The Family Integrity Program, Quality Assurance Department, completed 8 Quality Service Reviews throughout the 2012-2013 year, averaging two (2) QSR reviews a quarter. A random selection of cases was chosen from the sample generated by the Department of Children and Families. Each quarter, one In Home case and one Out of Home case was selected for the review. Additionally, the cases reviewed were from different case managers and supervisors.

The strengths noted are the child’s overall Safety, Parent & Caregiver Functioning, Early Learning and Development, Emotional Well-being, Voice and Choice and Maintaining Quality Connections.

The Child & Family Status Indicator of Safety from exposure to threats and harm was scored at an overall 81.3%. This indicator is slightly lower than the 2011-2012 year which was scored at 81.9%. However, the QSR interview process in conjunction with a review of the files demonstrates an established high level of competency in this indicator. A correlation between the Safety indicator and the Parent & Caregiver functioning which scored at 79.2% overall was noted. The Parent & Caregiver functioning indicator score remained the same from last year. The Family Integrity Program continues to attribute this correlation to the fact that children are placed in homes, whether it is in licensed care, relative or non-relative care, with appropriate individuals who are willing to keep the child safe from harm. These caregivers have the appropriate resources, skill set and desire to provide a safe living environment free from exposure to danger threats for these children.

The Early Learning and Development indicator was scored at 83.3%. The cases reviewed in the 2012-2013 fiscal year indicated that the Family Integrity Program promptly addressed areas of concern relating to the child’s early learning and development. Also, the reviews reflect that the agency provides ongoing support to ensure that a systematic, knowledgeable approach was implemented to ensure the child’s developmental needs were met.

The highest percentage in the Child and Family Status Indicators is the Emotional Well-being indicator, scored at 87.5%. This score may be attributed to the agency’s continued practice of seeking to identify and implement appropriate service intervention at the inception of the case. This form of assessment is accomplished through comprehensive assessments.

The Maintaining Quality Connections indicator was scored at 79.2%. This score demonstrates an improvement from the 2011-2012 score of 74.2%. The review process revealed that the agency was focused on identifying family connections and maintaining these connections when appropriate. However, it should be noted that room for improvement continues to exist in the area of maintaining quality connections with the mothers and fathers involved with the agency.
The highest percentage in the Practice Indicators was in the Voice and Choice indicator, which was at 81.3%. The 2012-2013 files reviewed show an improved trend in this area. The interview process revealed that case participants cited overall good communication with the agency and a solid understanding of expectations for safe case closure. The parents that participated in the interviews also confirmed that they felt included in the case planning process and had a voice in their cases.

The weaknesses that were noted were Pathway to Independence, Teamwork, Planning Transitions and Life Adjustments, and Evaluating and Adjusting.

The Pathway to Independence Indicator (50%) showed a marked decrease from 88.9% last fiscal year. Areas of concern noted were as follows: Functions Independently of Services and Preparing for Independence. It should be noted that only one child reviewed qualified for Independent Living Services. The focus child, at the time of this review, was residing in a Specialized Therapeutic Foster Home (STFC) and had been diagnosed with both Axis I and Axis II disorders; due to her cognitive limitations and mental health diagnosis, she had difficulty comprehending Independent Living skills.

The Teamwork Indicator (66.7%) decreased from 72.2% last fiscal year. This indicator remains a high priority and goal for the Family Integrity Program. The cases reviewed throughout the 2012-2013 timeframe continue to demonstrate quality “team building” as it relates to the case worker and family. However, there remains a negative trend in communication with the agency, service providers, and other identified informal supports.

The Planning Transitions and Life Adjustments indicator scored overall at 64.6%; a decrease from 78.6% last fiscal year. During the process, one case was reviewed that demonstrated little planning for transitions and life adjustments and as a result directly impacted this score. The case in question demonstrated the lack of communication between the agency and family relating to upcoming adoption proceedings. The QSR process revealed that both parties were not communicating effectively and a strong sense of frustration was evident among the caregivers of the focus child.

