

Progress of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Monitoring Period XIX
(July 1 – December 31, 2016)

Charlie and Nadine H. v. Christie

July 19, 2017



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1. At Least Two Family Team Meetings Held After 12 Months in Placement with a Goal Other Than Reunification (January – December 2016)	47
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7. Percentage of Children Who Were.....

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Stanley R. Chesler of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey appointed the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) as Federal Monitor of the class action lawsuit *Charlie and Nadine H. v. Christie*, aimed at improving New Jersey's child welfare system. As Monitor, CSSP has been charged with independently assessing New Jersey's compliance with the goals, principles and outcomes of the Court Order entered on December 1, 2005, the Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA) entered on July 17, 2006 and now the Sustainability and Exit Plan (SEP) entered on November 4, 2015 that supersedes the MSA. This is the third monitoring report measuring progress under the SEP and includes performance data for the period July 1 through December 31, 2016.²

Monitoring Methodology

The Monitor's public reports cover six-month periods.³ The primary sources of information on New Jersey's progress are quant

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- x Screening and Investigations Report⁶ – *Current and produced monthly*. This report details State Central Registry (SCR) activity, including data regarding calls to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, assignments to CP&P offices and trends in Child Protective Services (CPS) Reports and Child Welfare Services (CWS) Referrals.
 - x Workforce Report⁷ – *Planned to be annually; last report completed December 2016*. This report provides information regarding the demographics and characteristics of current workers, as well as a variety of indicators of workforce planning and development.
 - x Demographics Report⁸ – *Current and produced quarterly*. This report provides demographic data on children and youth receiving in-home and out-of-home services.
 - x Qualitative Review Report⁹ – *Formerly produced annually as a separate report (last report dated 2014)*. Going forward, the results of yearly Qualitative Reviews are to be included in an annual report entitled “Our Work with Children, Youth and Families,” anticipated in CY 2017. This report will assess the status of children and youth in care throughout the state, as well as the overall performance of DCF systems and practice models. The qualitative data is used to uncover trends and provide insight into systems issues.
 - x Children’s InterAgency Coordinating Council Report¹⁰ – *Current and produced monthly*. This summary report details referral and service activity for CSOC. It also includes the demographics of the youth, referral sources, reasons, resolutions and services provided.
 - x New Jersey Youth Resource Spot¹¹ – *Ongoing and updated as relevant*. The website offers the latest resources, opportunities, news and events for young people. This site includes a list of current Youth Advisory Boards, as well as additional resources available in each county and statewide.
 - x DCF Needs Assessment¹² – *Planned to be annual*. DCF will produce an annual report on its website and will report twice annually to the Monitor. The most recent report entitled *DCF Needs Assessment 2016 Report #2: Qualitative Findings* updates interim findings

⁶ To see the December 2016 Screening and Investigations Report, go to:

http://www.nj.gov/dcf/childdata/protection/screening/Screening.and.Investigation.report_12.16.pdf

⁷ To see the NJ DCF Workforce Report, go to: http://www.nj.gov/dcf/childdata/exitplan/NJ.DCF.Workforce.Report_2015-2016.pdf. To see the NJ DCF Workforce: Preliminary Highlights 2014-2015 Report, go to:

http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/childdata/orgdev/NJ.DCF.Workforce.Report_2015.pdf

⁸ To see the 4th Quarter 2016 Demographics Report, go to: <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/childdata/protection/summary/Demo-2016Q4.pdf>

⁹ To see the 2014 Qualitative Report, go to: <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/opma/Qualitative%20Review%20-%202014%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

¹⁰ To see December 2016 Children’s InterAgency Coordinating Council Report, go to: http://www.nj.gov/dcf/childdata/continuous/CIACC_Dashboard_AllCounty_12.16.pdf

¹¹ To see the New Jersey Youth Resource Spot, go to: <http://www.njyrs.org/>

¹² To See the CP&P Needs Assessment 2016 Report #2 go to:

http://www.nj.gov/dcf/childdata/protection/DCF.Needs.Assessment.Quality.Report_4.17.pdf. To see the CP&P Needs Assessment Interim Report, go to:

http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/childdata/protection/DCF.Needs.Assessment.Interim.Report_3.16.pdf

on DCF's three year multi-phase needs assessment process to identify the resources needed to serve families with children at risk for entering out-of-home placement and those already in placement. DCF expects the final report to be released in December 2017.

- x Adoptions Report¹³ – *Current and produced annually; last report dated 2016*. This report reviews CP&P adoption data and practice related to SEP requirements. This report will be based on CY data.
- x New Jersey's Child Welfare Outcomes Report¹⁴ – *Current and produced annually; last report dated May 2017*. This report focuses on longitudinal, quantitative data measuring outcomes of children served by CP&P.

Reports not yet available but that the state has committed to produce and publish on DCF's website include:

- x Our Work with Children, Youth and Families Report – *To be produced annually; first report expected in CY 2017*. This report will analyze DCF's implementation of the Case Practice Model (CPM), largely utilizing annual data from the QRs as well as selected quantitative data sets.
- x Healthcare of Children in Out-of-Home Placement – *To be produced annually; first report expected in CY 2017*. This report will be a review of the health indicators identified in the SEP and will be based on state FY (July 1 – June 30) data.

In November 2016, DCF launched an online data portal, the New Jersey Child Welfare Data Hub. The data portal, which was developed in collaboration with Rutgers University, allows users to view customized charts and graphs related to New Jersey child welfare data from CY 2008 to CY 2015.¹⁵

For this report, the Monitor engaged in the following additional verification activities:

- x **Caseload Data Verification**

The Monitor conducted a verification review during January and February 2017 of 131 workers to verify their individual caseloads during the period July to December 2016. Findings from this review are discussed in Section V.L – Caseloads – of this report.

- x **Housing, Employment and Education Status Review for Older Youth Exiting Care**

The Monitor collaborated with DCF to review case records of 67 youth ages 18 to 21 who exited care between July and December 2016 without achieving permanency. The

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¹³ To see the Adoptions Report, go here: <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/childdata/exitplan/AdoptionReport2016.pdf>

¹⁴

review focused on the housing, education and employment status of these youth to determine if performance met the level required by the SEP. Findings from the review are discussed in Section V.J – Older Youth – of this report.

x **Visitation Data Review**

The Monitor conducted a review of a statistically significant sample of 330 cases requiring parent visits with children in which documentation indicated that the parent was unavailable or the visit was not required. Findings are discussed in Section V.E – Visitation – of this report.

x **Family Team Meeting Data Review**

The Monitor reviewed 190 cases from July to December 2016 to verify how workers were using and documenting instances in which Family Team Meetings (FTMs) were not required in the first twelve months of placement. Further discussion of the current performance on this measure is included in Section V.B – Family Team Meetings – of this report.

x **Other Monitoring Activities**

The Monitor interviewed and/or visited multiple internal and external New Jersey child welfare system stakeholders, including staff at all levels, contracted service providers, youth, relatives, birth parents and advocacy organizations. The Monitor also periodically attended DCF’s ChildStat meetings, statewide Child Fatality/Near Fatality Review Board meetings, adolescent practice forums and Area Director meetings. The Monitor staff participate as reviewers in almost every scheduled statewide Qualitative Review throughout the year. DCF has fully cooperated with the Monitor in notifying Monitor staff of schedules and facilitating their participation in relevant activities.

