

# Child and Family Services Review Newsletter

A Regular Publication from the Division of Child Welfare



Safety



Permanency



Well-being



December 10, 2007

Volume 1, Issue 5



## WANTED!

As Colorado continues to move forward in the CFSR process and prepares for the formal on-site reviews that will occur June 23-26, 2008, it is necessary to recruit individuals who can serve on the Review Teams. For details see page 3 of this newsletter.

## Taking Stock of Our Role in the CFSR

By J. Robert Lowenbach

District Court Judge, Nineteenth Judicial District

The great American humorist, lecturer and writer Mark Twain observed "Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits." For those who are stakeholders in the Colorado Child Welfare system it may be tempting to ascribe the problems within it to other players in the system. While this finger pointing may soothe our own feelings of disappointment, it does nothing to improve the status of the children and families who are the consumers of those services.

The CFSR process is very important for all of Colorado's children and families and to be successful it requires that all stakeholders participate in the collaborative process. Beyond making plans to put our best foot forward as a state in order to avoid fiscal sanctions, the CFSR process compels us to *first* examine our own habits and to reform

them where necessary. It is essential that we share the credit for the excellent work being done with children and families and also that we accept responsibility where we have fallen short of our goals.

The CFSR process is designed to capitalize on our shared values in order to move our system forward to create a more humane system for our children and families. If properly executed, the CFSR process will force us to promote program improvement by unifying our stakeholders under a common goal. That goal is safety, permanency and well-being for all of our children. It is only by making a personal commitment to work collaboratively with other stakeholders that we will move forward to create an effective system for our children and their families.

Colorado Department of  
Human Services

Division of Child Welfare

1575 Sherman Street  
Denver, Colorado 80203

Phone:

(303) 866-5932

Fax:

(303) 866-5563

Website:

[www.cdhs.state.co.us/  
childwelfare/CFSR.htm](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare/CFSR.htm)

Editor:

Valerie Jenkins

[valerie.jenkins@state.co.us](mailto:valerie.jenkins@state.co.us)

Publisher:

Caitlin Smith

[caitlin.smith@state.co.us](mailto:caitlin.smith@state.co.us)

### How Judges and Magistrates Positively Impact the Safety, Permanency and Well-Being of our Children - *Child Welfare's Perspective*

The Courts play an integral role in supporting positive outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare process. Some of the ways the Court positively impacts the safety, permanency and well-being of our children are:

- Support the "1st placement is the only placement" principle.
- Make every hearing a meaningful event with defined objectives and/or specific actions to be taken in order to eliminate delays and empower parents to participate.
- Timeliness - facilitate a process to inform all parties regarding the Court's expectations and time frames; emphasize the need for permanence, safety and well-being.
- Raise your Court's standard about granting continuances if the continuance increases the time to permanence for a child.
- Know how many moves a child has had before the hearing starts, so if another move is proposed, good questions can be asked.

CFSR Kickoff  
May 23, 2007

CW Conference  
June 6-8, 2007

CFSR Meeting  
June 8, 2007

Regional Kickoffs  
July - October,  
2007

Receive State  
Data Profile  
November, 2007

Statewide  
Assessment  
April, 2008

State Reviewer  
Training  
May 27, 2008

Child and Family  
Services Review  
June 23-26, 2008

# Child and Family Services Review Newsletter

A Regular Publication from the Division of Child Welfare



## It's All About the OUTCOMES!

By Lloyd Malone, Director

Teller County Department of Social Services

The Children and Family Services Review is upon us! The Colorado Department of Human Services, all of Colorado's counties and their local stakeholders have finished our local and regional self-assessments. Many of us are waiting anxiously to see which two counties (besides Denver) will be selected to have on-site reviews next year. Teller County has recently volunteered to have an on-site review and I'd like to tell you why: it's all about the outcomes!

