

Steele County Minnesota Child and Family Service Review

Program Improvement Plan

I. General Information	
County Agency Name: Steele County Human Services	Address: 630 Florence Ave., Owatonna, MN 55060 Telephone Number: (507)444-7500
County Person Primarily Responsible for PIP: Dean Schneck, Social Services Supervisor	E-mail Address: Dean.schneck@co.steele.mn.us Telephone Number: (507)444-7560
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To be completed by DHS:

Date Draft PIP Submitted by County: 2/14/08	Date PIP Approved:
Due Dates for Quarterly Updates: 7/1/08; 10/1/08; 1/2/09; 4/1/09	
Date of PIP Progress Review(s):	PIP Completion Date:

II: Program Improvement Plan Narrative *Detailed instructions and additional information on the following narrative is available in the PIP instructions*

Introduction and Performance Summary: Include when the MnCFSR was completed and a summary of performance in outcomes, performance items and national standards.

Steele County Human Services participated in a Minnesota Child and Family Service Review of Steele County's child welfare system in August 2007. The onsite review consisted of an intensive examination of nine randomly selected cases involving children who received child welfare services between June 27, 2006, and August 30, 2007. Four in-home and five placement cases were reviewed.

The county had the strongest findings in:

- Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children.
- Well-being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their education needs.

The areas most often rated as needing improvement included:

- Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Well-being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs
- Well-being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Steele County had strength ratings in five out of six National Standards of Performance. Strengths included: recurrence of maltreatment, incidence of child abuse/neglect in foster care, stability of foster care placements, length of time to achieve reunification, and length of time to achieve adoption. The national standard of performance for foster care re-entries will be addressed in this PIP.

Cross Cutting Themes Identified During MnCFSR: Provide a description of crosscutting themes and systemic issues that affect multiple areas of the county's performance.

The following key themes emerged from information compiled from the Minnesota Child and Family Services Review in Steele County:

- The agency has maintained positive and effective working relationships with community partners. These efforts have resulted in collaborative community-based strategies being developed to address the safety, permanency and well-being needs of children.
- Family-centered practice and improved outcomes for children would be supported by developing policies and expanding assessments, services and case planning to include non-custodial parents and all children in families, not just identified victims of abuse or neglect.
- The case sampling process and a case that was reviewed both exemplified an agency practice of case workers unsuccessfully attempting to provide child protective services to families for several

months to address safety concerns. Improved outcomes for children would be supported by developing agency policy, caseworker expectations, and supervisory consultation to guide workers' practice when balancing parental need for autonomy with the need for families to safely protect and nurture their children.

- County licensed child foster care providers continue to be an asset for Steele County Human Services. Community stakeholders reported that providers are well-trained, supported, and are true partners in the child welfare system.

Description of Overarching Strategies: Provide a description of program improvement strategies and identify strengths or promising practices that can be effective in making improvements in multiple areas. Include discussion on staff orientation/training in relation to the MnCF SR and Program Improvement Plan.

The general practice of "Assessment" will be broadened/redefined/reconstructed to include: (1) Assessment workers and case managers routinely assessing the risk factors for all children in the home. (2) The identification and inclusion of non-custodial parents in assessing family strengths/needs and service provision. (3) Child well-being and Mental health assessments of all children in the household. These assessment practices are aimed at ensuring risk is appropriately managed, involving family in case planning, and maintaining appropriate levels of contact between case managers and family members.

Steele County will utilize the *Quality Assurance Toolkit* developed by DHS for conducting qualitative case reviews. On a quarterly basis, the Supervisor will review two in-home cases and one placement case with the case managers. Results will be shared with the case managers and with the Children's Services Unit as a learning tool and to assure uniform, quality practice.

Child protection social workers were actively involved the CFSR process in August 2007 and the development of this plan. Agency workers value practice improvement driven by research supported "best practices" and are open to DHS training opportunities that enhance the outcomes for children.

Description of Methods of Measurement/Monitoring: Provide a description of the evaluation approaches that will be used for measuring improvement, e.g. Qualitative Case Review System and review of relevant SSIS reports.

Steele County will implement a quality assurance system to measure and track progress toward achieving the goals of the Program Improvement Plan. Specifically, two facets of this system will be developed:

(1) The "Quality Assurance Toolkit" will be used by the Supervisor on a quarterly basis to review two in-home cases and one placement case. The Supervisor will review collected data with the Unit staff.

(2) Selected "SSIS General Reports" will be utilized to monitor and measure Children's Services Unit performance as it related to PIP goals and desired outcomes.

Plan for the Development and Dissemination of the PIP: Provide a description of the process used for developing and soliciting input on the PIP, e.g. who was involved, and the plan for dissemination of the PIP to agency staff and community partners.

The Supervisor and the Children's Services Unit have the responsibility for the development and ownership of the PIP. For the purpose of information sharing, consultation, and feedback, the CFSR, along with identification of the areas of improvement, has been shared with the Children's Services Unit, Child

Protection Team and the CJJ Team. The PIP plan will be disseminated to the agency Director along with the aforementioned groups.

