Annual Quality Services Reviews (QSR) Summary Report

Fiscal Year 2012-2013

Our Mission ~ To protect abused, abandoned and neglected children in the communities we serve.
Summary of Case Management Practice Trends

Over the course of Fiscal Year 2012 – 2013, ChildNet reviewed a total of fourteen (14) children utilizing the Quality Services Review (QSR) process for both Circuit 17 and Circuit 15. ChildNet conducted four (4) QSR reviews per quarter per circuit. Due to ChildNet becoming the lead agency for Palm Beach County on October 1, 2012, through an emergency procurement with the State of Florida, no QSR reviews were completed for Circuit 15 during the 1st quarter of FY 2012-2103.

The QSR is a nationally recognized process that encompasses a brief file review, and interviews with all of the case participants. The interviews are scheduled by the Child Advocate (CA) /Dependency Case Manager (DCM) to ensure that all parties are aware of the interviews as well as the reason for them. The interviews are generally scheduled over a two (2) day period with as many face-to-face interviews as possible, particularly the child and caregiver.

The first interview is generally the CA/DCM and supervisor. During this interview, the reviewers can clarify any information seen in the file. After completion of all of the interviews, the reviewers hold another meeting with the CA/DCM and supervisor to debrief the case. It is important to note that the reviewers are gathering information, not sharing between the different interviewees. The QSR protocol provides opportunity for others in the agency or stakeholders outside of the agency to shadow the review process.

Each indicator is scored on a six (6) point scale with scores of 1 – 3 in the unacceptable range and 4 – 6 in the acceptable range. Scores of 3 and 4 are in the marginal range with the score of 4 being acceptable if nothing was to change and a 3 is not acceptable.

For the files reviewed each quarter, the QSR stratification includes an equal share of In-Home service cases (non-judicial and judicial) and Out-of-Home service cases. The universe for the QSR review is provided by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) each quarter and each circuit randomly selects the files from the extract of children who were service recipients during a defined selection period. All children are assigned to a CBC’s sampling population based on the CBC assignment of the primary worker as of the sample date or the service recipient end date, whichever is earlier.

The overall average score for the cases reviewed across all items was more than acceptable. The findings for the child and family status averaged a score of 5.24 with the system status scoring an average of 5.10. The scores indicate that ChildNet has ensured children are safe and their well-being needs are addressed across all cases.

All fourteen (14) of the children reviewed scored in the acceptable range for the child and family status. Although rated as acceptable, one (1) child was in the process of being adopted by the caregiver when the Appellate Court overturned the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) final judgment. With the court offering the parents a reunification case plan, this case noted gaps in the child’s permanency indicator.
Within the system status indicators, all fourteen (14) children reviewed also scored in the acceptable range. One (1) case scored several fair ratings due to the court’s decision to reunify the child despite concerns from the Department and the GAL. As a result, the child’s transition to the mother’s care and custody was not well planned and implementation of in-home services to support the reunification was not comprehensive when the child returned home.

**Child and Family Status – Overall average for FY 2012-2013**

**Child and Family Status Indicators**

Although the sample size is not statistically significant, the reviews do provide sufficient information to identify strengths and any areas for improvement. The overall strengths in the child and family status include:

- Stability in the child’s daily living, learning, and work arrangements are stable and free from disruptions.
- Living arrangement of children is consistent with age and ability, and children are living in the most appropriate/least restrictive living arrangement.
- Physical health status of children is being maintained to also include dental, audio and visual assessments and services.
- Early learning services for children to include achievement of developmental milestones, development consistent with expectations, and receiving appropriate supports.
- Academic status for children to include attending school regularly and placed in grade level consistent with age or developmental level.
For the past year, pathway to independence status scored the lowest mainly in part due to a
youth placed in a group home with a permanency goal of Another Planned Permanent Living
Arrangement (APPLA). This youth wished to remain in licensed care and chose not to
maintain a relationship with her family. The youth’s team continues to explore other options for
permanence so the youth can gain skills, education, positive connections and relationships
and necessary capacities for successful independence. As evident by the overall QSR
average scores for FY 2012-2013, ChildNet has ensured constructs related to safety, stability,
well-being and functioning are acceptable and appropriate for the children and families served
under court ordered supervision.

The chart below show the quarterly and average scores for the child and family status section
for FY 2012-2013.

In terms of quarterly outcomes, the average child and family status score was consistently in
the good range (5), meaning constructs were substantially and dependably positive for the
child and family with an ongoing positive pattern and are likely to continue.

Although 1st quarter was slighter higher, it should be noted only two (2) children were reviewed
due to ChildNet's transition into Circuit 15.
Practice Performance Indicators

The system status for the child and family being reviewed scored slightly lower than the child and family status. Overall, the practice performance constructs were in the acceptable range which means the case practice was working reasonably for the child and family at the time of the review. The overall strengths include:

- Engagement to which those working with the child and family and support systems are developing and maintaining trust-based working relationships, focusing on strengths and needs.
- Transition planning for the child and family are being planned, stages and implemented to assure a timely, smooth and successful adjustment.
- Maintain quality connections when the child is placed out of the home by identifying and maintaining family connections.
- Monitoring and adjusting the child and family’s status and progress, interventions, and results and makes necessary adjustments.
- Psychotropic medication monitoring for the child to ensure safe and effective use when psychotropic medication is prescribed for the child.

