



Quality Service Review
Lake, Newaygo and Ottawa Counties

Review Conducted
May 2018

**Quality Service Review
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Introduction

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Division of Continuous Quality Improvement (DCQI) conducted a Quality Service Review (QSR) to provide a comprehensive view of case practice in Lake, Newaygo and Ottawa Counties on May 21-24, 2018.

The QSR includes in-depth interviews with case participants, stakeholder interviews, focus groups and surveys. While the QSR process allows an opportunity for participants to share their perceptions in individual and focus group interviews, the validity of the statements made are not verified by the reviewer or facilitators. Child welfare communities may use the information gleaned from the focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and the case reviews collectively, to inform improvement efforts. Following the QSR, a Practice Improvement Plan (PIP) is developed by the county director to address identified areas needing improvement.

The QSR is a real-time assessment of how children and their families are benefiting from services, identifying practice strengths as well as opportunities where coordination and collaboration can be improved. The QSR examines the county’s progress implementing the MiTEAM case practice model, which focuses on seven competencies: Engagement, Assessment, Teaming, Case Planning, Placement Planning, Case Plan Implementation, and Mentoring using two distinct domains or sets of indicators, “Child and Family Status Indicators” and “Case Practice Performance Indicators.” Child and family status is based on a review of the focus child and the parent(s) or caregiver(s) for the most recent 30-day period, unless stated otherwise in the indicator. Practice performance is based on a review of the most recent 90-day period for cases that have been open and active for at least the past 90 days.

The QSR uses a six-point rating scale to determine whether an indicator is acceptable. Any indicator scoring at a four or higher is viewed as acceptable. Indicators that are scored as a three or lower are considered unacceptable. All indicators with an overall baseline score of 75 percent or above are identified as a strength and an area to maintain. Any indicator scoring at 74 percent or lower would be included and addressed as an opportunity for improvement.

The rating scale is also broken into three categories: maintain (5-6), refine (3-4) and improve (1-2). The ranges are as follows:

UNACCEPTABLE			ACCEPTABLE		
1 – Adverse Status/ Performance:	2 – Poor Status/ Performance:	3 – Marginally Inadequate Status / Performance:	4 – Fair Status/ Performance:	5 – Good Ongoing Status/ Performance:	6 – Optimal & Enduring Status / Performance:
Status/practice may be absent or substantially	Status/practice is fragmented, unreliable, lacking	Status/practice may be insufficient, inconsistent, or	Status/practice is minimally or temporarily adequate to	At this level, the status/practice is functioning reliably and	At this level, there is exceptional,

inadequate. Performance may be missing or not done. Strategies may be inadvisable and in need of immediate action to address the situation.	necessary intensity, or validity. Performance warrants prompt attention and improvement.	not well matched to need. Performance may be falling below the acceptable range and there is a need for adjustment at the present time.	meet short-term needs or objectives. There is a reasonable prospect of achieving the desired outcomes if this performance level continues or improves.	appropriately under changing conditions and over time. Performance has continued to be generally effective and dependable with signs of stability being apparent.	steady, and effective status/practice in the function area. Performance has shown an enduring pattern of stability.
IMPROVEMENT		REFINEMENT		MAINTENANCE	

Michigan has developed a four-prong approach to illustrate the connection between the implementation of the MiTEAM case practice model to good outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being for children and families. The four prongs include the use of the evaluation to MiFidelity, results from a Quality Service Review, measurement of Key Performance Indicators and the Child and Family Service Review Outcomes.

The QSR findings in concert with these metrics support local offices and the state to understand the strengths and opportunities within a child welfare community.

When child welfare members implement the key behaviors or activities of the practice model and track key performance indicators on a regular basis, the direct outcomes experienced by children and families as measured by the federal Child and Family Services Review in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being can be achieved.

Lake county is made up of many lakes and rivers and is considered a rural community. Newaygo County is also a rural community in which tourism is an important economic activity with a blend of agriculture and small manufacturing. Newaygo County has developed collaborations with adjacent counties to assist with additional resources for children and families. Fremont, Michigan, located within Newaygo County, was the founding place of Fremont Canning Company which is now Gerber Products Company. Gerber Products Company now owned by Nestle is the largest employer in the county. Following Nestle’s purchase of Gerber Products Company the historical support to Newaygo County drastically changed and is no longer an active support to the community. To fill that void, the Fremont Area Community Foundation and the Gerber Foundation, founded by the Gerber family, provide support to the community. Lake County was described as a rustic and remote community with many miles of river and lakes. Lake County was also reported to be one of the lowest income communities in the State of Michigan. This presents challenges for Lake County in providing services to children and families.

Ottawa County is a larger county with a combination of small farming and metropolitan communities known for tourism. Ottawa County sits along the shoreline of Lake Michigan and

was described as one of the wealthiest counties in the State of Michigan. This county has an abundance of resources available to children and families. Ottawa County has a strong and accredited juvenile detention facility along with multiple unique programs for juvenile offenders. In 2010, Ottawa County was presented with a Program of Excellence award by Justice Corrigan for their Juvenile Court Resource Team.

At the time of the review in May 2018, Lake and Newaygo Counties were providing foster care services to 108 children and Ottawa County was providing foster care service to 181 children respectively¹. In Lake, Newaygo and Ottawa Counties the number of children in care at the time of the review accounted for less than one percent of the total number of children in the State of Michigan’s foster care population. Children under the age of nine represented 61 percent of the foster care population in Lake and Newaygo Counties and 64 percent in Ottawa County¹.

Lake, Newaygo and Ottawa Counties had a high number of cases reviewed with previous MDHHS interventions. Specifically, Lake and Newaygo Counties had four cases with previous MDHHS interventions; accounting for 50 percent of the total cases reviewed. Ottawa County had five out of the seven reviewed cases with previous MDHHS interventions; accounting for 71 percent of the total cases reviewed.

County Name	Prior CPS in-home case (within past 3 years)	Prior foster care case (within past 3 years)
Lake/Newaygo Counties	1	3
Ottawa County	3	2
Total cases with previous in FC/CPS cases (within past 3 years)	4	5

Summary of Findings

Sixteen cases, eight in Lake and Newaygo Counties and eight in Ottawa County, were randomly selected from a sample that was stratified based on children’s age, placement type and case status. One case in Ottawa County could not be reviewed as the child was truant at the time of the review and unable to be interviewed or observed by the review team. Six foster care and two Child Protective Services on-going cases were reviewed in Lake and Newaygo Counties. Six foster care and one Child Protective Services on going cases were reviewed in Ottawa County. In Lake and Newaygo Counties the case reviews included 60 interviews. In Ottawa County the case reviews included 45 interviews.

Age of Children	Lake and Newaygo Counties	Ottawa County
	Number of Cases	Number of Cases
0 to 4 years old	3	4
5 to 9 years old	3	2

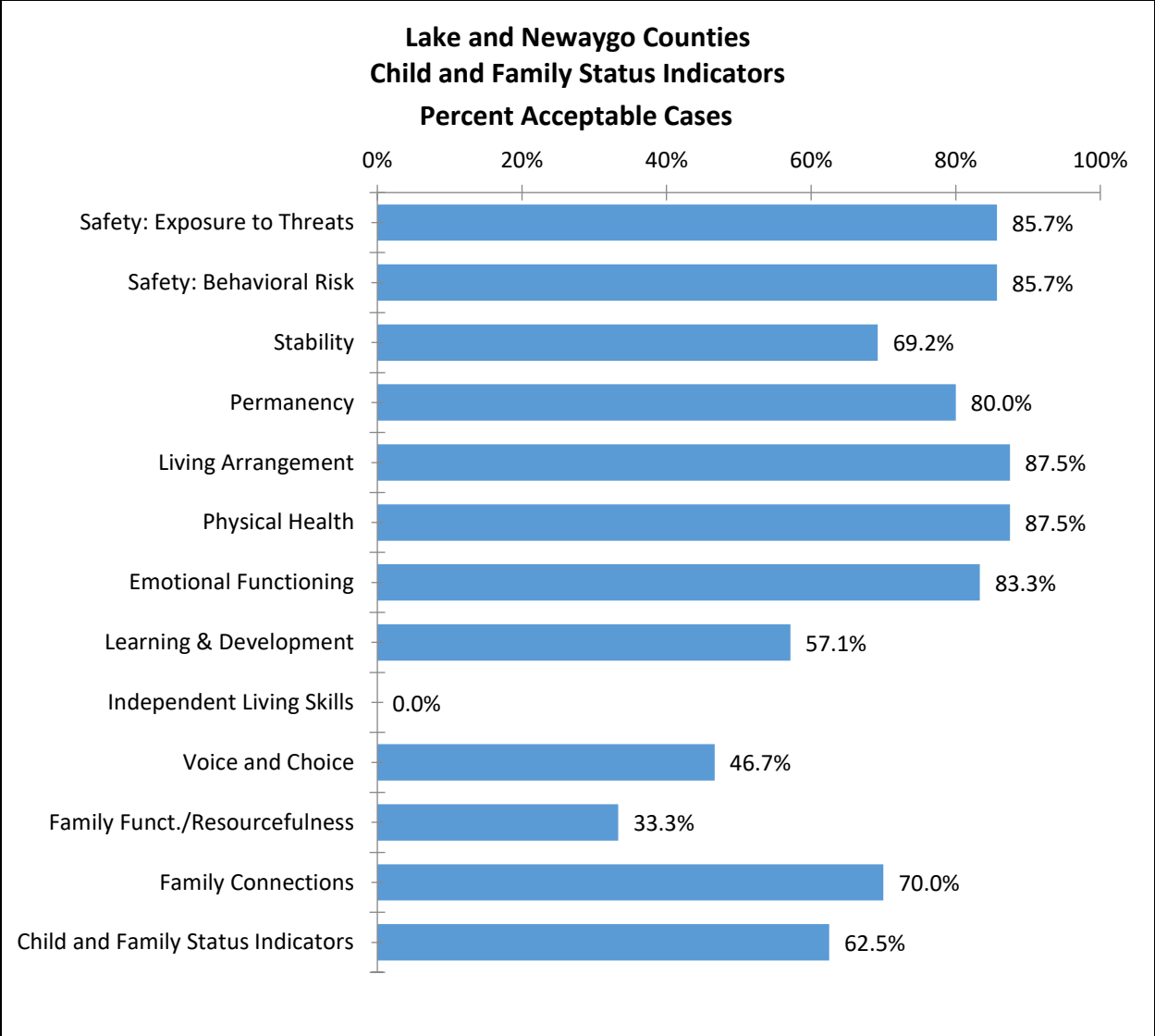
¹ Data provided in the Monthly Fact Sheet May 2018 produced by the Data Management Unit within the Division of Continuous Quality Improvement.

