OCFS CPS. In addition, if an applicant has resided out of State in the previous 5 years, out-of-State motor vehicle registries and child abuse registries are checked.

In order for a foster home license or adoptive home approval to be granted, the home study and supporting documentation must verify that the federally required background checks were completed. By policy, criminal background checks must be initiated at the time of placement of any child in a home that has not yet been licensed or approved.

The State requires employers to conduct criminal background checks on all child care institution staff and to keep the results of these checks on file.

Maine has no data on criminal background checks. However, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, in a title IV-E review conducted in June 2007, ACF determined that the State was “in substantial compliance with IV-E eligibility requirements.” The review specifically noted that criminal record checks were completed for foster family homes.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State requires background checks for all adults over the age of 18 in any resource family home, and background checks and fingerprints for all licensed placement providers, including relatives. Some stakeholders reported delays associated with fingerprinting due to the quality of the fingerprint. The State, according to some stakeholders, is in the process of obtaining Live Scan which will decrease the delays in receiving fingerprint results.

Item 44. The State has in place a 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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as a Strength. Although the population of the State is about 97 percent white, some children in foster care are from various racial and ethnic groups, and concerted efforts are being made in various locations to recruit foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnicity and race of these children. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, OCFS contracts with International Adoption Services Centre, Inc., for foster and adoptive home recruitment. Through IASC, AFFME is the contracted service for statewide recruitment of foster and adoptive parents for children in the custody of OCFS. The contract, according to the Statewide Assessment, focuses on recruitment of children who have special needs. AFFME divides recruitment into three categories:

- General
- Targeted
- Child-specific
 - Manages the **AdoptUsKids** program for Maine DHHS
 - Arranges child-specific features in print media outlets
 - Coordinates Thursday's Child
 - Arranges Meet and Greets and Adoption Teas
 - Maintains the Heart Gallery

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, Maine is one of the least diverse States in terms of population of tracked racial and ethnic backgrounds. The population of the State remains between 96 percent to 97 percent white. According to the Statewide Assessment, each DHHS district has designated staff who meet regularly (monthly or quarterly) to plan and carry out foster home recruitment activities. The Statewide Assessment referenced the following information with respect to diversity:

- District 2 (Portland) partnered with the Community Partnership for Protecting Children and the New Mainers Group to educate the existing foster parent community to increase cultural awareness.
- District 3 (Lewiston) has a significant refugee population (less than 1 percent of the population); the largest number of families is from Somalia. The executive director of the Somali Women of Maine, a DHHS office employee who is a native of Sudan, and a United Way staff member who attended college in Lewiston and has many connections to the area's Somali and Sudanese communities, are on the district's recruitment committee.
- District 6 (Bangor) has several gay and lesbian foster families, at least three Native American foster families, an African-American foster family, a Hispanic foster family, and several foster families of French Canadian descent providing care to children in DHHS custody.

- District 7 (Ellsworth/Machias) reports a need for Native American homes but has been able to place all Native American children with relatives.
- District 8 (Aroostook County) has seven Native American foster homes and wants to develop more. In their foster home recruitment efforts, staff consider the Native Bands of Micmacs and Maliseets to be key collaborators.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions on recruitment efforts that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that OCFS could increase recruitment efforts to reflect ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care while other stakeholders indicated that the State has made improvements in this area. Several stakeholders expressed the opinion that resources are currently not available for recruitment or are focused on licensing kinship homes as opposed to recruiting new foster families. Several stakeholders reported that the best recruitment tool for new foster and adoptive parents are current foster parents. Additionally, some stakeholders reported that the Heart Gallery is a successful recruitment tool.

Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength. The State effectively uses cross-jurisdictional adoption exchanges including **AdoptUsKids** and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) to support permanent placements for children. This item also was rated as a Strength in Maine's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in addition to the ICPC, OCFS uses the **AdoptUsKids** and AFFME websites.

The only available measures of effectiveness are the statistical reports available from the DHHS ICPC office. Findings from a review of annual ICPC statistical reports indicate that requests for out-of-state adoption home studies are declining:

- In 2006 55 requests were made.
- In 2007 32 requests were made.
- In 2008 20 requests were made.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in the use of cross-jurisdictional resources on behalf of children awaiting permanency. Several stakeholders noted the use of the ICPC to facilitate placements across State lines, most often for placement with relatives. Stakeholders noted that using the ICPC is

cumbersome and time-consuming. Some stakeholders noted that the State uses the **AdoptUsKids** website and State and national adoption exchanges to locate cross-jurisdictional placements for children free for adoption.