

Fact Sheet

for FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS

What are the CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS?

The Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. The reviews are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement within their agencies and programs. Ultimately, the goal of the reviews is to help states improve child welfare services and achieve the following seven outcomes for families and children who receive services:

Safety

- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.



Permanency

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families.

Family and Child Well-Being

- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The CFSRs also assess the following seven systemic factors that affect outcomes for children and families:

- statewide information system
- case review system
- quality assurance system
- staff and provider training
- service array and resource development
- agency responsiveness to the community
- foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention



The REVIEWS PROCESS

The CFSR begins with a statewide assessment. The statewide assessment is prepared by the state and provides information on how the state is doing on the safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes and systemic factors. Next is the onsite review where a joint federal-state team reviews the state child welfare program. The onsite review process includes:

- Looking at children’s case files and interviewing children, parents, the caseworker, and other people involved in the case
- Holding stakeholder interviews with people involved in the child welfare system to look at how the system is working as a whole

After reviewing all the data and information received, the Children’s Bureau determines how well the state is doing in meeting federal requirements and whether the children and families are having good outcomes. The state develops and implements a Program Improvement Plan to address those areas needing improvement. States must successfully complete their plans to avoid financial penalties.

OPPORTUNITIES *for Your* INVOLVEMENT

The CFSRs bring together people in the state who can make a difference in the child welfare system. As a foster or adoptive parent, your first-hand experience is important. You can supply vital information to help make systemic improvements and improve outcomes for children and their families.

You can be involved in the CFSR in a number of ways. Through state foster or adoptive parent associations or in arranged focused groups, you may participate as a stakeholder as the state develops its statewide assessment. You may also be involved in different types of interviews during the onsite review.

Case-related interviews focus on a specific child who is currently placed with you or has been placed with you in the past. These interviews give you a chance to share how the agency worked with you and the child in your home. The information you share is confidential and will not be shared with your caseworker. While the information will not have any impact on the child’s case, your feedback provides

information on how children and families are served. In case-related interviews, you may be asked questions such as:

- Did the agency assess your needs as a foster parent or pre-adoptive parent? Did they provide services to address any identified needs?
- How often did the agency assess the needs of the child in your home and did your child get the services he or she needed?
- If the child was on medication, how was the medication monitored?

You may also participate in a group stakeholder interview and be asked questions such as:

- Did you receive initial and ongoing training that helped you develop the skills and knowledge necessary to care for the child(ren) in your home?
- How do you find out about court hearings for the child(ren) in your care?
- Do you attend court hearings and are you able to provide information to the judge?
- Are the types of services that children need available?

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

The voice of foster and adoptive parents is critical to the CFSR process. Making changes that help children and families begins with understanding what families working with the child welfare system are experiencing. We hope you will share your experience.

MORE INFORMATION:

Additional information on the reviews is available on the Children’s Bureau’s website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews> or from the Child Welfare Reviews Project, JBS International, Inc., 5515 Security Lane, Suite 800, North Bethesda, MD 20852; 301-565-3260; e-mail: cw@jbsinternational.com. Round 3 resources are available at <https://training.cfsrportal.org/resources/3105>.