FamiliesFirst Network (FFn) of Lakeview

Annual Summary
Quality management Review Findings
Fiscal Year 2010-2011

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 of fiscal year 2010-2011. Data for Quarters 1 and 2 are combined as the agency completed semi-annual reviews in those quarters. Data for the fourth quarter of the fiscal year is not available as there was a temporary suspension in the statewide quality management reviews during that quarter.

In comparing the agency’s performance in Quarters 1 and 2 to performance levels of Quarter 3, data reflects FamiliesFirst Network either maintained or saw a decline in overall performance levels in all outcome measures. The most significant decline in performance was in the Well-Being Outcome. Safety continues to be the agency’s lowest performing outcome measure.

The chart below compares performance from previous fiscal years (FY08-09 and FY09-10 with most recent fiscal year, FY10-11).
As reflected in the chart above, FamiliesFirst Network experienced a downward trend in all outcome areas for FY10-11 in comparison to FY09-10. Performance continues to exceed FY08-09 levels. The agency’s most consistent performance is in the Permanency Outcome. The outcome measure with the most significant downward trend is Safety. While the agency has improved in completing initial and ongoing assessments in FSFN, this requirement continues to be a challenge.

FamiliesFirst Network of Lakeview Center achieved the majority of its contract performance measures for fiscal year 2010—2011 as shown in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>YTD 09-10</th>
<th>YTD 10-11</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>99.87%</td>
<td>99.30%</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>99.7%</td>
<td>99.77%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness of Reunification</td>
<td>% of children reunified who were reunified within 12 months of the latest removal.</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>80.5%</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>11%</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
<td>10.2%</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>46.7%</td>
<td>51.4%</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>35.65%</td>
<td>45.92%</td>
<td>32.32%</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>85%</td>
<td>85.26%</td>
<td>88%</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>156</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>172</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>99.8%</td>
<td>99.49%</td>
<td>99.48%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Measure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></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>388</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Placement Stability and Timeliness to Adoption continue to show significant positive trends. While still exceeding the target, Timeliness to Reunification, Permanence for Children in Foster Care for Long Periods, and the number of finalized adoptions bear watching as a significant downward trend is noted. Last fiscal year, the agency met targets for Maltreatment in Out-of-Home Care and Children Seen Each Month; however, the agency performed slightly under target in both areas in FY10-11.

During fiscal 2009-2010, 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. FamiliesFirst Network continues to be an “Innovation Site”. 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, especially supervisory staff, on family center practice principles.

Team Managers, most Team Supervisors, and all Quality Management Specialists were trained in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). A practice CFSR was held in each county to increase knowledge of federal requirements and to build capacity for change. Baseline data has been collected, and the agency plans to continue to complete some reviews which mirror a federal review.

This fiscal year, the FamiliesFirst Network Management team recognized the agency has an extensive quality management process throughout the entire system of care. Identified was the need to pull all the information together, analyze it, and develop means to sustain the successes and improve upon the deficiencies.

The Management team spent a substantial amount of time and training to explore the most effective way to develop a mechanism for improvement. It is recognized many well established agencies and businesses utilize an improvement system through the means of a council. The Management Team concurred the development of a quality council would be the best way to develop a means with which to pull all the qualitative information and to utilize it to develop performance improvements in the system of care.

The FFn Performance Improvement Council is a continuous performance improvement team that assesses agency wide qualitative information, identifies strengths, as well as opportunities for improvement, and makes recommendations in an effort to sustain and adapt current practice. With concurrence from the Management Team, the Council will initiate steps to strengthen routine operations through the development, modification, reinforcement or implementation of established processes.

The Performance Improvement Council reports directly to the Management Team. The Council is led by the Performance Improvement Manager or designee. The newly created Performance Improvement Manager position was filled during Quarter 3 of FY10-11.
Practice Trends

1. Assessment

Strengths

Independent Living Assessments
Assessments were consistently completed for children in licensed out-of-home care and over the age of thirteen. FamiliesFirst Network has a unit designated with staffs who work with this targeted youth population. This unit has a tracking mechanism in place which has proven to be effective in ensuring assessments are completed.