Structure of the Report

Section II of this report provides an overview of the state’s accomplishments and challenges. Section III provides summary performance data on each of the outcomes and performance measures required by the SEP in Table 1, *Charlie and Nadine H. v. Christie* Child and Family Outcome and Case Practice Performance Measures (*Summary of Performance as of December 31, 2016*). Section IV provides details and discussion of the SEP Foundational Elements.¹⁶

Section V of the report provides more detailed data and discussion of performance on SEP Measures *To Be Maintained* and Measures *To Be Achieved* in the following areas:

- x Investigations of alleged child maltreatment (Section V.A);

¹⁶ The Foundational Elements requirements of the SEP intentionally recognize the state’s accomplishments in early implementation of the MSA. At the Monitor’s discretion, based on a concern that a Foundational Element has not been sustained, the Monitor may request additional data. If the data demonstrate a persistent problem, in the Monitor’s discretion, the State will propose and implement corrective action (SEP.II).

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- x Implementation of DCF's Case Practice Model; including Family Team Meetings, case planning and visitation (Sections V.B, V.C & V.E);
 - x Educational engagement for children in out-of-home care (Section V.D);
 - x

The discussion below highlights current performance within specific content areas. In accordance with the SEP, subsequent to the release of this report, the Monitor will be providing information to the Court on the new measures that the Monitor intends to certify as *To Be Maintained*.

Child Safety

DCF is responsible for ensuring the safety of children who come to their attention through allegations of abuse or neglect and of those children who subsequently are receiving or have received services from CP&P. This responsibility includes ensuring the safety of children who are placed in resource family homes and congregate facilities, and preventing future maltreatment. As discussed in Section V.G below, DCF sustained performance with respect to the two SEP measures that had been designated as *To Be Maintained* (abuse and neglect of children in foster care and repeat maltreatment for children remaining in home). Notably, DCF met the SEP standard for maltreatment post-reunification for the first time this reporting period, reflecting the hard work DCF has done to ensure safe reunification for children in its care.

Permanency

Permanency is a cornerstone of child welfare practice. As a cornerstone of child welfare practice, permanency is a goal that is essential to the well-being of children. The Monitor will continue to monitor the Department's progress in achieving this goal.

willing and able to accommodate large sibling groups. As of December 2016, there were a total of 85 large capacity SIBS homes: 27 homes with a capacity to accommodate five or more children, and 58 homes that could accommodate four children. DCF hopes to further refine its approach to allow for more targeted recruitment of homes to accommodate specific age groups of children and youth.

Placement Stability

Appropriate, stable placement for children in foster care is critical to a child’s safety and well-being, and maintaining family, school and community bonds. DCF’s continued focus on the retention of an appropriate pool of resource homes and on the goal of making the first placement the best placement for children in out-of-home care has led to further performance improvement. Both SEP measures related to placement stability are longitudinal; CY 2015 data for placement stability for children in their first 12 months in care (SEP IV.G.35) became available this period, as well as CY 2014 data for placement stability for those children remaining in care for 13 to 24 months (SEP IV.G.36). For the first time, both of these SEP placement stability measures were met simultaneously.

Family Team Meetings

A critical component of DCF’s CPM is the use of Family Team Meetings (FTMs) to engage families and their formal and informal supports to discuss strengths and needs, craft individualized service plans and track progress toward accomplishing case plan goals. As discussed in Section V.B, the SEP includes five performance measures pertaining to FTMs, three of which have previously been met and are designated as *To Be Maintained*: the requirement that FTMs be held within 45 days of a child’s removal (SEP IV.B.16); the requirement that for children in out-of-home placement, at least three additional FTMs after the initial FTM be held within the first 12 months of placement (SEP IV.B.17); and the requirement that children in care after 12 months with the goal of reunification have at least three FTMs each year (SEP IV.B.18). DCF has not yet met the remaining two SEP targets in this area: FTMs held after 12 months in placement for children with a goal other than reunification (SEP IV.B.19) and Quality of Teaming (SEP IV.B.20)

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week, DCF's Office of Performance, Management and Accountability (PMA) works with each Area, through its Office of Quality, to develop short and long term goals to strengthen practice, called a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Office of Quality approves each PIP, aggregates results and shares them with leaders across DCF's divisions. Findings from the QRs are incorporated into existing training and supervisory tools and used to identify systemic opportunities for improvement.

In January 2016, DCF began using a new QR protocol, created in CY 2015, in its review of 195 cases across 10 counties.^{20, 21} Ratings from the 2016 QR reviews showed that the status of children and families served by DCF continued to be rated acceptable in the majority of cases in key areas including *learning and development, physical health of the child, safety and living arrangement*. Performance in some areas of practice/system performance also continued to be rated acceptable, such as on *family and community connections with siblings, assessment and understanding with resource families and provision of health care services*.

In other key practice areas, such as on the indicators that measure *teamwork and coordination, case planning, plan implementation and long term view*, performance between January and December 2016 was rated below acceptable levels. This is an area requiring improvement.

ChildStat

ChildStat is a case conferencing forum in which one case is seen as an opportunity to critically analyze practice, policy, and procedures from a systems perspective. The purpose of ChildStat is to encourage a culture of learning through self-reflective and self-diagnostic processes. ChildStat consists of three primary components: the case presentation, group learning activities and the

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The child and family outcomes and case practice performance measures are 48 measures and Foundational Elements that assess

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<i>Family Teaming</i>					
IV.B. 19	<u>Subsequent FTMs after 12 months – Other than Reunification Goal</u>	After the first 12 months of a child being in care, for those children with a goal other than reunification, 90% shall have at least two FTMs each year.	In June 2016, 83% of children with a goal other than reunification had two or more FTMs after 12 months of placement. Monthly range during January – June 2016 monitoring period: 73 to 87%.	In December 2016, 85% of children with a goal other than reunification had two or more FTMs after 12 months of placement. Monthly range during July – December 2016 monitoring period: 74 to 87%. ²⁹	No
IV.B. 20	<u>Quality of Teaming</u>	75% of cases involving out-of-home placements that were assessed as part of the QR process will show evidence of both acceptable team formation and acceptable functioning. The Monitor, in consultation with the parties, shall determine the standards for quality team formation and functioning.	51% of cases rated at least minimally acceptable on QR indicator <i>teamwork and coordination</i> . ³⁰ (January-June 2016)	49% of cases rated at least minimally acceptable on QR indicator <i>teamwork and coordination</i> . ^{31, 32} (CY 2016).	No

²⁹ Monthly performance is as follows: July, 84%; August, 84%; September, 87%; October, 84%; November, 74%; December, 85%.

³⁰ Under the new QR protocol, the *team formation* and *team functioning* indicators are measured under one indicator, *teamwork and coordination*.

³¹ All in-home cases are excluded from this measure.

³² Seventy-two of the 146 (49%) cases reviewed for Quality of Teaming were rated acceptable on the *teamwork and coordination* indicator.