10 to 13 years old	1	0
14 to 17 years old	0	1
18 to 21 years old	1	0
TOTAL	8	7
Time in Care	Number of Cases	Number of Cases
0 to 3 months	0	2
4 to 6 months	3	0
7 to 9 months	1	3
10 to 12 months	0	0
13 to 18 months	2	1
19 to 36 months	2	1
TOTAL	8	7
Type of Placement	Number of Cases	Number of Cases
Parental Home	2	1
Unlicensed Relative	0	0
Licensed Relative	1	0
Unrelated Licensed Foster Home	1	2
Pre-Adoptive	2	3
Residential	1	1
Independent Living	1	0
TOTAL	8	7

**One case was removed from the review ratings as the child could not be observed nor interviewed as the child was AWOL.*

Child and Family Status Indicators

Child and Family Status Indicators provide a picture of where the child and the family are functioning at the time of the review. The length of time a case is open can impact a rating and should be considered when reviewing the overall score. Child and Family Status Indicators concentrate on the outcomes of Safety, Well-Being and Permanence. The following scores reflect only those that fell in the acceptable (4-6) range.

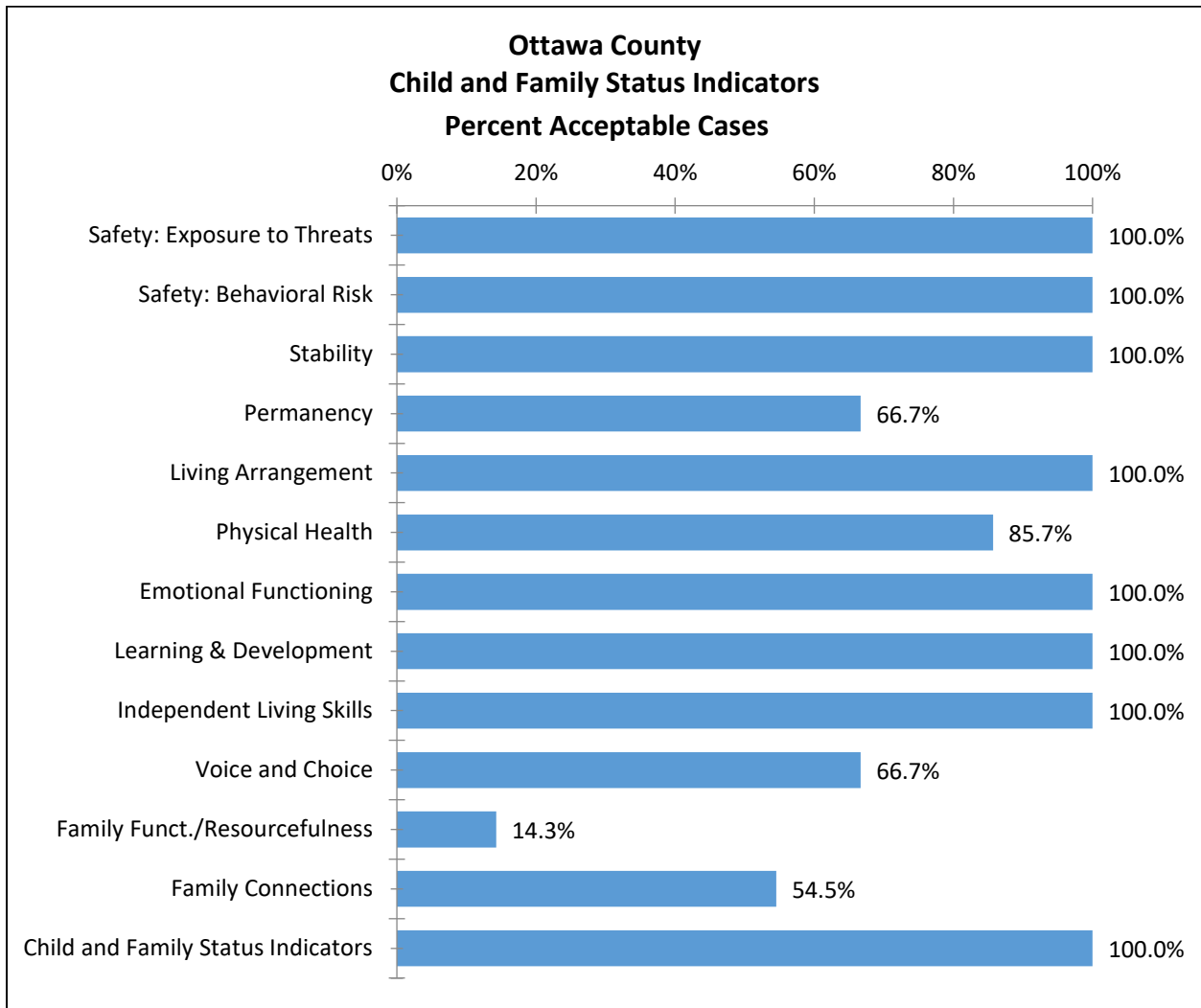


Focus children were found to be healthy with only minimal medical needs. Children are establishing strong relationships with their care providers and permanency is a primary focus. In several cases reviewed, children were placed in pre-adopt homes with case closure anticipated within the next few months. In many cases, focus children were placed in the same home with their siblings and regular visitation was occurring.

In Lake and Newaygo Counties children are safe in placements with caregivers capable to meet the focus children’s needs. However, challenges exist when dealing with older adolescents or children with severe behavioral needs. In one case reviewed, the youth is currently placed in Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care (YAVFC). The child is having regular contact with her biological mother and presents some safety concerns which impacted the overall Safety: Exposure to Threats score.

In another case, a young child is placed in a residential setting appropriate for children with a delinquency background. This child does not have a history of delinquency but does present challenging or difficult behaviors. The worker has been unsuccessful to get the focus child accepted into an abuse and neglect facility despite numerous attempts. The child continues to have severe behavioral needs putting herself and others at risk. Although the current placement is meeting the child’s immediate needs, a different placement is being sought. This case impacts the overall Safety: Behavioral Risk and Living Arrangement score.

Placing children into appropriate residential facilities has been a statewide challenge for workers. Residential facilities are not accepting children with severe behavioral issues placing a burden on workers to find an appropriate placement timely.



In Ottawa County, all focus children were found to be safe and stable in their current placements. In one case reviewed, timely permanency is expected to occur within 30 days of the review. The focus children’s current living arrangement were found to be the most appropriate and least restrictive. In a case reviewed, the family has had multiple challenges due

