FamiliesFirst Network of Lakeview

Annual Summary
Quality Assurance Review Findings
Fiscal Year 2009-2010

Report to Headquarters Office of Family Safety,
Florida Department of Children & Families
Summary of Case Management Practice Trends

The chart below compares the child welfare outcome scores for all quarters for fiscal year 2009-2010. Data for the first quarter of the fiscal year is not available as there was a temporary suspension in the statewide quality assurance reviews during that quarter.

FamiliesFirst Network has seen a positive trend in the overall performance improvement in all outcome measures this fiscal year.

The challenge continues to be in achieving the Safety Outcome measures; this area is the agency’s lowest performing outcome measure for this fiscal year. This encompasses the assessment process and documentation of steps taken to address the safety needs.

The chart below compares performance from previous fiscal year (FY08-09) with most recent fiscal year (09-10).
In addition, FamiliesFirst Network of Lakeview Center achieved the majority of its contract performance measures for fiscal year 2009-2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>YTD 08-09</th>
<th>YTD 09-10</th>
<th>YTD 09-10 *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maltreatment in Out-of-Home Care</td>
<td>% of children served in out-of-home care who are not maltreated by their out-of-home caregiver</td>
<td>99.68%</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
<td>99.87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children seen each month</td>
<td>% of children under supervision who are required to be seen each month who are seen each month.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
<td>99.77%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness of Reunification</td>
<td>% of children reunified who were reunified within 12 months of the latest removal.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanency of Reunification (Re-Entry)</td>
<td>% of children reunified who re-entered out-of-home care within 12 months.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13.95%</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness of Adoption</td>
<td>% of children adopted who were adopted within 24 months of latest removal</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanence for Children in Foster Care for Long Periods</td>
<td>% of children in out-of-home care 24 months or longer on 7/1/09 who achieved permanency prior to their 18th birthday and by 6/30/10</td>
<td>34.65%</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>45.92%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Stability</td>
<td>% of children in out-of-home care for at least 8 days, but less than 12 months, who had 2 or fewer placements.</td>
<td>84.27%</td>
<td>81.06%</td>
<td>85.26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of finalized Adoptions.</td>
<td># of children with finalized adoptions between 7/1/09 and 6/30/10</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Seen every 30 days</td>
<td>% of children under supervision who are required to be seen every 30 days, who are seen every 30 days.</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>99.49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care More than 12 Months.</td>
<td>No More than 489 children will be in out-of-home care 12 months or more</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>388</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* last quarters, therefore all qtrs roll-up for YTD data not available at time of this report.

Of note, the comparison of the agency’s contract performance from previous fiscal year (08-09) and this most recent fiscal year in Re-entry, Timeliness to Reunification, and Placement Stability.

During this fiscal year, FamiliesFirst Network of Lakeview Center, along with all of Circuit 1 was selected as one of three “Innovation Sites” as part of the CFSR Quality Improvement Plan. Circuit 1 has chosen to include all four counties of Escambia, Santa
Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton Counties. With this selection, Circuit 1 has utilized (and continues to) technical assistance from numerous areas, to include: National Resource Center of Permanency & Program Planning, National Resource Center for Judicial Improvement, FMHI, USF and Center for Social Policy.

The emphasis has been to establish core principles and strengthen staff on family center practice principles.

In addition, supervisory staff has been encouraged to attend in the Quality Assurance training offered by the Department of Children & Families. To date, FamiliesFirst Network has approximately fifteen case management staff certified.

**Practice Trends**

1. **Assessment**

   **Strengths**

   Initial Family Assessment
   In the past, the Initial Family Assessment was filed with the court in conjunction with the CPI’s Pre-Disposition Study. While the Initial Family Assessments were being completed, they lacked professional judgment and opinion as often these reports became part of the court record and were scrutinized by attorneys. With mandate of the Family Assessment in FSFN, the filing with the court of the Initial Assessment has been discontinued.

   Exit interviews
   Quarterly performance has increased with each quarter of this fiscal year. While the agency is completing the exit interviews, we are challenged with them being completed within the required timeframe. The agency has been on a Corrective Action Plan through Contract Oversight Unit as a result. A monthly report is completed and disseminated to all FFN staff. As a result, we are seeing an increase in both the completion and in meeting the timeframes.

   Independent Living Assessments
   All children that are in licensed out-of-home care and over the age of thirteen have the assessments completed. FamiliesFirst Network has a unit designated with staff who work with this targeted youth. This unit has a tracking mechanism in place that has been shown to be effective in ensuring these assessments are completed.

   Mental/Behavioral Health Assessments for Children
   All children that are removed and placed in out-of-home care are referred for a Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment. Psycho-social assessments are being completed on parents/caregivers and children that remain in home. Assessments, both
formal and informal (often through home visits), are being completed on a regular basis and documented in the case record. The agency utilizes a home visit template that is used to help Family Services Counselor’s in addressing and in driving discussions to ensure the visits are qualitative and purposeful.

Practice Improvement Opportunities

Subsequent Family Assessments
The standard requires that the subsequent assessment is completed in FSFN. FamiliesFirst Network had not required the use of the FSFN instrument until this fiscal year, therefore the quality of the subsequent assessments has not been determined yet.