III. Matrix

Supplemental Item: Screening and assessment	
Performance at time of review (%): 60%	Performance Goal (%): 85%
Issues noted in the final report: Of five cases rated, a FA and an Investigation were not thorough. In one case, not all risk and safety concerns were adequately addressed with the parent. In the other case, not all household members were interviewed.	
Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Children's Services Supervisor and Child Protection Assessment Social Workers.	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Conduct in-service training with all Assessment workers for the purpose of reviewing Assessment protocol including (a) Family Assessment Response Case Review Checklist, and (b) DHS Investigative Response Checklist.	4-1-08		
(2) Assessment protocol for all Family Assessments and Investigations will include: (a) Gathering sufficient information to complete Safety and Risk Assessments. (b) Conducting interviews/meetings with all household members.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	

SAFETY OUTCOME 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	
Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	
Performance at time of review (%): 55.6%	Performance Goal (%): 85%
Issues noted in the final report: Four cases rated this as an Area Needing Improvement. Two cases had child protection reports received by the agency during the period under review that appeared to meet criteria for an investigation or Family Assessment; however, these reports were screened out by the agency. There were three cases in which there was inadequate management of risk, and safety concerns for all children in families due to insufficient contact between workers and families.	
Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Intake worker, Child Protection Case Managers, and Children's Services Unit Supervisor	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) The agency's "Steele County Screening Criteria for Alleged Maltreatment" document will be updated by incorporating revisions from the state recommended guidelines.	4-1-08		
(21) All CP reports received by the agency will be screened according to uniform guidelines, regardless of whether they involve open cases or not.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(2) An in-service training will be provided to all CP workers involved in screening CP reports in order to review the "Steele County Screening Criteria for Alleged Maltreatment" and to review that uniform guidelines apply to all reports, regardless of whether they involve open cases or not.	4-1-08		
(3) The SDM Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths Tool will be used to guide the number of contacts necessary with a family to sufficiently address risks and safety concerns.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(4) An in-service training will be provided			

to all CP case managers to review case management protocol, including reviewing the Child Protection Case Management Checklist.	4-1-08		
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PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation	
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	
Performance at time of review (%): 66.7%	Performance Goal (%): 85%
Issues noted in the final report: One of the three foster care cases resulted in a child entering foster care twice within 12 months for essentially the same reason.	
Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Child protection case managers and Children’s Services Supervisor	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Case managers will utilize the SDM Family Reunification Assessment risk tool to aide in evaluating safety factors.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(2) In a CHIPS case, if the petition is not dismissed at the time a child returns home, the case manager will recommend a court ordered “trial home visit” before returning custody of a child to a caregiver.	On-going	Quarterly SSIS child re-entry reports. Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(3) In order to reduce unnecessary foster care placements and foster care re-entries, the Placement Committee will screen all cases for the appropriateness of Family Group Decision Making Services.	Ongoing	The Supervisor, as part of the Placement Committee, will oversee this on an on-going basis.	
(4) The FGDM Facilitator will meet with child protection workers and with the Placement Committee to review the various facilitated services available.	4-15-08		

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation		
Data Indicator: Foster Care Re-Entries		
National Standard: 8.6%	County Performance (2005): 14.8%; (2006): 14.3%	Performance Goal (%): 8.6%
Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Child Protection Case Managers and the Children's Services Supervisor		

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Case managers will utilize the SDM Family Reunification Assessment risk tool to aide in evaluating safety factors.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(2) In CHIPS cases, case managers will request court ordered "trial home visits" before returning custody to a caregiver.	On-going	Quarterly SSIS child re-entry reports. Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(3) In order to reduce unnecessary foster care placements and foster care re-entries, the Placement Committee will screen all cases for the appropriateness of Family Group Decision Making Services.	On-going	The Supervisor, as part of the Placement Committee, will oversee this on an on-going basis.	
(4) The FGDM Facilitator will meet with child protection workers and with the Placement Committee to review the various facilitated services available.	4-15-08		

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	
Performance at time of review (%): 66.7%	Performance Goal (%): 85%
<p>Issues noted in the final report: There was one in-home case in which there was not an adequate assessment of the mother's needs. In another case, one child's father, who shared custody with the mother, was not contacted about needs. In one case, not all the children received an assessment of their needs.</p>	
<p>Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Child protection case managers and Children's Services Supervisor.</p>	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Case managers will ensure that the needs of all family members will be assessed within 30 days of case opening.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(2) Case managers will utilize appropriate assessment tools, including: SDM-Safety Assessment, SDM-Family Risk Assessment, SDM-Family Needs and Strengths Assessment, SSIS-Child Well-Being Tool, and either the PSC or ASQ-SE for mental health screenings (unless the child is exempt or there is documentation that the parent refuses).	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(3) Supervisor will review the following training tools with case managers: <u>*PIP TIPS Item 17: Assessing Needs and Services" with case managers</u> <u>*PIP TIPS Item 18: Involving Families and Children in Case Planning</u> <u>*PIP TIPS: Worker Visits with Parents</u> <u>*PIP TIPS: Involving Fathers</u> <u>*PIP TIPS: Worker Visits with Children</u>	4-15-08		