Assessment of Children’s Needs (other than educational, physical or mental/behavioral health)
Informal assessments of children’s needs for normalcy, socialization, and extra-curricular activities are occurring and are documented in case files. The agency has placed an emphasis on the difference between a need and a service over the past year as supervisors and leaders were trained and participated in practice Child and Family Services Reviews.

Assessment of Mother’s Needs
The agency assesses mother’s needs both formally and informally. Mother’s are routinely referred for psychosocial assessments. Additionally, informal assessments of needs are documented in contact notes and in court reports. Both the formal and informal assessments are utilized in case planning.

Assessment of Caregiver’s Needs
Caregiver needs are primarily assessed informally and documented in FSFN. FamiliesFirst Network is able to adequately assess the needs of caregivers through a team approach, particularly for licensed caregivers. Placement team and foster parent liaisons along with Family Services Counselors assess and identify caregiver needs both initially and on an ongoing basis.

Physical Health Assessments for Children
Children removed and placed in out of home care are receiving initial health screenings and ongoing physical health assessments. While assessment of children’s physical health needs remains a strength, performance has hit a plateau. Renewed attention is occurring due to the ongoing Nubia Reviews, so improvement in this area is expected.

Mental/Behavioral Health Assessments for Children
FamiliesFirst Network continues to perform well in the area of assessing mental/behavioral health needs of children. This includes referring children removed and placed in out-of-home care for a Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment
and referring children who remain in-home for a formal psychosocial assessment, when appropriate.

**Practice Improvement Opportunities**

**Initial and Subsequent Family Assessments**
Initial Family Assessments were identified as an area strength last fiscal year. The decline in performance is related to the change in the standard requiring the Initial Family Assessment to be completed in FSFN. While still a practice improvement opportunity, the agency has made significant progress in completing the subsequent assessments in FSFN. There continues to be challenges with completing the assessments every six months.

**Safety Assessments Prior to Placement**
Case file reviews identified documentation deficiencies with regard to local criminal history and abuse history checks in relative and non-relative home studies. In debriefing discussions, it was learned these checks are largely occurring although not documented in the case file. In cases where reunification or placement was ordered by the court and the agency had not recommended same, home studies were incomplete.

**Assessment During Post-Placement Supervision**
Following reunification, evidence of consistent, weekly visits during the first ninety days of post-placement was not evident. Risk level was often not rated. Through debriefing discussions, it appears more assessment of risk is occurring than is evidenced through documentation. Informal assessments located in case notes largely take into account interactions with the family and do not include information from other collateral sources to include day care providers, school personnel, providers, and family members. When risk factors, safety concerns or needs were identified, there was a lack of documentation regarding how these issues were addressed by the agency. Debriefing discussions often revealed issues had been addressed but follow up documentation did not occur.

**Assessment of Father’s Needs**
As reflected in quantitative data, FamiliesFirst Network recognized a need to improve performance in assessing the needs of fathers. In June, a campaign focused on including fathers in all aspects of service delivery was rolled-out as a performance improvement initiative.

**Assessment of Dental Needs**
Deficits in the area of assessing children’s dental needs are being addressed through Nubia Reviews. Any noted deficiencies will be tracked to completion.
2. Family Engagement

Strengths

Visitation with Parents

Agency practice indicates visitation is not only occurring with both mother and fathers but is occurring more often than monthly and in settings more conducive to quality visits. When face-to-face contact is not possible, alternative means of communication such as telephone calls or letter writing is occurring.

Maintaining Child’s Important Connections

FamiliesFirst Network continues to encourage and facilitate maintaining children's connections to community and family following removal and placement in out-of-home care. The agency continues to utilize funds, when available, to encourage children in licensed care to participate in extra-curricular and normalcy activities. In addition, the agency continues to work with licensed and contracted group homes to ensure older youth are engaged in normalcy activities.

Practice Improvement Opportunities

Engagement of Mothers and Fathers

While the agency has made progress in the area of visitation with parents, efforts are needed to include parents in a more active role with decision making and children’s activities. Additionally, efforts are needed in documenting reasonable efforts to engage parents in services. Debriefing discussions indicate efforts are occurring but are often not included in case notes.