Assessment During Post-Placement Supervision
In discussing this area during debriefings with each case, it appears the assessment is most often occurring; however, there is a lack of documenting how the risks or needs are being addressed.

2. Family Engagement

Strengths

Maintaining Child’s Important Connections
Children that have been removed and placed in out-of-home care are encouraged to maintain contacts with friends and family. When available, the agency utilizes funds to help with children in licensed care to participate in extra-curricular activities. In addition, the agency has been working with licensed and contracted group homes to ensure that the older youth are engaged in normalcy activities.

Engagement of Mother(s)
Mother’s are most often the “removal caregivers”. Staff are making more consistent contacts and engaging the mother in case planning to support reunification efforts. Past practice and staff mentality was the burden was on the parent, not the agency. The evolution of practice changes support being more family centered have helped in changing old practice.

Practice Improvement Opportunities

Engagement of Father(s)
While efforts to include the parents in a more active role, fathers are often not included in the decision making. Majority of the removal parents are the mother and often the father(s) are absent. The agency needs to ensure we encourage the father(s) to take on a more active role, to include visitation.
3. Service Planning & Provision

Strengths

Repeat Maltreatment/Re-Abuse
FFN has consistently performed well in areas of re-abuse/re-neglect for both in home and out-of-home care; this is reflected in our contract measure performance and in the QA data.

Service Referrals
Service referrals being made are appropriate based upon needs identified.

Practice Improvement Opportunities

Frequency & Quality of Contacts with Parents
This overlaps in engagement of parents. Frequency and quality of visits with all case participants is a struggle. As mentioned, the agency has a home visit template and often it is not completed in its entirety. Also, not seeing the biological parents regularly (at least every 30 days & face-to-face) hinders progress in this item.

4. Promoting Case Progress

Strengths

Re-entry
In the past years, the agency has struggled with re-entry. This year, we have met and exceeded contract performance target. This is reflected in our contract measures and in the QA findings. The Quality Assurance unit is completing special reviews on many cases in which re-entry occurs. Continuing care plans are developed with the family at or near case closure.

Case Plans
Case plans are developed for every case that is referred for services. Most recently, there has been an issue identified with case plans expiring or being extended. A shift in practice coincided with changes in statutory language in which there was a push to have case plans with target dates of nine month instead of more often the twelfth month. Earlier quarters, there were struggles with expired case plans. In addition, there was a misinterpretation with CLS and case management staff that case plans could be extended. This has been clarified and both issues appear to have been addressed.

ICPC
The agency has put forth strong efforts at exploring out of state placement through ICPC, for both relative and parental placements. FamiliesFirst Network has case
management staff that specialize in ICPC that serve as liaisons for the process. This has been very beneficial.

Placement Stability
Placement stability is an area of marked improvement from past performance. In 2006, Circuit 1 received technical assistance from the National Resource Center to work on placement stability. With the help from the NRC and the initiative to reduce out-of-home care population, the agency had been able to see an improvement in placement stability.

Practice Improvement Opportunities

Individualized Case Plans
The quality of the case plans continues to be “cookie-cutter”. Case plans have tasks that are focused on completing a specific task/service rather than demonstrating or changing behaviors. Plans are not individualized specific to the family’s individual needs, but are based upon known available services. They are not amended when needed. The need for case plan training has been identified.

ICWA
Compliance with ICWA requirements has been a struggle over the past years. The QA standard requirements were pretty stringent, but have been modified for the upcoming fiscal year to get a more accurate baseline. In reviews, the information that supported the inquiry was made was found in most case records, however, the standard requires completion by case management, even when it was completed by the CPI during investigation. Local DCF & FFN staff have worked together to ensure this information is part of informational packet provided in the case transfer process.

5. Supervisory Review & Oversight

All supervisors of case management units must complete the Supervising for Excellence training. As part of the training, staff are trained on the “Supervisory Discussion Guide”. Supervisors must conduct at least one face-to-face discussion using the discussion guide per quarter on every assigned case. The agency has shifted to encourage the completion of these types of reviews at least every 90 days as best practice.

An internal quality assurance review specific to supervisory reviews was conducted in November, 2009. Supervisory/Management staff that were certified also participated in this review. The findings of this internal review reflect similar findings in the annual state reviews.

FFN Supervisors are completing supervisory reviews, however, there is an on-going struggle to ensure that these reviews include discussions pertinent to safety,
permanency, and well-being. Supervisory direction is given, but the follow-up on the direction is also a challenge.

With utilization of coaches as part of the Innovation Site activities, focus for this next six months is on supervisory oversight and follow-up.

**Addressing Findings**

The annual statewide Quality Assurance findings, as well as this report will be reviewed with FFN’s Management Team and provided to the supervisory staff.

Activities to address the findings can be located in the updated Quality Assurance Annual Plan, Circuit 1 Quality Improvement Plan & in the Innovation Site Plan.

FamiliesFirst Network will continue to utilize technical assistance from the numerous professionals through the National Resource Centers, Casey Foundation, FMHI and the Child Welfare Group.

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Bobbi Lowe, Quality Review Manager  Date
FamiliesFirst Network

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Margaret Taylor, Director of Policy & Quality  Date
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