Regional CQI Report and Plan
FY 2014/2015
Southern Region (CBC portion)

August 28, 2014: Note that the format for this report was provided by the Office of Child Welfare in Tallahassee for all CBCs and Regions to utilize.

I. Introduction

1. QA/CQI staff resources

Our Kids has a Director of Quality Assurance, a QA Lead Analyst and four QA Specialists. Our Kids also meets monthly with QA directors and staff of FCMA agencies. Troubleshooting, presentations by other agencies and preparation for upcoming reviews, scorecards and contract oversight unit reviews (COU) are discussed in these monthly meetings. Representatives also participate in reviews every quarter that Our Kids ensures get entered into the DCF QA Portal.

2. A description of regional geographic information,

- The Southern Region is the tip of Southeastern Florida and comprises the urban cities of Miami-Dade county and stretch of islands in the Florida Keys. The region has one CBC, Our Kids, and two judicial circuits. The 11th (Miami-Dade) and the 16th (Monroe). The region is diverse in its various communities with urban patches, suburban sprawl and some remote areas. Many cultural groups exist and there is a large Hispanic and large Haitian population.

- Turnover of both case managers and CPIS is high with negative outcomes for managing caseloads and maintaining morale for those that remain. It also requires reallocating fragile struggling families to new people -- a practice which can negatively impact time to permanency or completion of investigations. DCF’s Southern region reports that 45 CPIS left during the last fiscal year (and 2 Supervisors). Finding the real rate of departure for case managers throughout the Southern region is more difficult. One agency provides FMCA services in Monroe County. Wesley House Family Services case managers go through pre-service separately from the Miami Dade County case managers. In Miami-Dade, the new hires of all four agencies train together. For both counties the required training is ten weeks long, covers a lot of information and also requires trainees to shadow and observe in their home agencies. As they are not able to work directly and independently without certification, it is a true loss and ‘brain drain’ when case managers choose alternative careers after the training. Although there is a lot of exposure to the fieldwork in the training, there are still some individuals that decide the work is not for them. A few also do not pass the required exam and cannot continue the certification path. The expenditure by Our Kids and the FCMA to prepare workers is high as well. The Learning Institute at Our Kids has doubled the number of students in the pre-service training over last year. The turnover rate for case management organizations varies from about 40-55%. The vacancy rate varies from about 15-25%. Agencies try to have new
hires in pre-service training prior to vacancies being announced. Some trained graduates do not leave the field entirely but switch to other agencies. During the past year’s increase in removals these fluctuations are even more strongly felt by some agencies and more damaging.

- Stakeholder involvement is very active in both counties. There are four subcontracted Full Case Management Agencies in Miami-Dade. In the north region there is the Center for Family and Child Enrichment. In the Central area are Family Resource Center and CHARLEE. In the South is Children’s Home Society. In Monroe is Wesley House Family Services which also provides Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS). In Miami Dade there are four IFPS provider: Citrus Health Network, Family Central, Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services and Youth Villages.

- In addition to the FCMA and IFPS providers there is a rich array of other stakeholders. The Administration of Courts, Judges, Guardian Ad Litem program, Alliance of Child and Families, CWLA, Communities in Schools, the Greater Chamber of Commerce, Miami-Dade CBC Alliance, Miami Dade County Public Schools, Monroe County School District, The Children’s Trust and associations of Foster Parents in both counties all are actively involved and have a voice in changes and improvements to the system of care in the region. See www.ourkids.us for links to the other programs for more information.

II. Rapid Safety Feedback - Current Status

From January through June 2014 Our Kids and FCMA reviewers actively reviewed samples of children under the age of four that have open in-home cases. The Rapid Safety Feedback tool is incorporated into the tool being used for Fiscal Year 2014-15 for some children that will be reviewed throughout the year. Consult the Windows into Practice document issued by Traci Leavine and Eleese Davis for more information as to how that sampling will be accomplished for the Community Based Agencies.