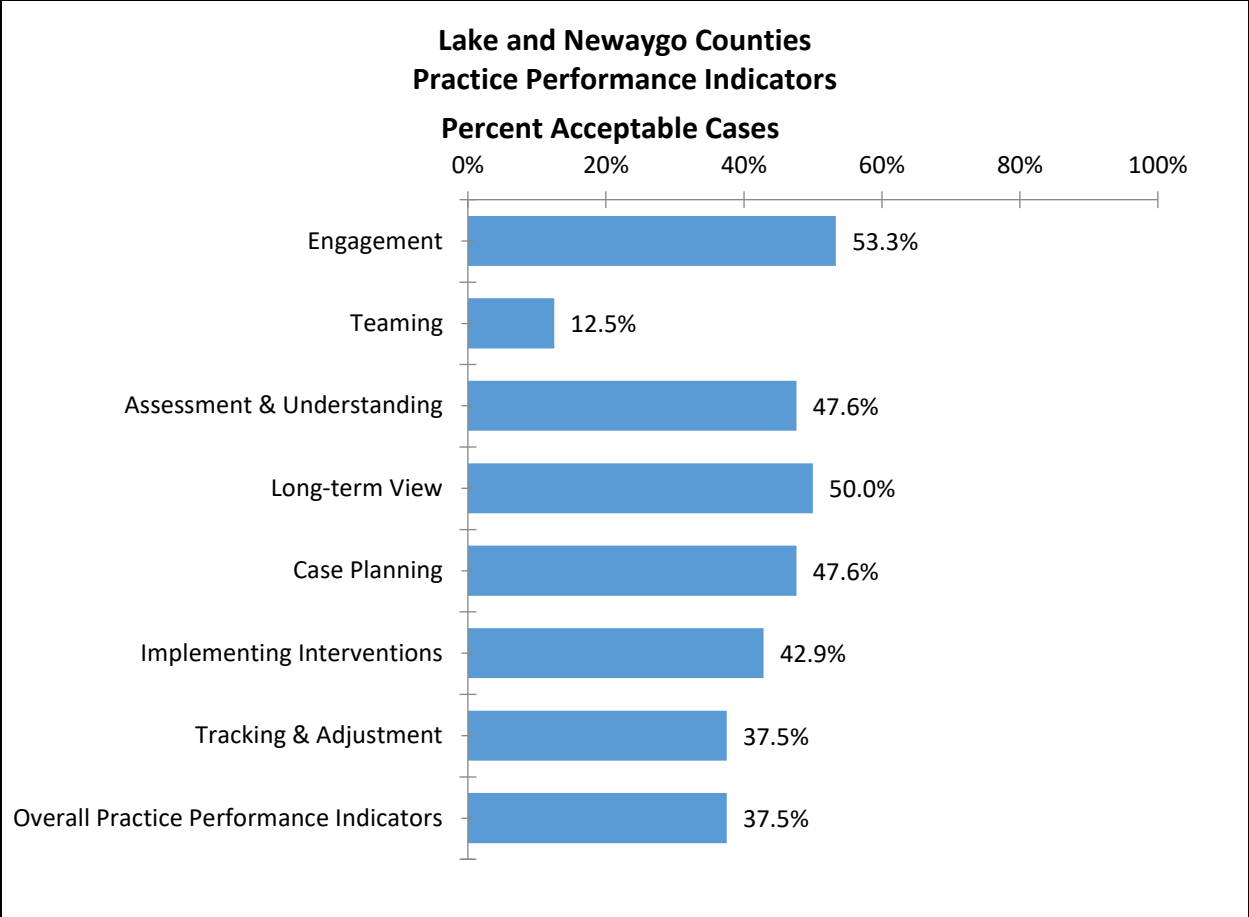
to a foster parent's recent illness, yet the family remains dedicated to the focus child and to completing the adoption process. Children were placed in the appropriate educational setting with all necessary services being provided.

Family Functioning and Resourcefulness was reflective of five out of the seven cases only being open nine months or less; the family could still be building a support system and developing the necessary resources to become self-sufficient. It was described that some parents felt like they had a passive voice in the planning process which has been captured in the Voice and Choice score.

Family Connections was assessed as an area needing improvement. Challenges exists for workers when trying to schedule regular visitation, parental schedules or lack of cooperation impact this score. In one case, the team had not reached out to the large extended family for a focus child. The focus child had recently lived with a relative prior to coming into care and no attempts had been made to contact this relative impacting the rating of Family Connections.

Practice Performance Indicators

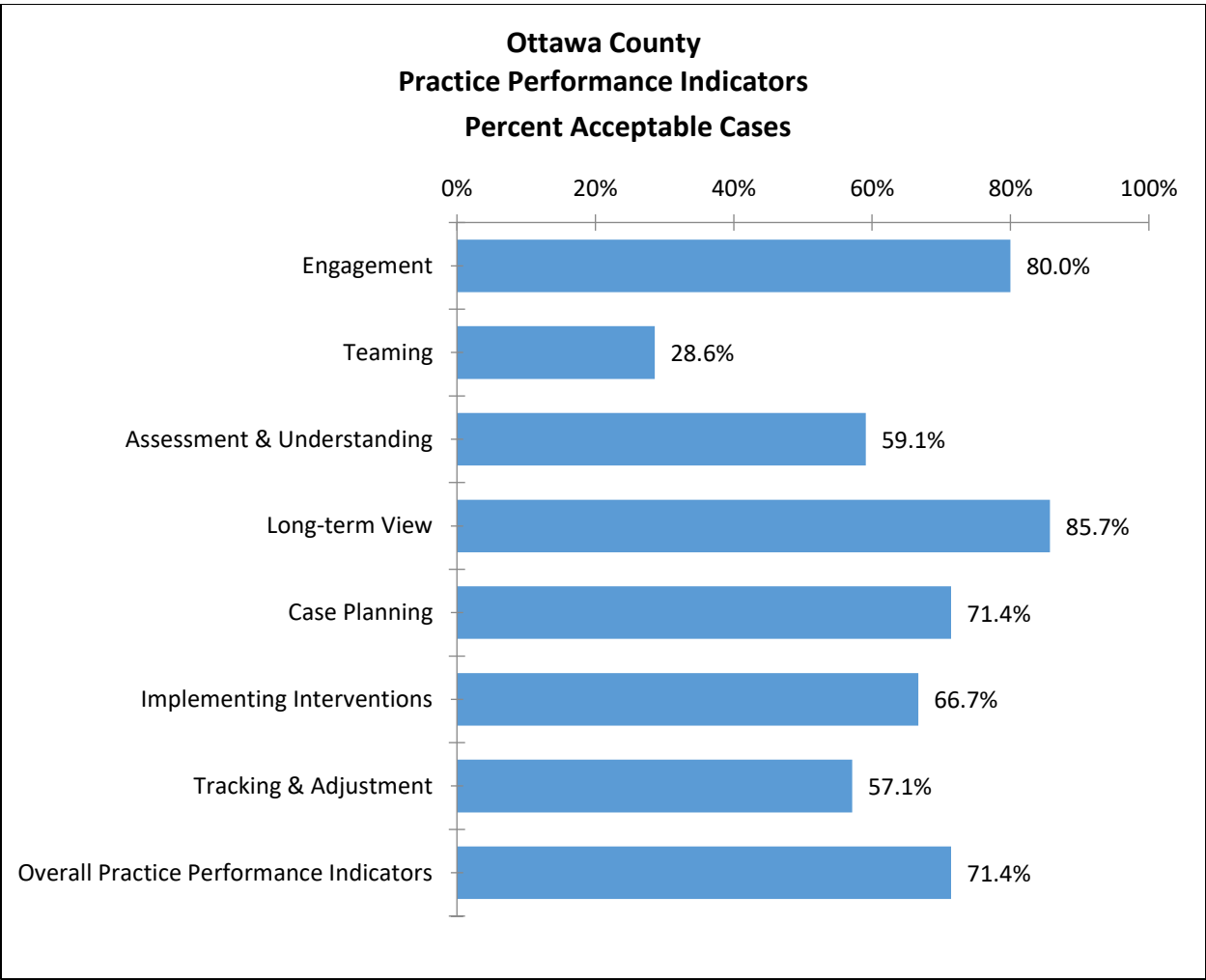
Practice Performance Indicators are a set of activities that correlate with the seven MiTEAM competencies and is the primary tool used to measure how well the child welfare community is implementing the case practice model. The practice indicators are assessed based on (1) whether the strategies and supports are being provided in an adequate manner; (2) whether the strategies and supports are working or not based on the progress being made; and (3) whether the outcome has been met. The following scores reflect only those that fell in the acceptable (4-6) range.



**In 2018, the QSR Protocol was updated. The Case Planning indicator has changed. Previously this indicator was named Planning Interventions and scored in four categories: Safety/Protection, Well-Being, Permanency and Transition to Life Adjustment. The Implementing Interventions indicator has changed, and multiple individuals are now scored (child, mother, father caregiver and other). The previous QSR Protocol only assessed one score for this indicator.*

Staff turnover was noted as a barrier within Lake and Newaygo Counties child welfare system. This is reflective in the scoring of both the Teaming and Engagement indicators. In Teaming, many cases reviewed noted a team being developed but not all team members were being included on decisions due to not being present for meetings. A barrier noted by workers was the difficulty of meeting all team members’ schedules. Providing enough notice in advance was a possible solution by team members interviewed.

Case planning was occurring, however family members felt like they had no voice and choice in the planning process resulting with the plan being developed and provided to the family with no input. This is reflected in the Case Planning score. There was a lack of services available for housing, transportation, mental health, and substance abuse services in Lake and Newaygo Counties, impacting the Implementing Intervention overall score. Overall, Lake and Newaygo Counties are providing the children and families with needed services. Workers and management are resourceful in finding ways to obtain the necessary services.



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In Ottawa County, many focus groups discussed high caseload sizes. Workers reported feeling overwhelmed with their job expectations. In most circumstances, when staff feel overworked or overwhelmed the engagement score decreases, but in Ottawa County this indicator is noted as a strength. This is due to the reports of workers working beyond the expected 40 hours a week to ensure the work is completed and quality time is spent with children and families to meet their needs.

Ottawa County has a wealth of services within the child welfare community. However, workers continue to use the same contracted service providers which results in lengthy wait lists. Many individuals noted the large amount of services available in their community, but several individuals stated that because of the large number of services they are unable to know all the

choices. Ottawa County is developing appropriate case plans for children and families, but due to the challenges with wait list and service provider eligibility restrictions, Implementing Interventions and Tracking and Adjustment indicators were found needing refinement.