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<i>Case And Service Planning</i>					

IV.D. 23	<u>Quality of Case Plans</u>	80% of case plans shall be rated acceptable as measured by the QR process. The Monitor, in consultation with the parties, shall determine that standards for quality case planning.	51% of cases rated at least minimally acceptable on both QR indicators <i>case planning process</i>
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<i>Maltreatment</i>					
IV.H 38	<u>Maltreatment Post-Reunification</u> "	Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period for the first time who are discharged within 24 months to reunification or living with a relative(s), no more than 6.9% will be the victims of abuse or neglect within 12 months of their discharge.	CY 2013 data not yet available.	For CY 2013, 6.5% of children who entered foster care for the first time who were discharged within 24 months to reunification or living with relative(s) were the victims of abuse or neglect within 12 months of their discharge.	Yes

IV.H 39	<u>Re-Entry to Placement</u> "	Of all children who enter foster care in a 12 month period for the first time who are discharged within 12 months to reunification, living with a relative(s), or guardianship, no more than 9% will re-enter foster care within 12 months of their discharge.	CY 2014 data not yet available.	For CY 2014, 12% of all children who entered foster care for the first time who were discharged within 12 months to reunification, living with relative(s), or
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<i>Timely Permanency</i>					
IV.I 41	<u>Permanency Within 24 Months</u>	Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, at least 66% will be discharged to permanency (reunification, living with relatives, guardianship or adoption) within 24 months of entering foster care.	CY 2014 data not yet available.	For CY 2014, 65% of children who entered foster care were discharged to permanency (reunification, living with relative(s), guardianship or adoption) within 24 months of entering foster care.	No
IV.I 42	<u>Permanency Within 36 Months</u>	Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, at least 80% will be discharged to permanency (reunification, living with relatives, guardianship or adoption) within 36 months of entering foster care.	CY 2013 data not yet available.	For CY 2013, 78% of children who entered foster care were discharged to permanency (reunification, living with relative(s), guardianship or adoption) within 36 months of entering foster care.	No
IV.I 43	<u>Permanency Within 48 Months</u>	Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, at least 86% will be discharged to permanency (reunification, living with relatives, guardianship or adoption) within 48 months of entering foster care.	CY 2012 data not yet available.	For CY 2012, 85% of children who entered foster care were discharged to permanency (reunification, living with relative(s), guardianship or adoption) within 48 months of entering foster care.	No



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<i>Investigations</i>					
III.A. 1	<u>Institutional Abuse Investigations Unit (IAIU)</u>	80% of IAIU will be completed within 60 days.	87% of IAIU were completed within 60 days.	83% of IAIU were completed within 60 days.	Yes
IV.A. 13	<u>Timeliness of Investigation Completion (60 days)</u>	85% of all investigations of alleged child abuse and neglect shall be completed within 60 days. Cases with documented acceptable extensions in accordance with policy are considered compliant.	In June 2016, 86% of all investigations were completed within 60 days. Monthly range during January – June 2016 monitoring period: 85 to 87%.	In November 2016, 84% of all investigations were completed within 60 days. Monthly range during July – November 2016 monitoring period: 84 to 87%. ⁴⁰	Yes ⁴¹
IV.A. 14	<u>Timeliness of Investigation Completion (90 days)</u>	95% of all investigations of alleged child abuse and neglect shall be completed within 90 days. Cases with documented acceptable extensions in accordance with policy are considered compliant.	In June 2016, 95% of all investigations were completed within 90 days.	In November 2016, 95% of all investigations were completed within 90 days, ⁴² Performance from July to November 2016 ranged from a low of 95 percent to a high of 96 percent. ⁴³	Yes

³⁹ “Yes” indicates that, in the Monitor’s judgment based on presently available information, DCF has fulfilled its obligations regarding the requirement under the SEP. The Monitor has also designated “Yes” for a requirement where DCF has met or is within one percentage point of the SEP standard or there are a small number of cases causing the failure to meet the SEP standard. “NA” indicated that data are not available for the relevant monitoring period.

⁴⁰ November 2016 was the most current data available at the time of this report. December 2016 data will be included in the next monitoring report. Monthly performance for this measure is as follows: July, 84%; August, 87%; September, 87%; October, 86%; November, 84%.

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<i>Case Plans</i>					

III. C. 6 Timeliness of Current Plans 95% of case plans for children and families will be reviewed

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III.F. 9	" <u>Caseworker Contacts with Children – New Placement/Placement Change</u>	93% of children shall have at least twice-per-month face-to-face contact with their caseworker within the first two months of placement, with at least one contact in the placement.	In June 2016, 91% of children had two visits per month, one of which was in the placement, during the first two months of an initial or subsequent placement. Monthly range during January – June 2016 monitoring period: 88 to 94%.	In December 2016, 93% of children had two visits per month, one of which was in the placement, during the first two months of an initial or subsequent placement. Monthly range during July – December 2016 monitoring period: 89 to 94%. ⁶⁴	Yes ⁶⁵
III.F. 10	<u>Caseworker Contact with Children in Placement</u>	During the remainder of the placement, 93% of children shall have at least one caseworker visit per month, in the placement.	In June 2016, 96% of children had at least one caseworker visit per month in his/her placement. Monthly range during January – June 2016 monitoring period: 96 to 97%.	In December 2016, 98% of children had at least one caseworker visit per month in his/her placement. Monthly range during July – December 2016 monitoring period: 96 to 98%. ⁶⁶	Yes

⁶⁴ Monthly performance is as follows: July, 89%; August 92%; September, 92%; October, 94%; November, 90%; December 93%.

⁶⁵ The Monitor considers this to be a temporary decline in performance that is still within an acceptable range. As this measure was designated as *To Be Maintained* in a previous monitoring period, the Monitor will continue to carefully track this data to determine if this decline in performance is temporary and/or insubstantial.

⁶⁶ Monthly performance is as follows: July, 96%; August, 97%; September, 98%; October, 97%; November, 97%; December, 98%.

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Placement

IV.G 32	<u>Placing Siblings"</u>	At least 80% of siblings groups of two or three children entering custody will be placed together.	CY 2016 data not yet available.	For CY 2016, 78% of sibling groups of two or three children entering custody were placed together.	Yes ⁶⁷
IV.G 33	<u>Sibling Placements of Four or More Children</u>	All children will be placed with at least one other sibling 80% of the time.	CY 2016 data not yet available.	For CY 2016, children were placed with at least one other sibling 84% of the time.	Yes
IV.G.34	<u>Recruitment for Sibling Groups of Four or More"</u>	DCF will continue to recruit for resource homes capable of serving sibling groups of four or more.	Between January and June 2016, DCF expanded its Siblings in Best Placement Settings (SIBS) program to include resource families (kinship, non-kinship or new families) willing and able to accommodate large sibling groups of four or more children. As of June 2016, DCF had 94 SIBS homes: 65 homes with the capacity for four children and 29 homes with the capacity of five or more children.	Between July and December 2016, DCF recruited a total of 34 SIBs homes. As of December 2016, DCF had a total of 85 large capacity SIBs homes; 27 homes that can accommodate five or more children, and 58 homes that can accommodate four children.	Yes

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IV.G 36	<u>Placement Stability, 13 – 24 Months in Care</u>	At least 88% of these children will have no more than one placement change during the 13 – 24 months following their date of entry.	CY 2014 data not yet available.	For CY 2014, 95% of applicable children had no more than one placement change during the 13 – 24 months following their date of entry.	Yes
<i>Education</i>					
III.G. 11	<u>Educational Needs</u>	80% of cases will be rated acceptable as measured by the QR in stability (school) and learning and development. The Monitor, in consultation with the parties, shall determine the standards for school stability and quality learning and development.	85% of cases rated acceptable for both QR indicators: <i>stability (school)</i> and <i>learning and development</i> . (January – June 2016)	87% of cases rated acceptable for both QR indicators: <i>stability (school)</i> and <i>learning and development</i> . ⁶⁸ (CY 2016)	Yes

⁶⁸ Seventy-eight of the 90 cases reviewed rated acceptable on *both* the *stability in school* and *learning and development* indicators; 59% (61 of 102) were rated acceptable for *school stability* and 94% (87 of 93) were rated acceptable for *learning and development*.

