

Child and Family Services Review



Virginia Department of Social Services

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

- The CFSR is a federal-state partnership to review services to children and families in all states.
- The CFSR covers Child Protective Services, Foster Care, Adoptions, and Family Preservation.
- Virginia's first review occurred during week of **July 7, 2003**



CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

CFSR criteria include 14 areas:

- Seven “Program Outcomes”
- Seven “Systemic Factors”
- The seven “Program Outcomes” include ***three performance indicators with national standards related to foster care and adoption.***



NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(Related to Foster Care and Adoption)

	<u>Standard</u>	<u>VA*</u>
● Stability of foster care placement <i>(no more than 2 in 12 mo.)</i>	86.7%	84.8%
● Length of time to achieve reunification <i>(12 months or less)</i>	76.2%	73.6%
● Length of time to achieve adoption in <i>(24 months or less)</i>	32%	17.9%

**Virginia's FY 2001 data*



CFS REVIEW APPROACH

Three-fold approach to review:

- Statewide Assessment
- On-site Review
 - Review of 50 cases each in Bedford, Norfolk, and Fairfax
 - Follow-up on-site desk review of 115 cases occurred March 15-17, 2004, which resolved a foster care re-entry discrepancy between state data and on-site review
- Program Improvement Plan (PIP)
 - Virginia will report progress on the PIP quarterly and will be reviewed a second time after two years
 - Failure to demonstrate progress could result in financial penalties



NEXT STEPS

- For areas not in substantial conformity, Virginia completed a Program Improvement Plan, addressing:
 - Action steps and dates of completion
 - Benchmarks and methods for evaluation
 - Percentage of improvement toward national standards
- Local Departments of Social Services and other stakeholders are involved in implementing program improvements



Meeting the national performance standard for adoption is one of Virginia's priority areas for improvement

- **The Department is taking a multifaceted approach in this area:**
 - **Revising policies and procedures**
 - **Promulgating regulations**
 - **Implementing best practices**
- **Some of the areas we are working on include:**
 - **Implementing best practices, such as concurrent planning**
 - **Identifying various termination of parental rights (TPR) improvements, such as requiring local agencies to file a petition for termination of parental rights at the same time they file a petition for the initial permanency planning hearing**
 - **Implementing dual approval of foster and adoptive families**



Recommendations

Some areas for consideration by this legislative committee include:


- **Section 63.2-1208 which currently:**
 - **Allows 90 days for the agency to make an investigation and submit a report to the court**
 - **Requires the Court to withhold consideration of the merits of the petition for 21 days pending review of the agency report by the Commissioner**
- **Section 63.2-1212 which also requires the Court to withhold consideration of the merits of the petition for 21 days pending review of the agency report by the Commissioner**



Recommendations

- **In agency placement adoptions, the agency be allowed no more than 60 days to submit the Report of Investigation to the court**
 - **All references to the court withholding consideration of the merits of the petition for 21 days be deleted completely.**
- **Another possible section for revision is Section 63.2-1205 relating to standards for determining the best interests of the child to include as consideration as to whether:**
 - **The birth parent has made an effort to provide reasonable financial support for the child**
 - **The birth parent has made continuous reasonable attempts to contact the child**





The CFSR review provided us with an opportunity to make changes in the child welfare system that positively impact children and families.

The SJR 331 study of Virginia's adoption laws will help identify and eliminate legal barriers to timely adoptions for children in Virginia's foster care system.