Like Lake and Newaygo Counties, Ottawa County had small teams developed on the cases reviewed. Many of those cases lacked communication due to team members working in individual silos failing to come together into one large group. Teams lack informal supports to assist with building a family’s resourcefulness. This is reflected in the Teaming score.

The Long-Term View score highlights workers and team members efforts to prepare families for case closure leaving MDHHS intervention.

Practice Performance Indicators	Lake and Newaygo		Statewide Fiscal Year 2017
	Counties	Ottawa County	
Cultural Identity and Need	N/A	N/A	97.8%
Engagement	53.3%	80.0%	65.0%
Teaming	12.5%	28.6%	37.4%
Assessment and Understanding	47.6%	59.1%	64.4%
Long-Term View	50.0%	85.7%	64.4%
Planning Interventions/Case Planning	47.6%	71.4%	80.8%
Implementing Interventions	42.9%	66.7%	74.4%
Medication Management	N/A	N/A	93.8%
Tracking and Adjustment	37.5%	57.1%	52.2%

**In 2018 the QSR Protocol was updated. The Case Planning indicator has changed. Previously this indicator was named Planning Interventions and scored in four categories: Safety/Protection, Well-Being, Permanency and Transition to Life Adjustment. The Implementing Interventions indicator has changed, and multiple individuals are now scored (child, mother, father caregiver and other). The previous QSR Protocol only assessed one score for this indicator.*

Summary from Focus Groups and Stakeholder Interviews

Lake and Newaygo Counties

Seven individual stakeholder interviews were conducted and seven stakeholder focus groups with a total of 50 participants.

Strengths:

- A positive work environment exists in Lake and Newaygo Counties. Staff reported everyone works well together and good collaboration between all programs was described. Workers function as a team and never hesitate to assist a co-worker when needed.
- In Newaygo County, Fremont Area Community Foundation provides local investment in the community services. True North Community Service is a useful resource for the child welfare community.

- A positive support network between service providers and workers was described. Service providers also reach out to one another and request assistance when needed. Due to the small community many service providers know one another along with workers. This assists with building strong relationships.
- Workers are very resourceful with limited resources in the child welfare community. MDHHS management is resourceful, using funding to obtain the necessary services needed in the area. A good collaboration with adjacent counties is an asset to obtain services when needed.
- Newaygo has a strong and positive relationship with court and law enforcement.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- The relationship between MDHHS staff and court personnel was described as strained in Lake County. The biggest challenges exist with approval of petitions filed by CPS workers. An improved collaboration would assist in rebuilding this relationship.
- The submission of court reports is often delayed and does not meet the guidelines. This is a challenge for court personnel and attorneys to adequately represent their clients.
- Foster parents requested additional trainings in the areas of trauma and managing children with specialized behaviors.
- Worker retention is a barrier in the child welfare community. This places additional challenges on workers and presents difficulties for workers to engage with families. This can also delay case progress or permanency.
- Lack of services available for housing, transportation, mental health, and substance abuse services is also an opportunity for improvement.

Ottawa County

One individual stakeholder interview and 11 stakeholder focus groups with a total of 85 participants were conducted.

Strengths:

- A supportive environment among workers was noted in the MDHHS office. Good communication and relationship between MDHHS and private agency partners was noted. A strong community collaboration was described with many MDHHS staff participating in collaborative groups in the community.
- A strong and positive relationship with court personnel was described. The prosecutor is a helpful resource for workers when needed. Workers and court personnel respect each other's opinion and work as a team.
- The faith-based community and nonprofit organizations provide a wealth of resources for children and families.
- Ottawa County has experienced and dedicated foster parents. Several support groups exist for foster parents. A Facebook page developed by a foster parent provides support and immediate assistance when needed.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- There is a need for increase capacity for services, including therapists, housing, transportation, CMH.
- MDHHS staff requested additional support from upper management. Caseload sizes are large and present as a challenge for workers. They would like alternative work schedules and work locations. Staff believe this would assist with overall staff morale.
- A focus on continued efforts to have a trauma informed child welfare community was noted as a need.
- In previous years, the collaboration between MDHHS and court personnel was occurring on a regular basis. MDHHS would regularly participate in programs like the Juvenile Court Resource Team. This collaboration has decreased and is seen as a useful resource for workers and the court.

Ongoing Monitoring Systems

The QSR is one-step in measuring and monitoring the ongoing progress within the child welfare system statewide. Although the QSR uses a unique and qualitative approach, other monitoring systems examine the compliance of statewide standards.

The Fidelity Tool is used to ensure that the main competencies of the case practice model: teaming, engagement, assessment and mentoring, are being implemented and used effectively by field staff. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are identified areas of compliance used to benchmark progress within the child welfare system statewide. All these areas of measurement are used to lead to the desired outcomes as measured in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

The CFSR assesses the outcomes of services provided to children and families. The CFSR examines systemic factors that affect the ability of the State to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. The CFSR includes a review of Michigan's AFCARS (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System) and NCANDS (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System) data, statewide assessment, case reviews conducted by federal and state reviewers and interviews with key stakeholders.

The CFSR assesses the following areas to promote child safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes:

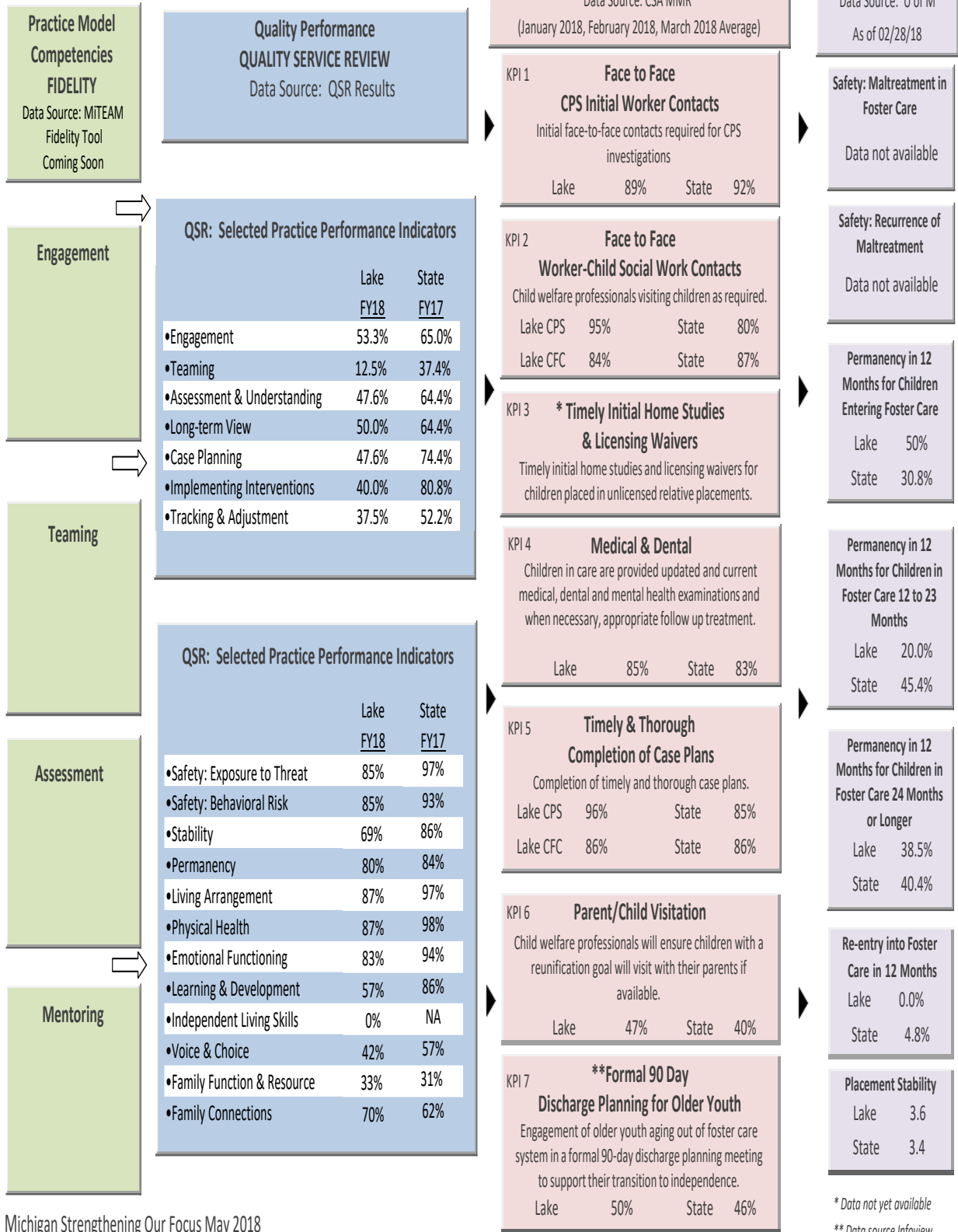
- Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

- Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The CFSR focuses on the entire statewide child welfare system and examines the effectiveness using seven systemic factors that include:

- Statewide information system
- Case review system
- Quality assurance system
- Staff and provider training
- Service array and resource development
- Agency responsiveness to the community
- Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention

Measuring and Monitoring Progress - Lake



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Measuring and Monitoring Progress - Newwaygo