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G"Ugtxkeg"Cttc{	Services for youth age 18-21, LGBTQI, mental health and domestic violence for birth parents with families involved with the child welfare system	Services for older youth can be found at NJYRS.org DCF Website will be updated with information on services for youth (e.g., Safe Space Liaison Program) CP&P Needs Assessment	Yes
	Preventive home visitation programs	Commissioner's Monthly Report	
	Family Success Centers	Commissioner's Monthly Report Monitor Site Visits	

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Appropriate medical assessment and treatment

Data are currently provided directly to the Monitor⁸³

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K0"Tguqwteg"Hc o kn{"Ectg" Uwrrqtv"Tevgu	Family care support rates	DCF Online Policy Manual DCF Website ⁹⁰	Yes
	Independent Living Stipend	DCF Online Policy Manual Youth Website	
L0"Rgt o cpgpe{	Permanency practices	Data are currently provided directly to the Monitor ⁹¹	Yes
	Adoption practices	Monitor site visits and attendance at QRs, ChildStat and other meetings	
M0"Cfqrkqp"Rtcevkeg	5- and 10-month placement reviews	Data are currently provided directly to the Monitor ⁹²	Yes
	Child specific recruitment	Monitor site visits and attendance at QRs, ChildStat and other meetings	

⁹⁰ USDA has altered its schedule for producing its Annual Report on costs of raising a child. By agreement, DCF now updates the rates within 30 days of the USDA annual report's release to meet the SEP standards and provides written confirmation to the Monitor.

⁹¹ Going forward, the following new report will be published as the data source for this Foundational Element: Report on Our Work with Children, Youth & Families

⁹² Going forward, the following new report will be published as the data source for this Foundational Element: Adoption Report

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This section of the report provides information on the SEP requirements for which the state has satisfied the specified performance targets for at least six months – designated as *To Be Maintained* – and, in more detail, those requirements that the state still needs to achieve – designated as *To Be Achieved*.

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The SEP includes four measures related to investigative practice – one is currently designated as *To Be Achieved*: quality of investigations (SEP IV.A.15) and the other three measures are *To Be Maintained*: timeliness of IAIU investigation completion (SEP III.A.1); timeliness of alleged child abuse and neglect investigation completion within 60 days (SEP IV.A.13); and investigation completion within 90 days (SEP IV.A.14).

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*Performance as of November 30, 2016:*⁹³

Performance as of November 30, 2016:⁹⁵

In November 2016, there were 4,334 investigations of child abuse and neglect and 4,106 (95%) were completed within 90 days. Performance from July to November 2016 ranged from a low of 95 percent to a high of 96 percent.⁹⁶ The SEP performance standard for the timeliness of investigation completion within 90 days continued to be met for the period July through November 2016."

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DCF, together with the Monitor, conducted a case record review of the quality of CP&P's investigative practice in September 2016. Reviewers examined the quality of practice of 327 randomly selected CPS investigations assigned to DCF Local Offices between February 1 and February 14, 2016 involving 497 alleged child victims.⁹⁷ Overall, reviewers found that 271 (83%) of the investigations were of acceptable quality.⁹⁸ Although close, DCF did not meet the SEP performance standard for this measure.

The findings from the September 2016 review reflect some clear strengths in CP&P investigative case practice, as well as areas in need of further development. Key strengths include:

- x Caseworkers interviewed the mother of the alleged child victim in 98 percent of the investigations;

⁹⁵ November 2016 was the most current data available at the time of this report. December 2016 data will be included in the next monitoring report. For certain data elements such as this one which have an extended time frame built into the measurement, the Monitor and DCF have decided to alter the period for data review so that six-month monitoring reports can be produced more closely to the end of the monitoring period. Due to this change and the fact that June 2016 data was already reported on in the prior monitoring report, some me

- x Caseworkers interviewed the father of the alleged child victim in 82 percent of the investigations;
- x Pre- and post-investigation worker/supervisor conferences took place in 98 percent of the investigations; and
- x Eighty-seven percent of pre-investigation conferences were found to be of acceptable quality; 82 percent of post-investigation conferences were found to be of acceptable quality.

The September 2016 review also found that an area in need of improvement in CP&P’s investigative practice includes securing and integrating significant collateral information into investigative decision making. Reviewers determined that all applicable collateral information was integrated into decision making in 76 percent of investigations.

Overall, recommendations for improvement include: continued training and coaching of staff and supervisors on areas of investigative practice; complete documentation of investigative activities and events and use of statewide presentations; and specialized workshops focused on quality improvements.

DCF will include the findings from this investigative case practice review in its Our Work with Children and Families Report to be released in CY 2017. "

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Swcpkv cvkxg"qt" Swcnkcvkxg"Ogcuwtg"	1. <u>Timeliness of Completion</u> : IAIU investigations of child maltreatment in placements shall be completed within 60 days.
Rgthqt o cpeg"Vct igv"	80% of IAIU investigations shall be completed within 60 days.

The Institutional Abuse Investigations Unit (IAIU) is responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect in resource family homes and other out-of-home care settings, as well as in child care facilities, detention centers, schools and residential facilities.⁹⁹

Performance as of December 31, 2016:

Performance data for July through December 2016 shows that DCF continued to exceed the SEP performance standard for this measure, with 83 percent of IAIU investigations completed within 60 days.

⁹⁹ CP&P Policy Manual (4-1-2013). Introduction to IAIU, I, A, 100.

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improved performance. In addition, LOMs will identify FTM coordinators in each Local Office to more closely monitor performance and to assist staff in addressing barriers. A statewide FTM Coordinators Convening is planned for Fall 2017 so that workers will have an opportunity to share effective strategies, ensure consistency and develop additional strategies to improve practice. Finally, DCF’s Central Office will partner with the Office of Training and Professional Development to move the Case Practice Model module relating to FTMs into new worker training to ensure that new workers are developed as FTM facilitators as early as possible. This modification to the training curricula will also reinforce the importance of FTMs as a core component of the Case Practice Model.

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Swcpvkcvkxg"qt" Swcnkvcvkxg"Ogcwvtg"	19. <u>Subsequent Family Team Meetings After 12 Months:</u> For all children in placement with a goal other than reunification, the number/percent who have at least two FTMs each year.
Rgthqt o cpeg"Vct igv"	After the first 12 months of a child being in care, for those children with a goal other than reunification, 90% shall have at least two FTMs each year.