Scoring less than 5.0 (but at least 4.5) include:

- Voice and choice to which the child, parents, family members, and caregivers are active ongoing participants in shaping decisions pertaining to child and family strengths and needs, goals, supports, and services.
• Teaming to which appropriate family members and providers are identified and formed into a working team that shares a common “big picture” understanding and long-term view of the child and family.
• Assessment and understanding to which those involved with the child and family understand the “big picture” situation and dynamic factors that guide intervention.
• Planning process for the child the family is individualized and matched the present situation, preferences and long-term view for safe case closure.
• Implementation for the child and family is planned and accessible, has sufficient power and beneficial effect, and has an adequate array of resources to produce results necessary to meet the needs and achieve outcomes for a safe case closure.

Although the system status indicators scored lower than the child and family constructs, these indicators focus on core practice functions that the case worker and others who serve as members of the child and family team are applied successfully. As evident by the system scores, ChildNet has demonstrated effective work in engagement, maintaining quality connections, and monitoring and adjusting. ChildNet continues to work on improving teaming and implementation through training opportunities for staff.

The chart below show the quarterly and average scores for the system status section for FY 2012-2013.
Although the QSR sampling stratification protocol changed from permanency goal to placement of the child (In-home or Out-of-Home), the findings remain consistent based on the statistically insignificant sample size of fourteen (14) reviews.

Below, the chart represents average overall score comparisons between FY 11-12 and FY 12-13. As noted on the chart, ChildNet achieved improvements in both child and family status and system status constructs.

![Average overall score comparison](chart.png)

ChildNet has shown improvement in the quality of care as well as documentation over the last year which is evidenced in the consistent top performance on the Department of Children and Family’s scorecard. ChildNet is a firm believer in Continuous Quality Improvement as demonstrated below.

**Child and Family Status Indicators**

- **Permanency:** ChildNet started a weekly supervisory meeting in Circuit 17 in order to monitor and report progress on children achieving permanency whether through reunification, permanent guardianship, or adoption. ChildNet created a position (Reunification Project Manager) that works directly with case management to ensure children are achieving permanency as safely as possible in a timely manner. This position also analyzes data within FSFN, provides projections for the agency, and distributes a weekly report showing a drill-down to the supervisory level. Similar to Circuit 17, our case management organization (CMO) in Palm Beach County also began meeting regularly to focus on permanency outcomes for the children and families served.

- **Stability:** ChildNet has strengthened our Intake and Placement units in both circuits to increase placement stability for youth in out-of-home care. Both units have also been working closely with case management to decrease the use of shelter and group home placements particularly for those youth age twelve (12) years and under. In Circuit 17,
the unit utilizes Home Study Specialists to assist Child Protective Investigation (CPI) to complete home studies on relative and non-relatives to facilitate those placements as a child’s first placement out-of-home, rather than licensed care.

- Adoptions: ChildNet was awarded a second grant position from the Dave Thomas Foundation to hire a Wendy’s Wonderful Kids (WWK) Recruiter that focuses on proactive, child-focused recruitment targeted exclusively on moving the longest-waiting children from foster care into adoptive families. These positions work on caseloads of children the system has forgotten, ensuring they have the time and resources to give each child as much attention as he or she deserves.

**Practice Status Indicators**

- Psychotropic medication monitoring: ChildNet reinforced our compliance and monitoring of children in out-of-home care who are prescribed psychotropic medications. Based on declined in performance from our Quality of Practice Standards (QPS) supplemental reviews during 1st and 4th quarters, ChildNet’s Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) department is sending out the weekly FSFN psychotropic medication error report and the monthly AHCA psychotropic prescription list to ensure FSFN accuracy and up-to-date consents and/or court orders. In addition, ChildNet amended the policy and procedure for children in out-of-home care prescribed psychotropic medication to better align our practices with Florida Statute, Florida Administrative Code, and DCF operating procedure.

- Teaming process: To ensure all appropriate family members and providers are identified and formed into a working team, ChildNet has incorporated and strengthened training as it relates to teaming into pre-service and ongoing training curriculums. ChildNet understands the importance of all members sharing a common “big picture” understanding and long-term view of the child and family to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved.

- Planning process: With the transition into Palm Beach County, ChildNet rolled out an aftercare planning process to improve the family’s knowledge of how to access community resources without having to re-enter the child welfare dependency system. Circuit 17 has been utilizing an aftercare plan, helping the family locate and utilize outside support systems and resources throughout the treatment process to facilitate family empowerment. An aftercare planning process prepares the family beyond the time when the dependency case is closed.