Practice Model
Competencies
FIDELITY
 Data Source: MITEAM
 Fidelity Tool
 Coming Soon

Quality Performance
QUALITY SERVICE REVIEW
 Data Source: QSR Results

Behaviors
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
 Data Source: CSA MMR
 (January 2018, February 2018, March 2018 Average)

Observed Performance
CFSR OUTCOMES
 Data Source: U of M
 As of 02/28/18

Engagement

QSR: Selected Practice Performance Indicators

	Newwaygo FY18	State FY17
•Engagement	53.3%	65.0%
•Teaming	12.5%	37.4%
•Assessment & Understanding	47.6%	64.4%
•Long-term View	50.0%	64.4%
•Case Planning	47.6%	74.4%
•Implementing Interventions	40.0%	80.8%
•Tracking & Adjustment	37.5%	52.2%

KPI 1
Face to Face
CPS Initial Worker Contacts
 Initial face-to-face contacts required for CPS investigations
 Newwaygo 91% State 92%

Safety: Maltreatment in Foster Care
 Data not available

KPI 2
Face to Face
Worker-Child Social Work Contacts
 Child welfare professionals visiting children as required.
 Newwaygo CPS 89% State 80%
 Newwaygo CFC 90% State 87%

Safety: Recurrence of Maltreatment
 Data not available

KPI 3
*** Timely Initial Home Studies & Licensing Waivers**
 Timely initial home studies and licensing waivers for children placed in unlicensed relative placements.

Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care
 Newwaygo 31.6%
 State 30.8%

Teaming

QSR: Selected Practice Performance Indicators

	Newwaygo FY18	State FY17
•Safety: Exposure to Threat	85%	97.7%
•Safety: Behavioral Risk	85%	93.4%
•Stability	69%	86.3%
•Permanency	80%	84.1%
•Living Arrangement	87%	97.8%
•Physical Health	87%	98.9%
•Emotional Functioning	83%	94.9%
•Learning & Development	57%	86.4%
•Independent Living Skills	0%	NA
•Voice & Choice	42%	57.5%
•Family Function & Resource	33%	31.4%
•Family Connections	70%	62.3%

KPI 4
Medical & Dental
 Children in care are provided updated and current medical, dental and mental health examinations and when necessary, appropriate follow up treatment.
 Newwaygo 88% State 83%

Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12 to 23 Months
 Newwaygo 50%
 State 45.4%

Assessment

KPI 5
Timely & Thorough
Completion of Case Plans
 Completion of timely and thorough case plans.
 Newwaygo CPS 90% State 85%
 Newwaygo CFC 91% State 86%

Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 24 Months or Longer
 Newwaygo 37.8%
 State 40.4%

Mentoring

KPI 6
Parent/Child Visitation
 Child welfare professionals will ensure children with a reunification goal will visit with their parents if available.
 Newwaygo 50% State 40%

Re-entry into Foster Care in 12 Months
 Newwaygo 41.7%
 State 4.8%

KPI 7
****Formal 90 Day**
Discharge Planning for Older Youth
 Engagement of older youth aging out of foster care system in a formal 90-day discharge planning meeting to support their transition to independence.
 Newwaygo 75% State 46%

Placement Stability
 Newwaygo 3.3
 State 3.4

* Data not yet available
 ** Data source Infowiew

Measuring and Monitoring Progress - Ottawa

Practice Model
Competencies
FIDELITY
 Data Source: MITEAM
 Fidelity Tool
 Coming Soon

Quality Performance
QUALITY SERVICE REVIEW
 Data Source: QSR Results

Behaviors
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
 Data Source: CSA MMR
 (January 2018, February 2018, March 2018 Average)

Observed Performance
CFSR OUTCOMES
 Data Source: U of M
 As of 02/28/18

Engagement

QSR: Selected Practice Performance Indicators

	Ottawa FY18	State FY17
•Engagement	80%	65%
•Teaming	28.6%	37.4%
•Assessment & Understanding	59.1%	64.4%
•Long-term View	85.7%	64.4%
•Case Planning	71.4%	74.4%
•Implementing Interventions	66.7%	80.8%
•Tracking & Adjustment	57.1%	52.2%

KPI 1 Face to Face CPS Initial Worker Contacts
 Initial face-to-face contacts required for CPS investigations
 Ottawa 93% State 92%

Safety: Maltreatment in Foster Care
 Data not available

KPI 2 Face to Face Worker-Child Social Work Contacts
 Child welfare professionals visiting children as required.
 Ottawa CPS 87% State 80%
 Ottawa CFC 82% State 87%

Safety: Recurrence of Maltreatment
 Data not available

Teaming

QSR: Selected Practice Performance Indicators

	Ottawa FY18	State FY17
•Safety: Exposure to Threat	100%	97%
•Safety: Behavioral Risk	100%	93%
•Stability	100%	86%
•Permanency	66.7%	84%
•Living Arrangement	100%	97%
•Physical Health	85.7%	98%
•Emotional Functioning	100%	94%
•Learning & Development	100%	86%
•Independent Living Skills	100%	NA%
•Voice & Choice	75%	57%
•Family Function & Resource	14.3%	31%
•Family Connections	60%	62%

KPI 3 * Timely Initial Home Studies & Licensing Waivers
 Timely initial home studies and licensing waivers for children placed in unlicensed relative placements.
 Ottawa 77% State 83%

Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care
 Ottawa 55.6%
 State 30.8%

KPI 4 Medical & Dental
 Children in care are provided updated and current medical, dental and mental health examinations and when necessary, appropriate follow up treatment.
 Ottawa 77% State 83%

Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12 to 23 Months
 Ottawa 67.7%
 State 45.4%

Assessment

KPI 5 Timely & Thorough Completion of Case Plans
 Completion of timely and thorough case plans.
 Ottawa CPS 85% State 85%
 Ottawa CFC 86% State 86%

Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 24 Months or Longer
 Ottawa 37.0%
 State 40.4%

Mentoring

KPI 6 Parent/Child Visitation
 Child welfare professionals will ensure children with a reunification goal will visit with their parents if available.
 Ottawa 45% State 40%

Re-entry into Foster Care in 12 Months
 Ottawa 7.7%
 State 4.8%

KPI 7 ** Formal 90 Day Discharge Planning for Older Youth
 Engagement of older youth aging out of foster care system in a formal 90-day discharge planning meeting to support their transition to independence.
 Ottawa (n/a - none due) State 46%

Placement Stability
 Ottawa 4.2
 State 3.4

Michigan Strengthen Our Focus -- May 2018

* Data not yet available
 ** Data source Infowiew

The University of Michigan with the collaboration of the MDHHS has developed a CFSR monitoring tool. The CFSR Observed Performance dashboard is a useful resource in monitoring County and BSC performance. The dashboard allows users to monitor Michigan's performance on CFSR measures by county and Business Service Center (BSC), monthly. The dashboard can be found at <http://ssw-datalab.org/project/cfsr-in-michigan/>.

Next Steps

The child welfare directors, in partnership with the child welfare community will utilize the results of the QSR focus groups and practice performance measurements to develop a Practice Improvement Plan (PIP), to address identified areas needing improvement. The Business Service Center (BSC) director will provide oversight to the county director on the development of the plan, its implementation and tracking of progress. A copy of the final approved plan will be provided to the director of the Division of Continuous Quality Improvement, as well as the executive director of the Children Services Agency.

It is recommended that each county's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team explore ways to address staff retention. Lake, Newaygo and Ottawa Counties' staff performance could benefit from a concentrated training effort aimed at coaching key caseworker activities outlined in Michigan's case practice model. The CQI team could be a resource to outline an action plan for specific enhanced case practice training.

The CQI team may want to focus attention in the areas that are immediately impacting case practice such as the following:

- **Family Team Meetings:** Staff should assure that the appropriate notice is provided to all team members to assist with participation. The meetings should include a combination of formal and informal supports for the family. Staff members should have regular communication among all team members. This allows for consistency when sharing updates and discussing case challenges. The family members should feel like active team members and be allowed a voice of advocacy in the case planning process. This will assist them in gaining the confidence and knowledge needed for case closure and beyond. A strong team can improve case practice leading to timely permanency, resourceful team members and positive outcomes for children and families.
- **Service Provision:** A review into the counties' recidivism rate of cases with MDHHS interventions may provide some needed direction into service implementation and contracts. This may provide a guide of what services are needed and useful when providing a family with interventions. In Ottawa County, a review of services used on a regular basis in comparison to the wealth of services available may provide workers and team members with knowledge and additional resources not currently being utilized.
- **Staff turnover:** Staff retention has been identified as a statewide barrier. This was identified in all three counties as a barrier for workers, service providers and the court.

Staff turnover leads to issues with engagement and teaming. Families are forced to build a relationship with multiple workers in a very short period. Case planning and implementation can be affected as recommendations and other services may be overlooked which can cause a delay in achieving permanency. The CQI team may want to examine alternative solutions for staff retention and recruitment.

Appendix A

Lake County and Newaygo County Interviews and Focus Groups

The QSR process allows an opportunity for participants to share their perceptions in both the individual and focus group interviews. It should be noted that the validity of the statements made during group sessions and interviews are not verified by the facilitators. The information is intended as an opportunity for further exploration by county child welfare leadership.