Performance as of December 31, 2016:¹⁰⁷

Based upon data from NJ SPIRIT, in December 2016, out of 158 children with a permanency goal other than reunification, 134 (85%) had two or more FTMs after 12 months in out-of-home placement. Performance from July to December 2016 ranged from a low of 74 percent to a high of 87 percent.^{108, 109} Table 2 and Figure 1 show DCF’s performance from July to December 2016 on holding FTMs after the first 12 months in placement for children with a goal other than reunification. DCF has shown improvement on this performance measure but has not yet met the SEP standard. D

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JULY	215	180	84%
AUGUST	177	149	84%

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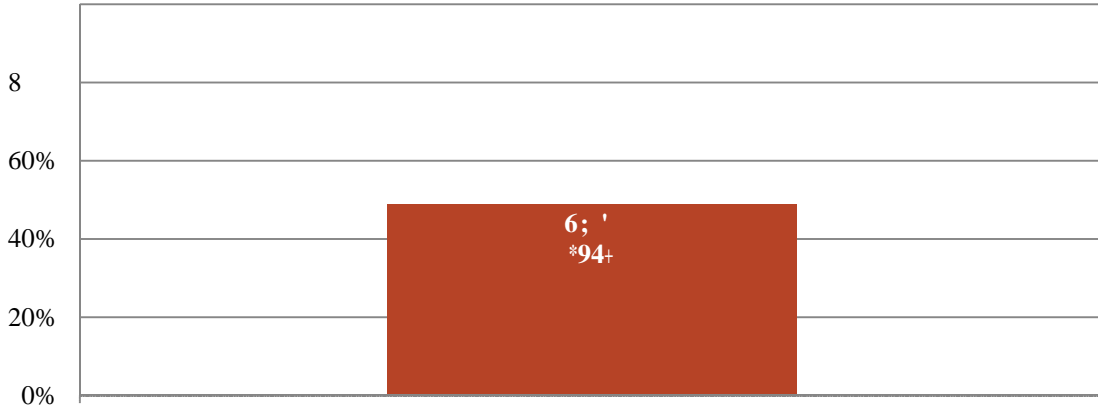
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Source: DCF data

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In the previous reporting period DCF met the SEP requirement that 95 percent of case plans be developed with families within 30 days (SEP IV.D.22) and, together with the SEP requirement that case plans be reviewed and modified every six months (SEP III.C.6), this measure is now designated as an Outcome *To Be Maintained*. The SEP measure regarding the quality of case planning (SEP Section IV.D.23) is designated as an Outcome *To Be Achieved*. DCF reports publically on case planning in its Commissioner’s Monthly Reports that are posted on the DCF website.

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Performance as of December 31, 2016:

In December 2016, 246 (96%) out of a total of 255 initial case plans were completed within 30 days of a child entering placement. Between July and December 2016 the timely development of initial case plans ranged from a low of 93 percent to a high of 96 percent.¹¹² While DCF met this

¹¹² Monthly performance for this measure is as follows: July, 93%; August, 96%; September, 94%, October, 94%; November, 94%; December, 96%.

measure in only two of the six months, performance was within one or two percentage points of meeting the standard in the remaining four months. As this measure was designated as *To Be Maintained* in the previous monitoring period, the Monitor will continue to carefully track this data to determine if this decline in performance is temporary and/or insubstantial.

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Swcpvkvcvkxg"qt" Swcnkvcvkxg"Ogcwgtg"	6. <u>Case Plans</u> : Case plans for children and families will be reviewed and modified no less frequently than every six months.
Rgthqt o cpeg"Vct igv"	95% of case plans for children and families will be reviewed and modified no less frequently than every six months.

Performance as of December 31, 2016:

In December 2016, 95 percent of case plans had been modified as required by the SEP. Performance from July to December 2016 ranged from a low of 95 percent to a high of 96 percent.¹¹³ DCF met or exceeded performance on this measure for each month between July and December 2016 this monitoring period.

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Swcpvkvcvkxg"qt" Swcnkvcvkxg"Ogcwgtg"	23. <u>Quality of Case Plans</u> : The child's/family's case plan shall be developed with the family and shall be individualized and appropriately address the child's needs for safety, permanency and well-being. The case plan shall provide for the services and interventions needed by the child and family to meet identified goals, including services necessary for children and families to promote children's development and meet their educational, physical and mental health needs. The case plan and services shall be modified to respond to the changing needs of the child and family and the results of prior service efforts.
Rgthqt o cpeg"Vct igv"	80% of case plans rated acceptable as measured by the Quality Review (QR).

DCF policy and the SEP require that families be involved in case planning, that plans are appropriate and individualized to the circumstances of the child/youth and family and that there is oversight of plan implementation to ensure case goals are being met and that plans are modified when necessary. Results from two QR indicators, *child and family planning process* and *tracking and adjusting*, are used to assess performance on this measure. Cases rated as acceptable demonstrate that child/youth and family needs are addressed in the case plan that appropriate family members were included in the development of the plan and that interventions are being tracked and adjusted when necessary.

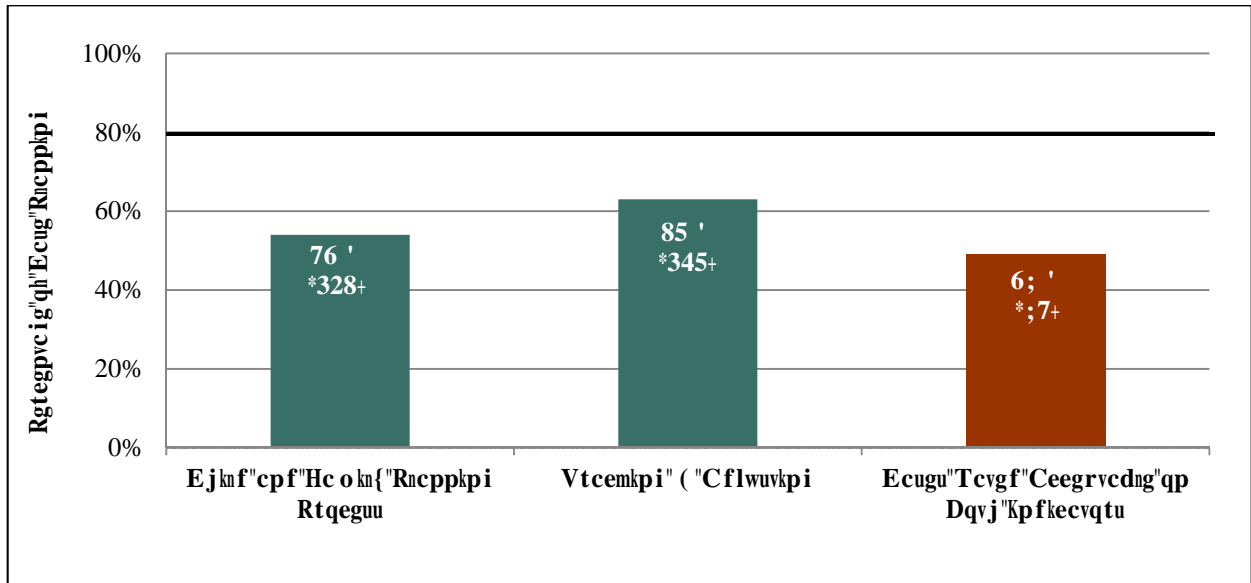
Information about the QR process and protocol are detailed in section V.N of this report.