The Evaluating and Adjusting indicator (68.8%) and the Teamwork indicator may be directly correlated to a breakdown in the communication process between the agency and individuals served. It should be noted that this indicator was scored at 79.2% last fiscal year. The Family Integrity Program understands the importance of effective, honest communication with the families it serves and continues to recognize this as a significant indicator.
Child and Family Status Indicators

The 11 indicators under the Child and Family Status Indicators are as follows:

- Safety from Exposure to Threats of Harm (81.3%)
  - Overall, this measure was slightly lower than last fiscal year when it scored 81.9%. This score is in regard to the child’s safety, specifically in the Home Environment. There was a lower score in regards to Services and Efforts in relation to providing appropriate services for the family to protect the child and prevent reentry into out of home care. This appears to be in direct correlation to the lack of teamwork and planning for transitions, which was reflective in the overall scores in those indicators. There were no major concerns noted during any of the cases reviewed in regard to each individual child’s safety.

- Child Vulnerability (75.5%)
  - The overall score for vulnerability increased from last fiscal year score of 73.6%. Again strengths were identified in regard to the child’s characteristics in this indicator. The other three subsections (Self Endangerment, Risk to Others and Mitigation) scored an average 87.5% within the twelve month period. The Family Integrity Program strives to identify a child’s vulnerability at the onset of the case through a comprehensive assessment (CBHA); thereby reducing potential risk and future trauma.

- Stability (79.02%)
  - This indicator demonstrates a high level of stability in the living arrangement for the children in the Family Integrity Program’s care; it increased from last years’ score of 75.0%. Stability in the child’s school setting was scored at 100% with the potential of disruption to this placement at 85.7%. The Family Integrity has worked hard to bolster its work force and secure/maintain quality employees to ensure continuity of care.

- Living Arrangement (83.3%)
  - This indicator demonstrates that the agency continues to secure living arrangements for the children in the most appropriate, least restrictive settings with caregivers who have the capacity to provide for their needs, educational support and understand the importance of permanency planning.

- Permanency (77.1%)
  - For the 2012-2013 fiscal year, four (4) In Home cases and four (4) Out of Home cases were reviewed. Of the In Home cases reviewed, no concerns of permanency were discovered and the children were believed to be in a permanent living environment with their biological parent. In regards to the Out of Home care children, permanency was believed to be progressing toward adoption in 100% of the cases reviewed with that goal for the child. Conversely,
the progress toward reunification was at 66.7%; a goal for the Family Integrity Program in 2013-2014 is to strive toward better assisting the biological parent with reunification efforts, which will be achieved through strong communication

- Physical and Dental Health (85.4%)
  o This indicator demonstrates the agency's ability to collaborate with community providers to ensure the children in care have their physical and dental health needs met effectively and efficiently. Physical health care needs and medication management were optimal for the children reviewed. However, this indicator was slightly lower than last years score of 88.9%. This is in part due to inadequate documentation of service provision relating to the children's medical and dental care.

- Emotional Well-being (87.5%)
  o This indicator shows improvement from 75.0% in 2011-2012. The Family Integrity Program understands the population of the children it serves and strives to identify and implement services to improve the children's overall well-being. Of the children reviewed during 2012-2013, there were positive attachments displayed towards the caregivers/parents noted in all of the cases. Early intervention through a comprehensive assessment helps the agency to identify the child's need to help establish coping and adapting skills. It has been noted that while a child's attachment and relationship are favorable, coping mechanisms and self-management of emotions and behaviors should be a focus, especially in assessments and planning.

- Early Learning and Development (83.3%)
  o Of the 8 children reviewed for 2012-2013, 4 children were under 6 years of age meeting this indicator. The children reviewed were all noted to have achieved their developmental milestones. When there are issues or concerns with a child's developmental milestones the agency acts as a support to provide the child, caregiver and parent with tools, and support needed to address the problem in a systematic, knowledgeable fashion.