III. Data Analytics

For details see Our Kids Quality Assurance Annual Summary Fiscal Year 2013-14 that was issued mid-month August 2014. Here is a link to the data that has been provided by DCF: http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/QualityAssurance/QA_StaffRpts.shtml

Our Kids and the FCMA learned during the Rapid Safety Response Reviews that formal safety plans were not always needed, and when they were needed they were rarely formalized in the FSFN
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template, but instead included and discussed in supervisory reviews or in the SDM assessments. Unannounced home visits and field based supervisory reviews both need to be incorporated more often for in home cases to decrease the use of self-report of parents in assessing safety, and to increase skill level and competence of case managers—especially newly certified case managers. Linkage with substance abuse and mental health counselors through the Motivational Support Program locally will increase monthly reports on parental progress towards increasing the ability to parent and overcome issues that affect child safety. Better documentation of home visit notes is also needed as reviewers learned much more from debriefing consultations with Case Managers and Supervisors than the file. While this is natural, important items that were strengths in the actual family and case progress would not have been discovered if the file was the only source of information.

The Annual Summary also provided information on four (4) Quality Service Reviews (QSR) and regular reviews using the Case Management Tool. The QSR reviews were very positive with each of the four cases having positive outcomes for the families and it was clear that the families and children were better off from their involvement with the system of care. It was also noted that changes in case management agencies, while sometimes necessary, can add length to the time in care. Knowing this, agencies should avoid unnecessary changes in case management in order to have continuity and to keep momentum towards permanency. It was also noted that non relatives that up until this year were not eligible for relative caregiver funds should be supported and encouraged to become licensed, if eligible, while preparing for adoption to reduce the financial burden prior to subsidy becoming available through adoption. Very competent counselors and case managers were noted and helped highlight the value of training and retaining excellent staff. In all four cases it must be noted that the parents or caregivers were very motivated and without this, the cases would have lingered much longer. Two of the cases had timely permanency and two others were rather lengthy but both successful. One mother’s had had such trauma in her own life that stakeholders wanted to ensure she was doing well. Reviewers, dyadic therapist, case manager and supervisor of the case resoundingly agreed she was ready for independence from the child welfare system. Another family had tried unsuccessfully to reunify which prolonged time to permanency as did the changes in case management from Reunification Unit to an Adoption Unit.

IV. FY 2014/2015 Initiatives to Improve Practice

The Southern Region like other regions in Florida has experienced a very large increase in removals and out of home care cases. This has affected all areas of our system of care and will continue to challenge and require teamwork from all partners. While Our Kids has a new President/CEO starting September 2, 2014, the Strategic Plan for 2012-2017 goals remains:
1. Continue implementations of Medical Case Management and supporting medical passport technology
2. Improve Communication Strategy
3. Continue Implementation of Structured Decision Making and supporting automation technology
4. Continue Implementation of Quality Parenting Initiative and the development of the Family Centered Practice model
5. COA Accreditation
7. Promote resource sharing and administrative efficiencies within Our Kids and across system of care partners
8. Prioritize teen quality of care, ensuring successful transition to adulthood
9. Improve services to families not in the dependency system (family preservation, diversion and post-adoption)
10. Transform to a Learning Organization

Our Kids Business Intelligence group will continue to conduct pre-service training and in-service trainings for case management staff including adoption competency, Casey Permanency Values, Safety Methodology and other topics of interest, such as Family Finding. Fiscal Year 2014-15 will also include more intensive work around permanency outcomes for the Southern Region. Even before the increase in removals and placement of children, the region struggles with timely permanency (both before 12 months and after 12 months of entry). Statewide QA teams were given approval for this fiscal year by Secretary Mike Carroll to tailor sampled to address needs of the community. More Permanency reviews can therefore take priority now that the Rapid Response Safety Reviews have been completed. Our Kids QA Director is also adding to the monthly CQI team meetings with all agencies some quick peer reviews on supervision and permanency. Florida Foster Care Review in Miami has received funding to devote one reviewer/facilitator to manage the Casey Roundtables in Miami. Wesley House and Our Kids together manage with trained partners the PRT process in Monroe County. Casey has provided two trainings on Permanency Values and Our Kids continued the training monthly at all FCMA since May and continue to reach out to stakeholders in the community like the Guardian Ad Litum program.

Our Kids has two other fund development proposals to improve practice and increase performance for human trafficking in the child welfare population and implementing evidence based practice with Intensive Family Preservation (IFPS) families with substance abuse indicators. Both have been submitted to the federal funding agency (HHS) and both require collaboration with DCF and other lead partners. As the federal fiscal year begins in October, Our Kids expects notification of the awards by September 30, 2014.