¹¹³ Monthly performance on this measure is as follows: July, 96%; August, 96%; September, 95%; October, 95%; November, 95%; December, 95%.

Performance as of December 31, 2016:

Results from the 195 cases reviewed from January to December 2016 indicate that 49 percent (95 of 195) were rated acceptable for *both* the *child and family planning process* and *tracking and adjusting* indicators.¹¹⁴ Figure 3 below reflects the findings from January through December 2016. Performance in CY 2016 (49%) reflects a slight decline from CY 2015 (53%). DCF did not meet the SEP performance standard for the period of January through December 2016. This is another area for which the level of performance suggests the need for an assessment of improvement strategies.

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Source: DCF data

¹¹⁴ From January to December 2016, 49% (95 of 195) were rated acceptable for *both* the *child and family planning process* and *tracking and adjusting* indicators; 54% (106 of 195) of cases were rated acceptable for *child and family planning process*; 63% (123 of 195) of cases were rated acceptable for *tracking and adjusting*.

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SEP Section III.G.11 requires that “children will be enrolled in school and DCF will have taken appropriate actions to ensure that their educational needs are being met.” The SEP requires that 80 percent of cases be rated acceptable on *stability in school* and *learning and development* indicators as measured by the QR.¹¹⁵ This performance measure has been previously designated as *To Be Maintained*.

The QR process and protocol are discussed in detail in Section V.N of this report.

Performance as of December 31, 2016:

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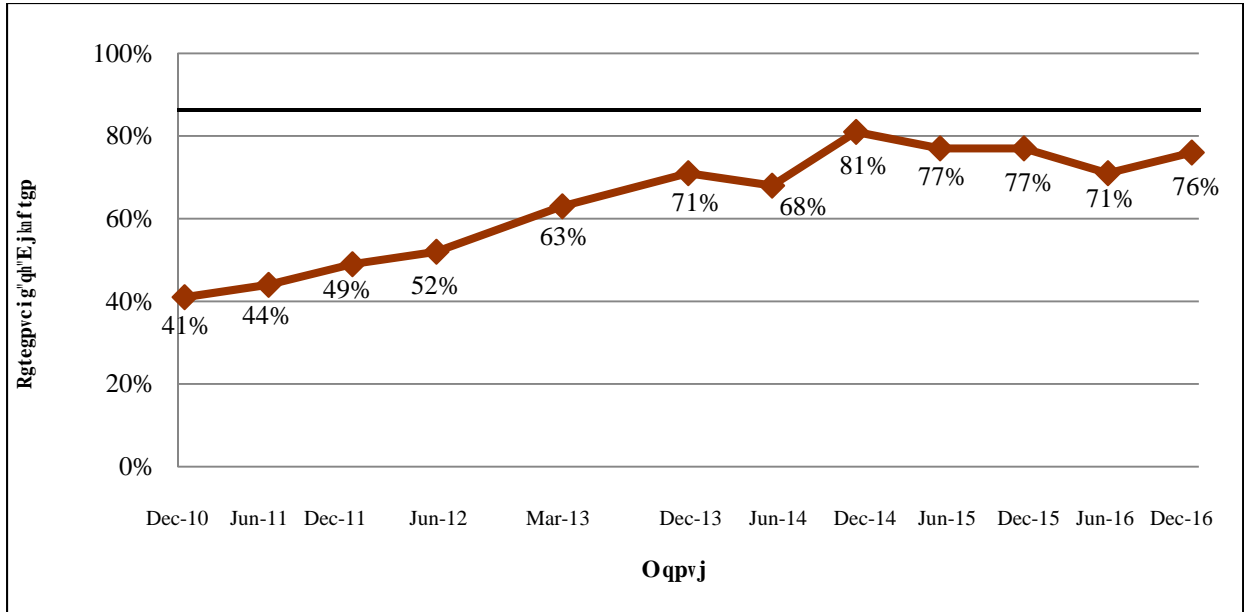
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the month. DCF performance does not yet meet the SEP standard for visits between children in custody and siblings with whom they are not placed.

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Source: DCF data

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Appropriate, stable placement for children in foster care is critical to safety and well-being, and maintenance of family bonds. DCF policy requires siblings to be placed together whenever possible, and that children experience as few placement changes as possible while in out-of-home placement. There are five measures included in this section. As of June 2016, four measures were designated as *To Be Maintained*: sibling placements of two to three children (SEP IV.G.32); sibling placements and recruitment of placements for four or more children (SEP IV.G.33), and placement stability for those children in care between 13 and 24 months (SEP IV.G.36) and one was designated as *To Be Achieved*: placement stability for those children in care 12 months or less (SEP IV.G.35).

With the exception of the measure requiring recruitment of resource homes to accommodate sibling groups of four or more children, the other placement measures discussed in this section are longitudinal measures and require data that looks at the experiences of cohorts of children and youth over time. The most recent performance data available are discussed below. For the first time this reporting period, DCF has met or substantially maintained every one of the SEP placement measures.

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Swepvkvcvkxg"qt" Swcnkvcvkxg"Ogcuwtg"	32. <u>Placing Siblings Together</u> : The percentage of sibling groups of two or three siblings entering custody be placed together.
Rgthqt o cpeg"Vct igv"	At least 80% of siblings groups of two or three children entering placement will be placed together.

Performance as of CY 2016:

In CY 2016, there were 644 sibling groups that came into custody at the same time or within 30 days of one another that were comprised of two or three children. Of the 644 children, 78 percent (501) were placed together. In CY 2015, 79 percent (503) of sibling groups of two or three were placed together. In the Monitor’s judgment, DCF has continued to meet the SEP standard.

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Swepvkvcvkxg"qt" Swcnkvcvkxg"Ogcuwtg"	33. <u>Placing Siblings Together</u> : The percentage of sibling groups of four or more placed together.
Rgthqt o cpeg"Vct igv"	For sibling groups of four or more 80% will be placed with at least one other sibling.

Performance as of CY 2016:

In CY 2016, there were 393 children who were part of a sibling group of four or more children in placement. Of those 393 children, 332 (84%) were placed with at least one other sibling. DCF has met or exceeded this SEP performance standard for each of the previous six years.

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Performance as of December 31, 2016:

During this monitoring period, DCF continued to refine its approach to more accurately forecast the need for new non-kinship resource family homes to accommodate sibling groups in each county. The process has involved a monthly cross-walk of NJ SPIRIT and Office of Licensing (OOL) data on the resource homes available by county and sibling group size of children in or entering care.

DCF’s ongoing effort to recruit and retain homes that can accommodate large sibling groups has had the added benefit of requiring that resource workers be in more regular communication with resource families regarding current capacity, and has provided staff with naturally occurring

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Source: DCF data analyzed by Hornby Zeller Associates.