Individual Stakeholder Interviews

Individual Stakeholder interviews were held with the Newaygo County family court referee, Newaygo County presiding family court judge, Lake County court personnel, Lake County prosecuting attorney, MDHHS program manager, and MDHHS county directors for Lake, Newaygo and Ottawa counties.

Strengths: A strength identified through stakeholder interviews was the collaboration among the community and the child welfare agencies. All the interviews discussed the collaboration that occurs within the community and the common goal to keep kids safe and help families.

The interviewees praised MDHHS staff for team collaboration and the support across divisions and with other counties. There are six counties who collaborate to help address needs within communities.

Stakeholders acknowledged the amount of resources and services available within the counties. The Fremont Area Community Foundation was discussed to be a resource utilized within the communities. Most the stakeholders reported they felt most of services needed are available.

Opportunities for Improvement: A challenge that was identified in the stakeholder interviews is finding a balance to provide funding needs and ensuring services are staffed with appropriately skilled workers. The stakeholders described that although they have services available in each county the same services are not available in both Lake and Newaygo Counties.

The stakeholders reported the geographic area of Newaygo and Lake Counties create a lot of travel time for families and workers. There is no public transportation available to families in Newaygo County to be able to travel to appointments and community resources. Stakeholders explained workers will have to travel outside of the county to take families to psychiatric services and hospitals.

Most of the stakeholders identified socio economic challenges for families living in generational poverty. Stakeholders explained Lake County is reported to be one of the lowest income counties in the state due to lack of employment opportunities within the county.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with the following groups:

Foster Care Youth

Eight individuals participated and provided feedback in this group. The ages ranged from 16-19 years old and have been in care from two to five years.

Strengths: All the youth reported they have benefited from participating in MYOI and continue being in the group for the support and life skill training they receive. The youth explained they also get additional help for vehicles, employment, and educational needs.

Most of the youth reported they have a good relationship with their worker and feel they have a positive relationship with them. The youth reported their workers are responsive to them and will text them back or call them when they need to communicate. The youth reported their workers have not changed a lot and they have been able to build relationships with them. Also, the youth reported they have not changed placements more than twice.

Most of the youth reported they feel they have a strong say in their case planning and can express their wants and needs. The youth reported they attend family team meetings and have a lot of support from team members. All the youth were able to identify support people they have in their lives.

Opportunities for Improvement: Most of the youth reported they felt obtaining services and counseling took a few months and should have started quicker. The youth explained most of them must go through one agency and it can take several months for the services to begin.

Most of the youth identified wanting more privacy in their personal lives specifically to their friends. The youth explained they don't like having to ask friend's parents for their full names and date of births, so they can have background checks completed on them. The youth discussed making them feel awkward and not wanting to go to other people's homes.

Some of the youth reported they were not having visitation with their siblings. The youth identified barriers to seeing their siblings as adoption and distance between foster homes. The youth discussed not having any contact information for their siblings even though they can have phone contact.

Foster Parents

Three individuals participated and provided feedback in this group. The years of experience ranged from two to five years.

Strengths: The foster parents reported they have a positive relationship with the foster care workers and find them to be supportive. The foster parents explained the workers are motivated to help them and the children do well. The workers stay consistent with the foster parents and visit monthly with quality visits.

The foster parents reported they were included in the case planning process such as attending family team meetings. There have been concerns where the parents did not want foster parents to attend so the worker has maintained contact with the foster parent separately.

The foster parents all reported they can get the support and services they need with assistance from the workers. The foster parents gave examples of knowing who to call for respite care, obtaining clothing allowance, and finding service providers.

Opportunities for Improvement: The foster parents reported there is a lack of networking support as there are no support groups in the community. The foster parents reported they do use social media groups as a form of support.

The foster parents identified the need for training to be more prepared when they take placement of a child. The foster parents explained they would like to see more classes available with varying times and locations such as doing them online.

The foster parents reported there is a need for more services to the youth and families such as doctors with Medicaid and therapists assisting with development and behavioral concerns. In-home respite care was also identified to be a resource that foster parents would find beneficial.

Lake and Newaygo Foster Care and Children Protective Services Supervisors

There were five individuals who participated and provided feedback in the meeting. Three MDHHS foster care supervisors and two MDHHS CPS supervisors. The years of experience in supervision ranged from five to eight years.

Strengths: The supervisors identified strengths in Lake and Newaygo County to be both counties collaborate well together and within their offices. The supervisors praised their workers for being dedicated to the job and ensuring the well-being of children. Most of the supervisors reported they have support from their management and feel they can work closely together and across programs. The supervisors explained there is a team approach to everything they do. The supervisors identified the priority for their work is ensuring children are safe.

All the supervisors for Newaygo County identified their relationship with the court to be a positive support for them and their workers. The supervisors stated they feel supported by the staff at court including the workers feeling respected by the referee and judge.

Opportunities for Improvement: All of the supervisors identified a greater need for services within their counties. Newaygo reported there is a need for transportation services, mental health, and substance abuse services. Lake County supervisors identified needing additional services for in home counseling and treatment foster homes.

The supervisors identified a need for workers to be better prepared when they complete their initial training. The supervisors gave examples of workers having inconsistent training between trainers, and not being fully prepared for their job responsibilities.

The supervisors in Lake County identified needing to improve the communication between the department and court system. The supervisors gave examples of not being able to directly contact the judge. The staff feel there is a lack of support from the referee regarding their petitions.

Children Protective Service Workers

Fourteen individuals participated and provided feedback for this group. The years of experience ranged from nine months to six years.

Strengths: All of the CPS workers identified their teamwork and collaboration together as a positive strength for their division. The workers explained they are supportive to one another and help each other whenever needed.

The workers reported they have a positive working relationship with law enforcement and the schools within the district. The workers reported they can contact law enforcement whenever needed and know they will assist with families.

The workers identified having a funding resource for removals they can access funding to assist in the needs of the children.

Opportunities for Improvement: The workers from both counties identified needing more community resources and services within their communities. The workers identified needing more in-home services. The workers gave examples of having no public transportation and substance abuse services.

Lake County workers identified needing to improve the relationship with their court to improve the acceptance of petitions and after hour removals. The workers reported they desire having increased contact and communication with the prosecutor.

Most of the workers reported they desired to have more consistency among the supervisors regarding expectations and standards for their statistics. The workers reported some supervisors are available to help support them always and others have difficulty with their schedules.

Foster Care and Licensing Workers

Ten individuals participated and provided feedback for this group. The years of experience ranged from 11 months to 16 years.

Strengths: The workers identified having a strong and supportive team for their division. The workers reported they feel their coworkers and supervisors provide support to them in their work. The workers explained they feel they have good placements for children and licensing homes.

The workers reported they have a positive relationship with the service providers that provide great services to their youth and families. The workers explained since they are a smaller community, they can build closer relationships with the workers.

All the workers stated they have positive interactions with the court system and the judges. The workers reported feeling respected in the court room, can convey their passion for the families and are able to advocate for their interests.

Opportunities for Improvement: All the workers identified needing additional training after the new worker institute. The workers reported they did not feel the training prepared them for the work that is done in the field. The workers reported there is ongoing training offered at the office that is helpful, however, most of their learning has occurred outside of classroom settings.

Most of the workers identified needing more community resources and service providers. The workers explained they would like to see the quality of some services increase to help support families with substance abuse and cognitive impairments.

All the workers reported they are working to find a balance between the caseload requirements and completing all necessary tasks. The workers explained time consuming requirements such as scanning documents, data inputting and completing paperwork takes away from the time they can spend in the field.

Attorneys and Prosecutors

Five individuals participated and provided feedback in this group. The years of experience ranged from twenty years to six years.

Strengths: All of the attorneys reported they have a positive relationship with MDHHS workers. The attorneys reported they can contact the workers through email or calling them. The attorneys explained they like that the community is small, and they know the workers.

The attorneys identified having a good court system that examines at each family's case individually and base the requirements and services specific to that case. The attorneys explained this is a benefit to the families with timelines of reunification.

The attorneys reported they are invited to family team meetings however are usually unable to attend due to their case schedules. The attorneys explained they do feel a part of the case planning through the court process and informal meetings that may occur.

Opportunities for Improvement: The attorneys identified the lack of community resources and foster homes for youth as a barrier to reunification for families. The attorneys explained services can take some time to begin working with youth and families. Also, children are often not able to find the best homes because there is always a need for more foster parents. Most of the attorneys identified needing to educate parents on the court process and what the expectations of them will be during their court involvement. The attorneys gave examples of parents needing to attend visits, appointments, services, and maintain employment. The attorneys identified this can cause a barrier to youth being reunified as the expectations are high of parents.

Some of the attorneys identified needing to improve their communication with service providers. The attorneys explained they are unable to obtain reports or contact service providers at times. Some of the attorneys reported service providers testimony is more about advocacy than accurately reporting statements in court.

Lake County Service Providers

Five individuals participated and provided feedback in this group.

Strengths: The service providers identified several trainings that are available at their facilities and services provided through their agencies. The service providers reported these resources are available to workers and families.

All service providers reported having a great relationship with MDHHS staff and supervisors. The service providers explained they can contact them through email or texting and have quality communication.