- Academic Status (70.8%)
  o This indicator shows a slight decline from last year's score of 73.8%. This is in direct relation to the focus child reviewed that was in an STFC home and was placed in an improper educational setting. Although the team of professionals involved in her case recognized this, there was little that could be done due to the child's placement location and the lack of educational supports offered through that school system. Family Integrity Program continues to maintain a presence in the school system in St. Johns County. Ideally case managers continue to build a strong rapport with the educators, including attending IEP's and "staffings" to build an educational team for the child.
Pathway to Independence (50%)
  - Although there was only 1 child that qualified for this indicator, there was a
    significant decrease in the score of 88.9% from 2011-2012. As stated above, the
    focus child, at the time of this review, was residing in a Specialized Therapeutic
    Foster Home and had been diagnosed with both Axis I and Axis II disorders; due
    to her cognitive limitations and mental health diagnosis, she had difficulty
    comprehending Independent Living skills. That child’s primary goal at the time of
    review was reunification and the professionals involved in her case agreed to that
    goal and strived toward reunification.

Parent and Caregiver Functioning (79.2%)
  - The Family Integrity Program continues to recognize the importance of the
    caregivers in the lives of the children they serve. The agency is paramount in
    facilitating services to ensure that these caregivers have the support they need to
    be successful. As also seen in the past year, the agency continues to need to
    improve in understanding the importance of the role of the parent, especially the
    father, and continue to provide support through services and guidance to improve
    their overall functioning.

Practice Performance Indicators

The 10 Practice Performance Indicators are as follows:

Engagement Efforts (77.1%)
  - The Family Integrity Program understands the need for strategizing and
    coordinating with case participants throughout the life of the case. This indicator’s
    score remained the same from last fiscal year, demonstrating that the agency
    has maintained its focus relating to engagement efforts. The Family Integrity
    Program continues to successfully engage the child and caregivers. It should be
    noted that engagement efforts extended to mothers has improved over the
    course of the year. However, engagement efforts relating to the fathers involved
    with the agency remains less successful. The agency recognizes the importance
    of this effort, as it impacts many other practice indicators.

Voice and Choice (81.3%)
  - This indicator shows an increase from last year’s score of 76.4%. It continues to
    demonstrate a fair practice trend as it relates to the caregiver and participant’s
    assessment of their goals. Through the interview process, it was determined the
    frequency and quality of monthly visits were sufficient to establish rapport with
    both the child and caregiver. The mother’s participation in the assessment of
    goals reflects a strong, positive trend. Although the father’s assessment of goals
    and service selection remains an area of concern. Although there is an increase
    in the overall score, The Family Integrity Program will continue efforts to
    encourage parental participation in their cases. A correlation to the Engagement
    Efforts indicator may be drawn in this example.
- **Teamwork (66.7%)**
  - The Family Integrity Program determined this indicator as an opportunity for improvement last fiscal year. The agency continues to recognize this as an area for improvement characterized by the decrease in score of 72.2% from 2011-2012. The QSR review process revealed that overall team functioning/effectiveness and lack of team meetings continues to greatly impact this score. The agency’s capacity to respond appropriately when a child or participant were in crisis and form a functioning, highly effective team to identify and solve the crisis remains at a high level. The agency will strive to demonstrate a higher level of competency in teaming on a continual, on-going basis for the children and families served.

- **Assessment and Understanding (75.0%)**
  - This indicator shows a slight decline in score from 77.8% last fiscal year. The Family Integrity Program continues to stress the importance of an initial assessment and understanding of case participants in order to effectively understand their needs and facilitate the case plan goals. The agency does well in assessing and understanding the needs of the child and caregiver at the inception of the case as well as throughout the life of the case. This level of assessment and understanding has also made strides in the area of the biological mothers. However, this improvement does not extend to the biological fathers involved with the agency. This trend may be directly correlated to the Engagement Efforts Practice Standard. If the parents are not engaged they can not be assessed. The Family Integrity Program recognizes this gap and will strive to ensure more comprehensive engagement efforts are implemented for the upcoming fiscal year.

- **Planning for Safe Case Closure (72.9%)**
  - Although this indicator is slightly down from 2011-2012 (77.8%), the Family Integrity Program continues to demonstrate a solid level of competency in its ability to effectively and dynamically plan for safe case closure. The agency ensures that the planning process is individualized to the family’s present situation; ensuring it takes into consideration a long-term view to maintain the safety and well-being of the child.