Performance as of CY 2014 (Most Recent Calendar Year Available):

The most recent performance data assesses the 1,907 applicable children who entered care for the first time in CY 2014 and aggregates the number of placements each child remaining in care experienced in the second year of their removal. For children entering care in CY 2014, 1,810 (95%) children had no more than one placement change during the

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Performance as of CY 2016:

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Performance as of CY 2015 (Most Recent Calendar Year Available):

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Regardless of age, gender, race or ethnicity, all children need and deserve a safe, nurturing family to protect and guide them. Though safe family reunification is always preferred, permanency for children can be achieved through a number of different avenues, including kinship/guardianship and adoption. There are four SEP measures included in this section, all related to the achievement of permanency for children in DCF care. As of the end of June 2016, one measure was designated as *To Be Maintained* – achieving permanency within 12 months (SEP IV.I.40) – and three measures were *To Be Achieved* – achieving permanency within 24 months (SEP IV.I.41), 36 months (SEP IV.I.42) and 48 months (SEP IV.I.43) respectively. All of the measures discussed in this section are assessed with longitudinal cohort data and the most current performance data available are discussed below.

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Swcpvkvcvkxg"qt" Swcnkvcvkxg"Ogcwvtg"	40. <u>Permanency Within 12 months</u> : Of all children who entered foster care in a 12 month period, what percentage were discharged from foster care to permanency (reunification, living with relatives, guardianship or adoption) within 12 months of entering foster care.
Hkpcn"Vct igv"	Of all children who enter foster care in a 12 month period, at least 42% will be discharged to permanency (reunification, living with relatives, guardianship or adoption) within 12 months of entering foster care.

Performance as of CY 2015 (Most Recent Calendar Year Available):

The most recent data available for this measure are for children who entered foster care in CY 2015. Of the 4,034 children who entered foster care in CY 2015, 1,686 (42%) were discharged to permanency within 12 months from their removal from their home. Current performance represents a slight improvement over CY 2014 (41%), and meets the SEP performance standard.

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Hkpcn"Vct igv"	Of all children who enter foster care in a 12 month period, at least 66% will be discharged to permanency (reunification, living with relatives, guardianship or adoption) within 24 months of entering care.

Performance as of CY 2014 (Most Recent Calendar Year Available):

The most recent data available for this measure are for children who entered foster care in CY 2014. Of the 4,378 children who entered foster care in CY 2014, 2,829 (65%) were discharged to permanency within 24 months from their removal from their home. DCF performance has improved and is just shy of meeting the SEP standard.

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Performance as of CY 2012 (Most Recent Calendar Year Available):

The most recent data available for this measure are for children who entered foster care in CY 2012. Of the 4,701 children who entered foster care in CY 2012, 4,010 (85%) were discharged to permanency within 48 months from their removal from their home. Current performance is close to, but does not yet meet the SEP performance standard for this measure.

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Early in New Jersey’s child welfare reform efforts, DCF built Child Health Units (CHUs) to facilitate and ensure the timely provision of health care to children in CP&P custody. These units are operational in each CP&P Local Office and are staffed with Regional Nurse Administrators, Nurse Health Care Case Managers (HCCMs) and staff assistants based on the projected number of children in out-of-home placement.

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Performance as of December 31, 2016:

In December 2016, there were 823 youth aged 14 to 18 in out-of-home placement for at least six months; 721 (88%) had an Independent Living Assessment (ILA) completed. Monthly performance between July and December 2016 ranged from 87 to 93 percent.¹³⁰ DCF sustained performance at or above the level required by the SEP in two of the six months in the reporting period; performance fell slightly below the standard in the other months. The monitor considers this a temporary decline in performance. In the Monitor’s discretion, DCF has met the performance standard.

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Performance as of December 31, 2016:

Performance data for this measure were collected through QRs conducted from January to December 2016 of 32 cases of youth ages 18 to 21. In rating these cases, reviewers use both the standard QR protocol and a list of additional considerations relevant to this population, such as DCF’s efforts to plan and support youth who identify as LGBTQ, are victims of domestic violence, are expectant or parenting and/or are developmentally disabled. From January to December 2016, 63 percent (20 of 32) cases were rated acceptable for *both* the *child (youth)/family status* and *practice performance* indicators.¹³¹ The Monitor considers this a temporary decline in performance given that the universe of cases to which this measure applies is small and therefore more susceptible to fluctuations. In the Monitor’s discretion, DCF has met the performance standard.

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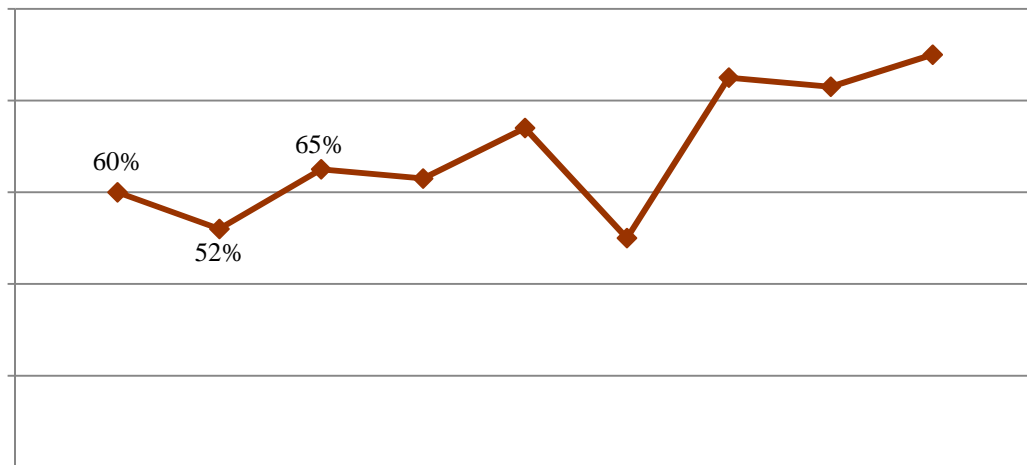
Performance as of December 31, 2016:

The Monitor and DCF conducted a case record review of the 66 youth who exited care without achieving permanency between July and December 2016; this measure was applicable in 59 cases.¹³³ Forty-nine youth were either employed or enrolled in education or vocational training programs, and there was documentation of consistent efforts by the caseworker to help the youth secure education or employment in an additional seven cases. Overall, there was compliance with this measure in 53 (90%) cases. DCF has now met the SEP performance standard."

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Source: Data from DCF and CSSP Case Record Reviews

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¹³³ Seven youth were not applicable for one of the following reasons: youth was incarcerated, youth was missing and the worker made attempts to locate the youth, youth declined or not interested in employment or educational/vocational program, youth in the process of enrolling or youth had mental impairment which prevented employment or enrolled in an educational/vocational program.

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Performance as of December 31, 2016:

While involved with DCF, families and children may face several transitions, including changes in family relationships, living arrangements, service providers or schools. Some transitions are more critical than others but all require recognition and planning in order to be smooth and successful. DCF uses the QR process to measure case practice that supports families to make successful transitions.

Section IV.J of the SEP requires that 80 percent of cases be rated acceptable for the
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Caseload compliance is measured by assessing caseloads for individual caseworkers in each of the functional areas (Intake, Permanency, Adoption and IAIU) as well as office standards for CP&P Local Offices. Table 3 summarizes the caseload standards for individual workers.

The SEP includes eight measures related to caseloads and all are designated as *To Be Maintained*. These eight measures include Intake office caseloads (SEP IV.E.24); Intake individual worker caseloads (SEP IV.E.25); Adoption office caseloads (SEP IV.E.26); Adoption individual worker caseloads (SEP IV.E.27); Permanency office caseloads (SEP III.B.4); Permanency individual worker caseloads (SEP III.B.5); IAIU investigators individual caseloads (SEP III.B.3); and supervisory/worker ratio (SEP III.B.2).