Psychotropic Medications

There are many factors at work in this area. The policy is quite complex and requires cooperation and communication among a number of partners to include internal staff, providers, Children’s Legal Services, and caregivers. Deficits were identified in obtaining court orders immediately following TPR and with changes in prescribing physicians. FSFN data is often inaccurate. Information in FSFN, court orders, and medical reports are often not identical. FamiliesFirst Network is in the process of finalizing an internal training module on psychotropic medications. The FamiliesFirst Network Manual has been updated to reflect the most recent policy on psychotropic medications and staffs are routinely being encouraged by leaders at all levels to utilize the manual. FamiliesFirst Network completed an internal special review of psychotropic medications during FY2010-2011. The results were similar to data from QA reviews. Another internal review on psychotropic medications will be scheduled during FY2011-2012.
3. Service Planning & Provision

*Strengths*

Initiation of Immediate Interventions

For children re-abused or re-neglected, action was taken to address needs and to put services in place to prevent further maltreatment.

Services to Protect the Child

For in-home cases, services were matched to identified needs and were directly related to keeping the child safe.

Service Referrals

The agency continues to perform well in the area of service referrals. Service referrals made were based upon needs identified to keep children safe.

Independent Living/Teen Plans

Youth are provided opportunities to participate in formal life skills training. In addition, informal opportunities are offered to include mail outs of additional life skills information. Information on life skills is also provided in a monthly newsletter mailed to teens in licensed care. Caregivers are engaging teens in age appropriate chores and learning activities to prepare them for transition to adulthood. Teens are involved in activities based on their age, development and maturity. They are also regularly engaged in extra-curricular activities.

Educational Services

When educational needs are identified, services to address these needs are being provided.

*Practice Improvement Opportunities*

Frequency & Quality of Contacts with Parents

Frequency and quality of visits continues to be a challenge. In debriefing discussions, it was learned parents were being seen with more frequency than documented and quality discussions were occurring. This area overlaps how the agency is performing in the area of engagement of parents.
4. **Promoting Case Progress**

**Strengths**

**Re-entry**

This year, the agency has again met and exceeded contract performance target. This is reflected in our contract measures and in QA findings. The agency continues to promote development of a Continuing Care Plan with families at or near case closure.

**Placement Stability**

The agency has met and exceeded contract performance target in the area of placement stability, and this is supported in QA findings. This year a workgroup was established to address placement stability in the county with the highest rate of placement changes.

**Case Plans: Timeliness**

Data supports the issue of extended case plans identified last fiscal year appears to have been appropriately addressed through clarification with Children’s Legal Services and family services staff. Expiration of case plans continues to be area to be watched.

**Case Plan Goals**

Case Plan goals are aligned with federal regulations and state statutes. FamiliesFirst Network has decreased the number of children with APPLA goals. The use of concurrent case planning has become more prevalent.

**Judicial Reviews**

Judicial Reviews were held timely. Judicial Review Social Study Reports were detailed and thorough resulting in the court receiving quality information.

*Practice Improvement Opportunities*

**Termination of Parental Rights Exceptions**

Compelling reasons for exceptions to filing Termination of Parental Rights Petitions was not located in court orders. Rationale, based on the exceptions for not filing Termination of Parental Right Petitions, was absent from case records and Judicial Review Social Study Reports.
5. **Supervisory Review & Oversight**

The requirement continues for all supervisors of family services units to complete the training “Supervising for Excellence”. As part of the training, supervisors are trained on the “Supervisory Discussion Guide”. Supervisors must conduct at least one face-to-face discussion on each assigned case a minimum of every 90 days. Supervisors are to utilize the “Supervisory Discussion Guide in completing these reviews with their staffs.

Supervisors are struggling to complete quality reviews every 90 days on every case assigned to their unit. There appears to be a downward trend in all aspects of supervisory review: timely completion; addressing safety, permanency, and well-being; following up on guidance and direction.

As a means to continue benefit derived from coaches who were contracted to provide services during FY10-11, FamiliesFirst Network has created a position designed to support and coach supervisors. The position has been advertised, and the agency is in the process of hiring for this position.

**Addressing Findings**

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

Activities to address the findings can be located in the updated Quality management Annual 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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FamiliesFirst Network

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