I was responsible for the on-site review in El Paso County the last time the feds were in town, and yes, it was a challenging and time-consuming process. But when it was all over and I could look forward, it was well worth the effort. Agency staff, providers, representatives from the legal community, schools, the mental health system, and many other key stakeholders had been involved in preparing for and participating in the Review. Together as a community, we learned about our strengths and our barriers to better outcomes for children and families. It's one thing to see numbers and percentages on data reports. It's quite another thing to take a detailed look into case practices, analyze interagency protocols, and question our selves and each other, how we could do better!

- How can we support casework practice to ensure quality visits for families and children?
- How can we work together to reduce instability in foster care?
- What initiatives can we support that enable meaningful family involvement in and ownership of their case plans?
- How can we work more closely with our schools to achieve better educational outcomes for foster children?
- What steps can our community take to enable youth to find permanent homes and family/kinship connections?

Many of these questions will have better answers and yes, lead to better outcomes when the whole community and not just the child welfare agency is involved. If Teller County is lucky enough to be selected for the Review, we will welcome the opportunity for our whole community. If not, we'll use our CFSR self-assessment to begin a local dialogue and develop some action plans to improve our performance.

After all, it IS all about the OUTCOMES!

### Areas where Colorado is "Out of Compliance"

Two prominent areas that Colorado is out of compliance with Federal Standards include:

- Timeliness
- Periodic Review

Timeliness refers to how long it takes workers to end date a removal span in Trails. 694 records out of 3,813 in the latest AFCARS submission took more than 60 days to be entered in Trails from the time the removal was ended.

Periodic Review refers to the need of all children in foster care to have a periodic review every six months, either by the Administrative Review Division or by the Courts. 1725 records out of 10,612 (16.26%) in the latest AFCARS submission did not meet this requirement.

For more information regarding the data profile visit the CDHS Portal. Look in the folder named "CFSR Quarterly PIP Data". You can run the reports by county or by state.

# Child and Family Services Review Newsletter

A Regular Publication from the Division of Child Welfare



## CFSR Review Teams - We Need You!

As Colorado continues to move forward in the CFSR process and prepares for the formal on site reviews that will occur June 23-26, 2008, it is necessary to recruit individuals who can serve on the Review Teams. The following is a list of activities and functions the team members will participate in:

- Participate in Training and Orientation Sessions prior to the review.
- Review the completed Statewide Assessment and Preliminary Assessment and any other materials provided in preparation for the onsite review.
- Remain present and free from other responsibilities at the review site for the entire week of the review. Activities will include participating in all activities from the entrance conference through the final local site debriefing conference.
- Conduct all activities related associated with review case records and conducting case related interviews as well as completing onsite review instrument.
- Participate, as requested, in focus groups, open forums, and other group meetings scheduled during the site review.
- Attend daily briefings and present information on cases reviewed.
- Assist in compiling a summary of the team's findings during the onsite review.
- Submit completed review instruments.

- Remain available for telephone consultation following the review, if needed, to clarify or supplement information recorded on the instruments.

The Onsite Review Team will include both Federal and State representatives that bring a broad perspective from within and outside the child welfare agency. The team will be divided into four local site teams—two teams will operate at the Denver site and two additional teams—one for each of the additional sites yet to be determined.

We anticipate recruiting and training a minimum of 50 individuals. It is important for any one interested in participating in this important process to have an understanding of Colorado's Child Welfare policies and procedures as well as having some understanding of the Trials Information System. All interested persons are asked to complete the [Reviewer Application Form](#) and return it to Valerie Jenkins, CFSR Project Lead, by no later than December 28, 2007. If you have additional questions feel free to contact Valerie at 303-866-3918.

Applications will be reviewed and final decisions made by January 15, 2008.

**Submissions Wanted!**  
Beginning with the next newsletter, we will be having a regular Court Corner and County Corner section of this newsletter. Please submit your ideas, articles, pictures and other ideas to Valerie Jenkins to be considered for publication in future editions.



### Coming Attractions

- Site Selection Criteria and Process
- Finalized Statewide Assessment
- Updates from the Executive Oversight Committee