Most of the service providers reported they are involved in the case planning with the families and workers. The service providers stated they are invited to family team meetings and appreciate how they are run in a strength-based way that is supportive to the families. Some of the service providers reported the community benefits from having a small community that consists of caring people who work together to benefit the families in their community.

Opportunities for Improvement: The service providers reported there is a need for quality resources of housing, employment, and transportation in the community. The service providers

stated there is a need for safe housing; houses with structurally sound roofs and clean functioning water sources.

Most of the service providers identified a need for caregivers to build positive support networks outside of the generational poverty cycle. The service providers explained families often remain living together in poverty and do not trust other caregivers in the community.

Some of the service providers reported there is a need for a smoother referral process that will allow for continuation of services and allow services to begin quickly initially. The service providers explained workers can assist with this by engaging families to see the benefit of services.

Newaygo County Service Providers

There were five individuals that participated and provided feedback for this group.

Strengths: The service providers reported they are a community that works well together and focuses on collaboration. The service providers explained they have been working together for many years and seek each other out to get assistance.

Some of the service providers identified foundations that offer funding and financial resources to support services. The service providers explained they feel they have more opportunities than some of the surrounding counties. Most of the service providers reported they have a positive relationship with MDHHS and the workers. The service providers stated there is a lot of good collaboration to provide services to families and they include foster parents at times.

Opportunities for Improvement: Most of the service providers reported there is a need for transportation services and low-income housing that is safe. The service providers explained since there is limited housing landlords often charge higher rent and have less standards for the home.

Some of the service providers reported there is a need for more in home counseling services due to the lack of transportation and a large geographic service area. The service providers explained this would be a benefit for families who are unable to attend counseling and could provide foster care support.

The service providers identified challenges in finding licensed providers such as clinicians, doctors, and psychiatric services. The service providers explained due to funding and insurance information this creates barriers for families to find services in the community.

Appendix B

Ottawa County Interviews and Focus Groups

The QSR process allows an opportunity for participants to share their perceptions in both the individual and focus group interviews. It should be noted that the validity of the statements made during group sessions and interviews are not verified by the facilitators. The information is intended as an opportunity for further exploration by county child welfare leadership.

Individual Stakeholder Interviews

An individual stakeholder interview was held with the MDHHS Ottawa County director.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with the following groups:

Foster Youth

A total number of seven youth participated and provided feedback in this group.

Strengths: A strength identified by the youth in the program was the opportunity to participate in the MYOI group. The group provided examples saying they feel supported by the peers in the group and the leader. The youth discussed having their needs advocated for and assistance with personal appointments.

Most of the youth reported they have been able to attend family team meetings with their workers and can discuss their input on their case plans with the workers. The youth reported they felt included in the case action decisions and services with their workers.

Some of the youth reported they were able to utilize funds from programs that supported them in accessing independent skills such as driving, and technology needs for their education. The youth discussed the appreciation for this opportunity to assist with furthering their independent living skills.

Opportunities for Improvement: An opportunity identified by the youth was to have better communication with their foster care workers and guardian ad litem (GAL). The youth reported they do not have continuous contact with their GAL and felt that their workers could spend more time with them at their visits.

Most of the youth reported once they entered care they were no longer able to see their siblings. The youth reported various reasons being due to siblings being adopted, distance between foster homes, and other legal issues. The youth expressed a desire for maintaining the contact with their siblings.

Some of the youth reported they felt workers did not follow through with what they said and are not always honest with the youth.

Private Agency Foster Care Supervisors

A total number of three foster care supervisors participated and provided feedback in this group.

Strengths: All the supervisors identified the number of services as being a strength for Ottawa County. The supervisors explained they feel there are numerous services available for families and often can be accessed quickly.

The supervisors also identified the relationship with the court personnel and judges as being very positive. The relationship was described to have trust and respect with all the staff and their workers. The supervisors reported the workers feel they can provide the best placements and services for the youth with the judges' approval.

The supervisors reported there is also a beneficial and positive relationship with MDHHS. There is good communication between the agencies and a supportive working relationship. The supervisors identified MDHHS purchase of service monitors as being responsive and supportive to their staff.

Opportunities for Improvement: The supervisors reported the training for their staff and their supervision training could be improved to include more policy and MiSACWIS training. The supervisors felt there are areas that are improving within new worker training; however, workers still need additional hands on training in some areas.

Most of the supervisors reported they would like to see reports from service providers completed and sent to the workers in a timelier manner. The supervisors explained that workers often have a hard time getting reports and responses back from therapists.

All the foster care supervisors identified needing more foster homes for the youth in foster care. The supervisors explained they have a hard time keeping siblings together due to lack of availability. The supervisors gave examples of not being able to place young children including babies due to the foster home pool being smaller.

Foster Care Workers

A total of seven foster care workers participated and provided feedback.

Strengths: All the workers identified a positive relationship between MDHHS and private agencies. The workers reported they find the relationship to be supportive and helpful with

sharing information. The workers stated they have good communication and feel their voices are heard.

Most of the workers reported there are a lot of organizations within the community that provide good services to families and are dedicated to helping keep children within the community. The workers expressed how they appreciate resource fairs happening at MDHHS and through email information.

Most of the workers identified having a positive relationship with the court and legal partners. The workers reported feeling supported by the court and a positive working relationship with the attorneys. The workers explained having good communication with the attorneys and court.

Opportunities for Improvement: All of the workers identified needing more foster care homes for the youth. The workers gave examples of not having enough placements for the youth and needing homes that are better trained in being able to handle the trauma youth are experienced before they entered care.

Most of the workers reported they would like to get better and quicker feedback from service providers as they are often having to wait to receive their reports. The workers also reported they often send their families out of the county to receive services and this can be complicated with referral processes and funding.

Some of the workers identified feeling unsupported by their supervisors and administration. The workers identified the statistics for cases as being emphasized and can at times over shadow the work that is being done with families.

Attorneys

A total number of four attorneys participated and provided feedback in this group. One attorney is assigned as the GAL for the county, two are parent attorneys, one is the prosecutor.

Strengths: The attorneys identified the relationship with MDHHS workers and private agency workers to be positive and feel there is good communication. The attorneys stated they have regular meetings with MDHHS and private partners.

Most of the attorneys identified the services available within the county to be beneficial to foster youth and the parents working with the court system. The attorneys identified a variety of services that are available within designated areas for families.

Some of the attorneys reported workers are doing well on their petitions and testifying in court. Some of the workers were reported to maintain good communication with the attorneys and notify them if there are any changes.

Opportunities for Improvement: All of the attorneys identified the turn-over for workers to be a challenge in cases. The attorneys expressed frustration in the number of case workers youth have and the lack of information that is passed on when workers change.

The attorneys identified opportunities for training in court room settings such as testifying and petition writing. The attorneys explained they felt workers would benefit from additional training to feel confident and comfortable in the court room.

Most the attorneys reported the need for additional services such as domestic violence services specific to male victims, housing, transportation, and dental. All these services were identified as limited within the county and impacting family reunification.

Private Agency Foster Care Program Managers and Directors

There were four individuals who participated and provided feedback for this group.

Strengths: The program managers and directors identified the court system in Ottawa to be a positive support as the workers feel they are heard at court and have easy access to court personnel. The group explained the court is knowledgeable about the youth and families.

Most of the group felt the community has great opportunity for resources and services as they are a “resource rich” county due to the income from manufacturing jobs in the area. The group reported the services provide community support and individual services to help families.

The group reported the community is supportive to foster care youth as they provide Christmas parties and gifts for them while they are in care. The group explained the companies within the county are involved in supporting youth within the community.

Opportunities for Improvement: All the program managers and directors reported there needs to be additional housing for foster care. The group discussed there is a need for treatment foster homes however currently there is not sufficient funding.

The group identified the need for services for youth that require clinical services and are unable to receive counseling and psychiatric services due to not meeting the requirements outline in Medicaid policy. The group discussed the lack of funding as a barrier in receiving Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) waivers, services to address autism, and trauma informed counselors.

Most of the group discussed the need to address the rate of turnover for all staff. Some of the agencies discussed trying to determine internally why the retention rate is low for workers. These members further described that when employees depart the agency, exit interviews could be useful to collect more specific information from the staff about why they left the job.

Legal Partners

Four individuals participated and provided feedback in this group. Assistant director of field services, juvenile court director, probate judge and circuit court judge.

Strengths: The legal partners reported they feel the workers are prepared for court when they come for hearings. Most of the workers were described as learning the court process after their first hearing.

The group discussed the community having a lot of services that are available to the families. The workers were praised for their knowledge assisting the parents with services. Most of the legal partners discussed being involved with the cases to make decisions to continue moving it forward for children reunified with parents. The group discussed having designated attorneys for parents and children as being positive for the court and families.

Opportunities for Improvement: The legal partners discussed an opportunity to improve collaboration between the courts and MDHHS. The group gave examples of the department no longer collaborating on court efforts or participating in meetings as they did previously.

Most of the legal partners also discussed feeling that supervisors and workers at MDHHS and private agencies are relying on policy to drive their practice and they feel it can interfere with the workers case management skills.

Most of the legal partners reported that court reports are often not timely and do not fit the format needed for the hearings. The legal partners gave examples of the reports being too lengthy or not containing enough detailed quality information.