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Intake	Respond to community concerns regarding child safety and well-being. Specifically, receive referrals from the State Central Registry (SCR) and depending on the nature of the referral, respond between two hours and five days with a visit to the home and begin investigation or assessment. Complete investigation or assessment within 60 days.	Intake workers are to ha ntr t Comp ro
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Verifying Worker Caseloads

DCF caseload data are collected and analyzed through NJ SPIRIT. As in previous monitoring periods, the Monitor verified caseload data supplied by DCF by conducting telephone interviews with randomly selected workers across the state. The caseload verification process included workers in all areas in which the SEP establishes caseload standards: Intake, Permanency and Adoption. A sample of 170 workers were selected from all active workers in December 2016. All of the 46 CP&P Local Offices were represented in the sample. For the past several years, CSSP has weighted the sample with Intake workers to examine in more depth the impact of shared cases between Intake and Permanency workers. The interviews were conducted in the months of January and February 2017. All 170 workers were called and information was collected from 131 workers (80% of the eligible sample).¹³⁵ Among the 131 workers who participated in the caseload verification interviews, 77 were Intake workers, 23 were Permanency workers, 20 were Adoption workers and 11 were trainees.

During the interviews, Monitor staff asked each caseworker whether their caseload met caseload standards between July and December 2016; responses were compared to the caseload information from NJ SPIRIT on identified workers for the same period. Workers were also asked to report their specific caseload size for the month of December 2016, and their reports were compared with NJ SPIRIT data for that month. "

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In November and December 2016, DCF piloted a caseload verification review with Intake workers as part of its newly implemented internal caseload verification process and continuous quality improvement efforts. The caseload verification review serves as a quality assurance method where workers' reported caseloads are compared to their caseloads as reported in SafeMeasures. In addition, the review is intended to identify practice issues and training needs. DCF's caseload verification process began statewide in February 2017.

The SEP intake caseload standard is no more than eight new case assignments per month, no more than 12 open cases at any one time and no Intake worker with 12 or more open cases can be assigned more than two secondary assignments per month. In January 2017, DCF implemented a new methodology for tracking and reporting the SEP Intake caseload standard to more clearly communicate the standards to staff and to streamline monitoring and reporting. DCF's new methodology will capture secondary case assignments on the Intake worker's monthly caseload report, which will track and report intake caseloads as follows: no more than eight new assignments per month; no more than 12 cases assigned as primary case assignments at any one time; and no more than 14 cases at any one time, including both primary and secondary case assignments. The methodology for the standard of no more than eight new case assignments per month remains unchanged.

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¹³⁵ Five workers were on extended leave during the period the calls were made and were removed from the sample. One additional worker refused to participate and one worker newly assigned to the position for less than half of the monitoring period was also removed from the sample. The Monitor made at least three attempts to contact each caseworker in the sample.

<p>Swcpvkcvkxg"qt" Swcnkvcvkxg"Ogcwtg"</p>	<p>24. <u>Intake Local Office Caseloads</u>: Local Offices will have an average caseloads for Intake workers of (a) no more than 12 families, and (b) no more than eight new assignments per month. No Intake worker with 12 or more open cases can be given more than two secondary assignments per month.</p>
<p>Rgthqt o cpeg"Vct igv"</p>	<p>95% of Local Offices will have an average caseload of (a) no more than 12 families, and (b) no more than eight new assignments per month. No Intake worker with 12 or more open cases can be given more than two secondary assignments per month.</p>

Performance as of December 31, 2016:

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Performance data for July through December 2016 shows that 100 percent of Local Offices met the intake caseload standards.

<p>Swcpvkcvkxg"qt" Swcnkvcvkxg"Ogcwtg"</p>	<p>25. <u>Individual Intake Caseloads</u>: individual Intake workers shall have (a) no more than 12 open cases, and (b) no more than eight new assignments per month. No Intake worker with 12 or more open cases can be given more than two secondary assignments per month.</p>
<p>Rgthqt o cpeg"Vct igv"</p>	<p>90% of individual Intake workers shall have (a) no more than 12 open cases, and (b) no more than eight new assignments per month. No Intake worker with 12 or more open cases can be given more than two secondary assignments per month.</p>

Performance of December 31, 2016:

DCF met the individual Intake worker caseload standard this monitoring period. The state reported an average of 977 active Intake workers between July and December 2016. Among those active Intake workers, an average of 95 percent (927 of 977) of workers had caseloads that met the caseload standard. Specifically, in December 2016 individual worker caseload compliance for Intake workers was 92 percent (902 of 977 total workers). For the 75 Intake workers who did not meet caseload requirements in December 2016, the highest number of new intakes during the month for any worker was nine and the highest number of open cases for any worker in the month was 21 families.

Data by Local Office show that during December 2016, performance ranged between 27 and 100 percent, with 37 of 46 Local Offices (80%) having all Intake workers in compliance with caseload standards.

Among the 131 workers who participated in the Monitor's telephone interviews for caseload verification, 77 were Intake workers. Four (5%) of the 77 Intake workers reported exceeding the caseload limits for new assignments at some point between July and December 2016. Twenty (26%) Intake workers reported having more than 12 total families on their caseload at some point during the same period.

DCF deploys Impact Teams (consisting of a supervisor and three workers) to a unit or a Local Office in different areas of the state when intakes are unusually high in order to assist in



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Performance as of December 31, 2016:

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Performance as of December 31, 2016:

As of December 31, 2016, 133 DASG staff positions assigned to work with DCF were filled. Of those, five DASG were on full time leave. Thus, there are a total of 128 (96%) available DASG. DCF reports that in addition to these positions, DASG outside of the DCF Practice Group have dedicated some of their time to DCF matters. DCF continues to meet this SEP standard for this measure.

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QUALITATIVE REVIEW

New Jersey's Qualitative Review (QR) is an assessment of the status of children, the status of practice and the functioning of systems in each of the counties. The protocol and process used

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Male	93	48%
Female	102	52%
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4 years or less	68	35%
5-9 years	39	20%
10-13 years	32	16%
14 -17 years	24	12%
18-21 years	32	16%
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White/Caucasian	110	56%
African American	95	49%
Hispanic	53	27%
Native Hawaiian	0	0%
American Indian	2	>1%
Asian	3	>1%
Unable to Determine/Unknown	2	>1%

Source: DCF data

DCF reports that 1,890 individuals were interviewed across the state to inform the QR data for this reporting period. The informants for the QR include CP&P and Child Health Unit staff, biological parents, others who the youth or parent identified as supportive, relative and non-relative resource parents, education providers, mental health and legal professionals, substance abuse treatment providers and children/youth.¹⁴¹

Reviewers evaluate the child and family’s status on a range of indicators and rate whether the status was acceptable or unacceptable. See Table 8 for the results on each child and family status indicator and overall child and family status ratings for all c

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CDE<" A Better Childhood"
CEH<" Administration for Children and Families"
CHECTU<" Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting
System"
CKR<" AFCARS Improvement Plan"
CSEn<" Area Quality Coordinators"
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