Central Region Quality Assurance Plan
FY 2014 – 2015
Background

The Central Region Family Safety Quality Assurance (QA) plan for Child Protective Investigations and Community Based Care agencies during FY 2014-15 will focus on the quality assurance and continuous quality improvement activities which will adhere to the 2014-2015 Windows into Practice: Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement. The Central Region QA plan will consist of Rapid Safety Response Reviews for Child Protective Investigations including Consultations, Sheriff's Peer Reviews per Chapter 39, Children and Family Service Reviews, and special or focused reviews along with continuous quality improvement activities.

Introduction

The Central Region Family Safety Program Office Team consists of a Family Safety Program Administrator, four Licensing Specialists, two Family Services Specialists, three Field Support Coordinators, one Child Fatality Prevention Specialist and one Missing Children -Human Trafficking Specialist. Within the FSPO, The Central Region Quality Assurance Team includes one Quality Assurance Manager and five Operations Review Specialists.

The Central Region consists of four circuits: (Circuits 5, 9, 10 and 18). The Department of Children and Families conducts Child Protective Investigations in all counties within the Circuits with the exception of Seminole County in Circuit 18. The Department contracts with the Seminole County Sheriff’s Office to conduct child protective investigations in Seminole County. The Central Region currently consists of 71 DCF units. There are 19 units in Circuit 5, 27 units in Circuit 9, 14 units in Circuit 10, and 11 units in Circuit 18 Brevard County.
Transformation

The Central Region DCF is anticipating the full implementation of Safety Methodology by the end of December 2014 (excluding the Seminole County Sheriff’s Office). At this time, there are two investigation units in the Central Region (one in Hernando County...
and one in Citrus County) remaining to be implemented to the Safety Methodology. The transformation to Safety Methodology of the Seminole County Sheriff’s Office will occur in the beginning of 2015.

As of this writing, 100% of the Family Safety staff in the Central Region have been trained as to the Safety Methodology or are scheduled to begin pre-service training.

The Central Region currently employees fifty-five Safety Methodology Proficient trainers. Fourteen of these trainers are considered Super Subject Practice Experts (SSPE). The SSPEs and program office are coordinating implementation support teams throughout the region.

**Child Welfare Quality Assurance Activities:** Working Relationship with CBC and Sheriff Partners

The Central Region Quality Assurance staff experience a good working relationship with our partnering Community Based Care agencies (CBC) as well as the Seminole County Sheriff Office who perform Child Protective Investigation functions. The Central Region Family Safety Program Office staff are involved on a regular basis with all Central Region CBC agencies through participation in foster care licensing reviews, participation in Fee Waiver committees, working with adoption staff on enhanced subsidy requests and providing ongoing leadership/technical assistance for missing children and human trafficking.

The Central Region QA staff also experience a good working relationship with the Seminole County Sheriff’s Office through ongoing communication and providing technical assistance when requested. The Central Region QA staff participates in the legislatively mandated peer review process conducted at the sheriff’s department on an annual basis. The Seminole County Sheriff’s Office has indicated a willingness to participate in the CPI Rapid Safety Review process using the Department’s web portal site and have recently gained access to the portal.

**CPI Supervisory Consultations**

Unit level supervisory day-to-day oversight and guidance is critical to achieving successful outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being. In addition to coaching and mentoring staff, supervisors also ensure quality investigative practice through ongoing consultation and guidance at various intervals and at closure. Supervisory consultations must be based on critical, reflective thinking and qualitative discussion between supervisors and staff. Continued implementation of the Florida Safety Methodology will enhance the existing supervisory practices as it relies heavily on supervisors conducting face-to-face consultations. This will allow
supervisors to assess learning needs of each worker and provide training via case consultations, which is essential within any workforce and even more so critical, when staff are relatively inexperienced.

**Rapid Safety Feedback Reviews**

During Fiscal Year 2014-2015, the Central Region Quality Assurance staff will continue conducting Rapid Safety Feedback reviews on investigations open between 25 and 35 days. The sample will include investigations completed through existing practices and those completed using the Florida Safety Methodology. Each Central Region QA staff are responsible for completing 4 reviews per week, collectively the five QA staff will complete 20 reviews per week. This sample and required number of reviews to be completed may change and is based upon statewide guidance and direction provided by Central Office. Furthermore, Central Region has been allocated three new Field Support Consultant positions which will also assist in completing reviews once hired and trained. Review findings will be entered into the QA Web Portal and documented in a FSFN note.

Rapid Safety Feedback case consultations will be conducted with the Child Protective Investigator (CPI) supervisor and Operations Manager or designee (if available) by phone within two business days of the completed review. If an immediate safety issue is identified, an immediate call will be conducted with the CPI supervisor or designee and the CPI, if available. If at any time a QA reviewer notes significant safety concerns they will immediately report such findings to the assigned Operations Manager for action and resolution. The reviewer will document the Request for Action (RFA) in FSFN.