MDHHS Child Welfare Staff (CPS Workers)

There were fourteen individuals who participated and provided feedback in this group. Most workers were investigators and one ongoing worker. Also attending were the MiTEAM specialist, data analyst, prevention worker, and a lead worker. The years of experience ranged from 3 months to 21 years. Most of the participants had around two and half to five years of experience.

Strengths: The workers reported they felt supported within their office and everyone is willing to help each other including across programs. The workers stated the agencies are supportive and they have positive relationships.

The workers reported there are a wealth of services available to the families within the community and they collaborate with service providers and law enforcement to assist families.

Most of the workers reported they have a positive relationship with their supervisors. The workers reported their supervisors are understanding of the work they do and assist them with

completing tasks if needed. The workers reported their supervisors are available for supervision whenever they need it.

Opportunities for Improvement: Some of the workers reported they do not have a positive relationship with the court and feel they are intimidated by court personnel and attorneys. The workers described examples where they felt disrespected at court and hesitant in their position.

All the workers reported they perceive stats and numbers to be the highest priority. The workers explained they must work a lot of hours on their cases and are not able to always meet deadlines due to demanding caseloads.

The workers identified housing, transportation and mental health services as a need within the community to support families. The workers explained families outside of town are not able to access services easily due to lack of transportation or find affordable housing.

MDHHS Foster Care and CPS Supervisors

There were nine individuals that participated and provided feedback in this group. Five participants supervise CPS. Four participants supervise foster care. The years of supervision ranged from one year nine months to eight years.

Strengths: The supervisors reported they feel their staff works well together and they always make sure children's safety comes first in their work. The supervisors reported there is a lot of teamwork among the programs.

Most of the supervisors reported there are many services that provide beneficial resources to the community. The department has a good relationship with the service providers that are contracted for services with families. Substance abuse and domestic violence services are reported to be great services that are available within the community.

Some of the supervisors reported feeling supported and able to provide the additional support and guidance needed to their staff. Supervisors reported they attend several meetings to discuss statistical data and feel they are supported by their management in addressing challenges.

Opportunities for Improvement: Most of the supervisors discussed improving the relationship with the court and attorneys. The supervisors discussed the court having issues with MDHHS policy which can present challenges for workers.

Most of the supervisors discussed needing more providers within the services available. The supervisors explained Community Mental Health (CMH) as being restrictive and limited in the services they will offer families. Also, services are often backlogged for families.

Most of the supervisors reported challenges with balancing caseloads and maintaining statistics. Supervisors stated most of their caseworkers have high caseloads with high expectations leaving them to feel overwhelmed leading to staff turnover.

Licensing and Adoption Workers

There were nine individuals that participated and provided feedback for this group. Five were licensing workers and four were adoption workers.

Strengths: The workers reported a good collaboration between private agencies and MDHHS. The workers explained there is a monthly coalition that meets to help address retention rates and training.

The workers also discussed the many resources available that have strong connections to the community. The workers described having a focus on trauma services for the youth and their families available.

Most workers reported having positive relationships with their supervisors and feel they are supportive of their staff. The workers discussed supervisors assisting with tasks and having open communication with them to participate.

Opportunities for Improvement: Most of the workers reported there are challenges in finding appropriate foster homes for youth including young children. The workers explained if any youth have any behavioral challenges it makes it very difficult to place them within foster homes as foster parents are not able to handle aggressive behaviors.

Most workers reported foster parents are facing challenges of getting through the licensure process which delays receipt of payment. The schedules for training foster parents is not always convenient.

Some of the workers reported that there is a need for additional services such as a behavioral specialist and occupational services. These services were identified to have a lack of funding including no Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) waiver from CMH. Workers reported when a child moves out of county their services are not able to continue and this causes a disruption in services.

Foster Parents

Thirteen individuals participated and provided feedback in this group. The years of experience range from nine months to eight years.

Strengths: All of the foster parents reported they have a great working relationship with their foster care workers and licensing workers. The foster parents explained the workers are responsive in their communication and help to answer any questions they have.

Most foster parents reported they appreciate how the placing system works as the process includes looking at the best options for the children and not just the first option. The foster parents explained they believe a good relationship among the agencies contribute to the placing system.

Some foster parents reported there are a lot of resources within the community that offer services. The foster parents reported they are often looking for ways to utilize these resources with the foster youth.

Opportunities for Improvement: All of the foster parents reported there is a greater need for training to include restraint training, trauma training and court process training. The foster parents explained they do not feel they have all the skills they need to understand the foster youth when they accept placement.

Most foster parents reported needing additional resources to help with respite, counseling and behavioral concerns. The foster parents explained they are unsure who needs to initiate services and who they should begin calling. Funding was identified as a barrier in the availability of services.

Most foster parents reported feeling more communication needs to occur at the initial placement of the child and despite confidentiality everyone should be included within the team to make appropriate decisions for the child. The foster parents reported full disclosure of the youth's behaviors are often not reported at placement.

Service Providers

Six individuals participated and provided feedback in this group.

Strengths: All of the services providers reported there are a lot of close connections within the community among the agencies and service providers. The service providers explained how some of them are within close proximity to one another and collaborate with some of the same community groups which makes it possible to have good communication.

Most service providers reported there are many resources within the community who believe in investing within their own community including churches and nonprofits. The service providers explained there are many collaborations that happen within the community to engage the agencies together and address barriers identified.

Some of the service providers reported having a positive relationship with MDHHS. The service providers explained some of the workers are very responsive and willing to assist them with working with the families. The service providers reported they feel everyone in child welfare has a good and polite relationship with each other as they all want to work collaboratively.

Opportunities for Improvement: All the service providers reported there is a cultural stigma within the community that needs to change to accept lower income housing and mental health services. The service providers explained there is a lack of funding being contributed to housing, mental health services and transportation.

Most service providers identified trauma in youth as increasing greatly and the number of needed therapists are not available. The service providers explained the youth are having to wait to receive services, specifically psychiatric services unless they travel out of the county.

Some of the service providers expressed a need to have additional prevention services available to families. The service providers explained this would lead to a decrease in referrals and CPS workers not feeling burned out from high caseloads.

Appendix C

Child and Family Status Indicators

* The following scores reflect only scores that fell in the acceptable (4-6) range.

Category	Item	Lake and Newaygo	Ottawa
Safety: Exposure to Threats	a. Home	100.0%	100.0%
Safety: Exposure to Threats	b. School	80.0%	100.0%
Safety: Exposure to Threats	c. Other Settings	0.0%	100.0%
Safety: Behavioral Risk	a. Risk to Self	85.7%	100.0%
Safety: Behavioral Risk	b. Risk to Others	85.7%	100.0%
Stability	a. Home	75.0%	100.0%
Stability	b. School	60.0%	100.0%
Permanency	Permanency	80.0%	66.7%
Living Arrangement	Living Arrangement	87.5%	100.0%
Physical Health	Physical Health	87.5%	85.7%
Emotional Functioning	Emotional Functioning	83.3%	100.0%
Learning & Development	a. Early Learning / Development	100.0%	100.0%
Learning & Development	b. Academics	40.0%	100.0%
Independent Living Skills	Independent Living Skills	0.0%	100.0%
Voice and Choice	a. Child/Youth	50.0%	N/A
Voice and Choice	b. Mother	25.0%	0.0%
Voice and Choice	c. Father	25.0%	100.0%
Voice and Choice	d. Caregiver	100.0%	80.0%
Voice and choice	e. Other	0.0%	100.0%
Family Functioning/Resourcefulness	a. Mother	33.3%	0.0%
Family Functioning/Resourcefulness	b. Father	33.3%	0.0%
Family Functioning/Resourcefulness	c. Other	N/A	100.0%
Family Connections	b. Mother	100.0%	33.3%
Family Connections	c. Father	50.0%	66.7%
Family Connections	d. Siblings	50.0%	0.0%
Family Connections	e. Other	100.0%	75.0%

Practice Performance Indicators

* The following scores reflect only scores that fell in the acceptable (4-6) range.

Category	Item	Lake and Newaygo	Ottawa
Engagement	a. Child/Youth	50.0%	N/A
Engagement	b. Mother	50.0%	100.0%
Engagement	c. Father	25.0%	100.0%
Engagement	d. Caregiver	100.0%	80.0%
Engagement	e. Other	0.0%	50.0%
Teaming	Teaming	12.5%	28.6%
Assessment & Understanding	a. Child/Youth	62.5%	85.7%
Assessment & Understanding	b. Mother	25.0%	25.0%
Assessment & Understanding	c. Father	25.0%	33.3%
Assessment & Understanding	d. Caregiver	75.0%	80.0%
Assessment & Understanding	e. Other	0.0%	33.3%
Long-term View	Long-term View	50.0%	85.7%
Case Planning	a. Child/Youth	50.0%	71.4%
Case Planning	b. Mother	25.0%	75.0%
Case Planning	c. Father	25.0%	66.7%
Case Planning	d. Caregiver	100.0%	80.0%
Case Planning	e. Other	0.0%	50.0%
Implementing Interventions	a. Child/Youth	50.0%	71.4%
Implementing Interventions	b. Mother	25.0%	75.0%
Implementing Interventions	c. Father	25.0%	33.3%
Implementing Interventions	d. Caregiver	75.0%	80.0%
Implementing Interventions	e. Other	0.0%	50.0%
Tracking & Adjustment	Tracking & Adjustment	37.5%	57.1%