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	
Performance at time of review (%): 33.3%	Performance Goal (%): 85%
<p>Issues noted in the final report: There were three cases in which not all families members signed the case plans, although there was evidence of parents' and children's full involvement in the development of their plans. There were two cases in which not all appropriate family members were involved in case planning. There was one case that was open for five months in which no case plan was developed with the family; although a subsequent case opening resulted in timely case plan development with all family members.</p>	
<p>Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Child protection case managers and Children's Services Supervisor.</p>	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Case managers will ensure that all appropriate family members (e.g. parents and age-appropriate children) sign case plans. If a family member is unwilling or unable to sign the plan, the worker will document the reason(s).	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(2) If a family refuses voluntary case management services for more than 30 days, and a CHIPS petition is not filed, the case manager will close the case.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(3) Supervisor will review the following training tools with case managers: <u>*PIP TIPS Item 17: Assessing Needs and Services" with case managers</u> <u>*PIP TIPS Item 18: Involving Families and Children in Case Planning</u> <u>*PIP TIPS: Worker Visits with Parents</u> <u>*PIP TIPS: Involving Fathers</u> <u>*PIP TIPS: Worker Visits with Children</u>	4-15-08		

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs	
Item 19: Worker visits with child	
Performance at time of review (%): 66.7%	Performance Goal (%): 85%
Issues noted in the final report: In three cases, children were not seen at a frequency that matched their needs; the frequency of face-to-face contact was less than monthly between workers and the children.	
Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Child protection case managers and Children’s Services Supervisor.	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Case Managers will have face-to-face contacts with children at the minimum frequency associated with the SDM-Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths Risk Level.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(2) The Children’s Services Supervisor will conduct in-service training with case managers to review the policies and practices associated with the SDM-Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths tool, particularly as they relate to the expectation that the number of monthly contacts will be based upon the SDM-Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths Risk Level.	4-15-08		
(3) Supervisor will review the following training tools with case managers: <u>*PIP TIPS Item 17: Assessing Needs and Services” with case managers</u> <u>*PIP TIPS Item 18: Involving Families and Children in Case Planning</u> <u>*PIP TIPS: Worker Visits with Children</u>	4-15-08		

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs	
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	
Performance at time of review (%): 77.8%	Performance Goal (%): 85%
Issues noted in the final report: In two cases, there were less-than-monthly visits by the worker with the mothers, and no visits with the fathers; in one of those cases, a subsequent case opening resulted in appropriate frequency of visits.	
Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Child protection case managers and Children’s Services Supervisor.	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Case Managers will have face-to-face contacts with caregivers at the minimum frequency associated with the SDM-Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths Risk Level.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(2) The Children’s Services Supervisor will conduct in-service training with case managers to review the policies and practices associated with the SDM-Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths tool, particularly as they relate to the expectation that the number of monthly contacts will be based upon the SDM-Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths Risk Level.	4-15-08		
(3) Supervisor will review the following training tools with case managers: * <u>PIP TIPS Item 17: Assessing Needs and Services” with case managers</u> * <u>PIP TIPS: Worker Visits with Parents</u> * <u>PIP TIPS: Involving Fathers</u>	4-15-08		

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	
Performance at time of review (%): 37.5%	Performance Goal (%): 85%
Issues noted in the final report: In two cases, the mental health screening tools were not completed within required time frame; when the screenings were completed, there was no indication of a need for further mental health evaluation. In three cases, the mental health screening tools were not completed.	
Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Child protection case managers and Children’s Services Supervisor.	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Supervisor will review with Case Managers the requirement of timely mental health screenings for all children in families receiving child protection case management services.	4-15-08	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(2) Case Managers will document case notes concerning the results of the mental health screenings and any subsequent diagnostic assessments.	On-going	Quarterly QA case reviews.	
(3) Supervisor will review <u>PIP TIPS Item 23: Mental Health of the Child</u> with case managers.	4-15-08		

SYSTEMIC ISSUES: Quality Assurance System	
County Self Rating (from Self Assessment): 2	Goal:
Issues noted in the final report: Steele County has some formal and informal quality assurance practices in place. Developing a process that includes a qualitative case review system will support the agency in measuring progress in Program Improvement Plan (PIP) goals.	
Person(s) responsible for implementing action steps and monitoring progress: Children's Services Supervisor.	

Action Steps	Date to be Completed	Methods of Measurement/Monitoring	Quarterly Updates
(1) Supervisor and child protection case managers will conduct quarterly reviews using the "Quality Assurance Toolkit". The goal is to review <u>two in-home</u> and <u>one placement</u> case each quarter.	Quarterly reviews will begin 5-1-08.	QA Toolkit	
(2) The supervisor will seek assistance from DHS Quality Assurance staff as needed to ensure appropriate use of the Quality Assurance Tool.	On-going		