**Sheriff Peer Review**

The Seminole County Sheriff’s Office has established their peer review schedule to be completed during the week of September 17, 2014. Two Central Region QA Specialists participated in the Seminole County Sheriff’s peer review.

**Community Based Care Reviews**

Community Based Care agencies are required to establish Quality Management Plans for their respective agencies which at minimum conduct on-going targeted reviews of cases to determine the quality of child welfare practice related to safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. In addition, two full Children and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) will be conducted each quarter. The full CFSR includes reading case files of children served under the title IV-B and IV-E plans and interviewing parties involved in the cases. The FSPO QA staff and CBC QA will participate in joint reviews.
as needed. It is the goal of the Central Region Quality Assurance unit to participate in the reviewing of one CFSR case per CBC during the fiscal year.

**Special or Specific Focus Reviews**

The Secretary of the Department or other executive staff may determine a review of a particular process or topic is needed, or may require a statewide or localized special project be conducted throughout the year. This activity may require specifically designed review tools or protocols depending on the subject matter and coordination of activities. The Central Region QA staff will lead or participate in any such request as needed.

A special review refers to a quality assurance review outside of the routinely planned QA activities in Child Protective Investigations and case management. A request for a special review and/or case specific review may be made by Department headquarters, elected officials, the Central Region Managing Director, CBC executives, sheriff’s office or others in a leadership capacity. The Central Region QA staff will conduct these reviews as assigned.

Upon completion of a special or specific focus review, the Central Region staff will work to ensure quality improvement efforts are established to address any areas in need of improvement noted during the reviews. Staff will determine root cause analyses, identify and implement counter measures so that problem areas are remedied. Focus will emphasize consistent quality to achieve positive, sustainable results for children and families.

**Continuous Quality Improvement Activities**

The Central Region Family Safety Program Office and Operations staff are responsible for monitoring performance expectations using Rapid Safety Feedback and FSFN data. Continuous Quality Improvement is a method for systemically analyzing, documenting and correcting issues that impact effective child welfare practice.

Data and feedback gained through Rapid Safety Feedback Reviews will be utilized to develop ongoing trainings and/or workshops that align with adult learning strategies to improve the quality of casework. Structuring training through the Family Safety Program Office will allow for training to be directly linked to QA findings in a more succinct and streamlined manner; ensuring that training is relevant and applicable. Supervisors and Senior Investigators will be provided with additional opportunities for professional growth through the use of evidence based leadership training, field specific training for Subject Matter Experts and mentoring opportunities. This will further professionalize the
workforce while providing front line staff with additional resources to assist in the critical child safety decision making process.

**Request for Action**

There are two types of Request for Action that may be generated during a review: administrative or child safety. If at any time during a case file review a Regional QA reviewer identifies a concern which warrants bringing attention to management due to an administrative or child safety concern, a Request for Action form will be completed immediately upon knowledge of the concern.

Child Safety Request for Action may be generated to document any evidence in which the safety of a child may be threatened. If a Request for Action is generated due to child safety issues, the information is immediately (within 4 hours) provided to the Program Administrator responsible for the investigation and a formal written response is requested back from the field staff within 48 hours as to how the issue was resolved by management. This may include providing Regional QA with supporting documentation as to how the concern was addressed. Regional QA will review the response and determine if the response was sufficient to address the child safety concern identified. Should for any reason, additional action need to be taken by Regional QA it will be addressed on a case by case basis with Operations Manager to ensure child safety.

Administrative Request for Action may be generated when there are concerns that are not related to child safety. They may include but are not limited to: data integrity issues, FSFN documentation, or missing documents.

All Requests for Action generated by the Region QA will be saved in the FSPO share drive and documented in FSFN via a QA review chronological note. The Request for Actions capture specific case information, the request date and requestor, the type of request (administrative or safety), the presenting concern, due date, date response received, and how it was resolved. Information regarding a Request for Action will be generated and included in the Quarterly QPS Review Reports.

**Child Death Reviews**

A Region Child Fatality Prevention Specialist is responsible for conducting ongoing reviews of child deaths. These reviews include conducting a death review staffing, compiling information, providing technical assistance to operations, documenting information in the Death Review Database, as well as completing an assessment and summary QA report on each closed investigation and providing data upon request by various stakeholders. The Child Fatality Prevention Specialist reports to the Family Safety Program Administrator and is responsible for tracking all child deaths received in the region and ensuring compliance with applicable Florida Statutes, Administrative Codes and Operating Procedures.