

Connections to the CFSR

In 2002, Pennsylvania did not meet “substantial conformity” in reference to Well-Being Outcome # 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs). Two out of the four items associated with this outcome are impacted by the mental health of the adult caregiver’s in the family.

Concerns:

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

This item assesses whether or not the agency 1) adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents; and 2) provided the services necessary to meet those needs. 32% of the cases reviewed did not meet the criteria for conformity. The concerns specific to the adult caregiver for this item are:

- The services provided were not adequate to meet the needs of parents and/or children.
- Parent’s needs were not assessed and/or services to address needs were not provided.
- Fathers were not contacted by the agency to determine needs.

Families often experience delays in accessing mental health services and substance abuse assessments and treatment.

Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning.

This item assesses whether or not parents, unless their participation was contrary to the best interest of the child, and children, when age appropriate, actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. 23% of the cases reviewed did not meet the criteria for conformity. The concerns specific to the adult caregiver for this item are:

- In several instances, one or more of the caregivers (or children) had not been involved in the case planning process.
- In general, case plans were developed by the caseworkers and presented to parents for signature without requesting their feedback or input.
- Many of the case plans developed are generic, “boiler plate” plans generated to expedite the process.
- Agencies were more effective in involving parents and children in case planning when the children are in foster care than when they are being maintained in their own homes.