- **Planning Transitions and Life Adjustments (64.6%)**
  - This indicator shows a marked decrease from 78.6% last fiscal year. This trend may be part of a larger area in need of improvement identified in the Teamwork category. Without communication between all team members, the agency will not be able to plan, stage and implement a cohesive process or supports to ensure future life transitions are successful. The Family Integrity Program will work to create an internal process which promotes “Teaming” and ensures the case participants are prepared for natural transitions throughout the life of their case.
- Implementation (75.0%)
  - The Family Integrity Program demonstrates a competent understanding of the Implementation Practice Standard, improving its score from 73.6% in 2011-2012. The QSR process revealed that case managers did well in identifying necessary services needed by their families. Once these areas were identified as a need, a good combination of strategies and services were implemented to improve the overall functioning and well-being of the family served. It is believed that this score will also improve once the Assessment and Understanding indicator improves, which will occur through consistent engagement of the parents.

- Maintaining Quality Connections (79.2%)
  - The Family Integrity Program understands the importance of maintaining quality connections and whenever possible strives to foster these relationships. The increase in score from 74.2% in 2011-2012 showcases this understanding and effort on behalf of the agency. The QSR process revealed that family connections were adequately identified and maintained for most family members through appropriate visits. Although improvements were made in the area of maintaining connections with mothers and fathers, the agency understands there remains continued, ongoing room for improvement in maintaining these visits with the biological parents. In some instances, due to lack of compliance and involvement, connections could not be maintained effectively. Therefore, the Family Integrity Program will evaluate its strategies and efforts to engage the parents, and other identified important individuals, in an ongoing manner.

- Evaluating and Adjusting (68.8%)
  - This indicator shows a marked decrease in score from 79.2% in 2011-2012. The Family Integrity Program continues to demonstrate a solid level of competency in the evaluation and monitoring of the family’s progress throughout the life of the case. It should be noted that the QSR process revealed that although the case managers competently gather and assessed information to strategize for the families, there was an identified gap in the application of these strategies. Furthermore, this aspect of the Evaluating and Adjusting indicator may be directly correlated to the Teamwork Indicator as it relates to communication and the identified need for work in this area.

- Psychotropic Medication Management (83.3%)
  - The Family Integrity Program continues to demonstrate a competent, comprehensive, level of understanding as to the importance of carefully monitoring all children prescribed psychotropic medication by ensuring its use is necessary, safe and effective. Additionally, the case manager works with the families to ensure the child, parent and caregivers are involved and understand the benefits and risks of the medication. Only one of the 12 cases reviewed had a child prescribe psychotropic medication. This case demonstrated a good understanding and compliance with the medication.
Addressing Findings

The findings of the QSR will continue to be utilized by the Family Integrity Program to provide the staff with opportunities for growth and improvement in the areas demonstrating need. Although each case reviewed is unique in its circumstances, the overall trends noted during this review process will determine which direction the agency needs to take to improve or maintain service delivery to the children and families in its care. There continues to be noted areas for improvement from the previous fiscal year, which will assist the agency in determining opportunities for training and ongoing supervisory guidance. Noted trends help to establish the focus for the Quality Management Plan and influences training needs by agency staff. A debriefing is held after each Quality Service Review with the case manager and the case manager’s supervisor to outline the findings of the case. At the end of each quarter, a subsequent debriefing is held with the agency’s supervisors and senior management to discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses identified. In addition, monthly CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) meetings are held to discuss ongoing quality improvement strategies within the agency.

The agency currently excels in the areas of Safety, Parent & Caregiver Functioning, Early Learning and Development, Emotional Well-being, Voice and Choice, and Maintaining Quality Connections. These areas have been identified as strengths within case management team and may be utilized as examples of quality service delivery.

A lack of Teamwork continues to be a trend noted within the cases reviewed. This area for improvement will be communicated to the case management and supervisory staff, at quarterly debriefing meetings. Teamwork is a critical function in which the agency will seek to improve upon. This standard is directly correlated with many of the other standards to include planning for transitions and life adjustments, evaluating and adjusting, assessments, engagement and implementation. Success in implementation and structuring of effective service delivery for families served requires all of the teaming components be in place to ensure a healthy, positive environment exists for the child and the family.

Lisa Crane - Compliance Specialist
7/31/13
Date

Kelly Wilkerson - Compliance Specialist
7/31/15
Date