This is the fourth quarterly report for the FY2008-2009 QA Base File Reviews, part of the Statewide QA Plan. Cases selected for this review follow the states sampling methodology which provided a list of all Children that entered care at age six or older. The period under review was April 1, 2008 through March 31, 2009. From the list of 952 children, 25 were selected using a random sample calculator. Of these 25 cases; the random sample calculator was applied again to identify which eight cases to provide to DCF for the Side-by-Side reviews. The remaining seventeen were used for the Base Review utilizing the State’s new Case Management Tool, Quality Practice Standards for Case Management.

Analysis of Case File Review Data
The analysis of the data for the 17 Base Review files reveals an increase in score in the areas of Safety, CFSR and Well-Being. Permanency scored 6% lower, respectively, than the third quarter data. The overall score increased from 66% in the third quarter to 68% in the fourth.

Overall Performance in Achieving Safety
In the area of safety there are a total of 21 questions which address the overall safety of children. The overall performance score for safety was 62%.

Strengths
- In 100% of the cases, no child living in the home was re-abused or neglected.
- There was a 6% increase in providing service referrals consistent with identified needs through the life of the case.
- A thorough safety assessment of the home was completed prior to reunification 100% of the time; this is a 40% increase from quarter three.
- There was also a 17% increase in the six month family assessment being focused on the immediate and prospective safety of the child.

Opportunities
The data in the fourth quarter again revealed that the majority of opportunities in the area of safety have the common thread of involving family assessments; ensuring that they are completed, that they are thorough, and that they are current. Additionally, concerted efforts to provide or arrange for appropriate services for the family to prevent re-entry to out-of-home care decreased by 33% in the fourth quarter.
Practice Trends – Safety
The areas that the file reviews identified as opportunities for improvement were previously identified during the third quarter. The overall safety score has increased by 7% from the previous quarter data. We have begun to see the utilization of the six month Family Assessment component in FSFN. We expect that this module is providing the structure that has remedied the omissions of documentation as well as to prompt care managers to complete assessments timely and thoroughly. QA has completed RFA’s on cases reviewed that do not contain a completed Family Assessment in FSFN. In addition, continued training and clarification on assessing risk and safety through QA In-service trainings will assist in correcting deficits.

Overall Performance in Achieving Permanency
In the area of permanency 46 items were applicable. Overall, HKI performance scored at 70% which decreased 6% from the third quarter data. In this area several strengths as well as opportunities for improvement were identified.

Strengths
- For the fourth quarter in a row, current stability of placement continued to score high. Placements were stable and able to meet the child’s needs. They also had no identified significant risks or projections of disruption.
- The parents were notified of all child placement changes in 100% of the cases which is consistent from quarter three.
- An MDT staffing for placement planning was conducted before each placement to ensure the placement or move was unavoidable increased 27% from the third quarter reviews.
- There has been a trend in the last several quarters that the Case Plan was expired, however in the fourth quarter; the case record contained a current CP 82% of the time.
- Concerted efforts were made to ensure visitation between the child and sibling was sufficient to maintain the continuity of the relationship increased in the number of applicable cases as well as score. This item improved from 33% in quarter three to 80% in the fourth quarter.

Opportunities
- Case plans only addressed visitation 22% of the time, which is a decrease from 71% in the third quarter.
- Although Supervisory Reviews were documented to have occurred 100% of the time; as seen in quarter two and three, they were rarely thorough and did not document follow-through on assigned tasks. This area did increase by 23% in the 4th quarter, but remains an area that needs improvement.
- Both the mothers and fathers scores decreased from last quarter in regards to being encouraged and supported to participate in making decision about their children’s needs and activities.
**Practice Trends – Permanency**

We predict supervisory reviews will continue to improve now that our supervisors are utilizing the State’s Modeling and Mentoring Discussion Guide. Per state guidelines, this guide will be utilized quarterly. At this time HKI is requiring CMO’s to continue to complete monthly supervision during the months that the guide is not utilized. QA has also implemented a training and tips guide for both the CM and supervisors to help them better utilize the new guide. This review did show a 23% improvement in the quality of supervision since the third quarter.

While HKI continues to struggle with obtaining appropriate ICWA inquiries, this item maintained about the same in quarter four. HKI continues to work with the Sheriff’s Office in efforts to receive this form during the ESI staffing process. Also, for older cases without the completed ICWA form, HKI will continue to follow-up with families in efforts to ensure that each file contains accurately completed documentation. QA did an ICWA presentation with the agency units to provide explanation and instruction regarding the ICWA process.

There continues to be issues placing the siblings together. This was down 13% from the third quarter. Of the applicable cases, only 50% documented clear evidence that separation was necessary. HKI continues to work with the care manager’s on the importance of maintaining the sibling relationship.

**Overall Performance in Achieving Well-Being**

In the area of well-being there are 49 items identified. Overall, HKI performance scored at 73% which is a 4% increase from the third quarter data. In this area several strengths as well as opportunities for improvement were identified:

**Strengths**

- For the third quarter in a row, an ongoing assessment of the child’s needs was conducted to provide updated information for case planning purposes in all 17 cases.
- Concerted efforts were made to support the father in services in 75% of the cases which is up 32%.
- The CP helped achieve permanency 93% of the time in the fourth quarter which is a 23% increase from quarter three. The cause for not scoring 100% in this area was that one of eight applicable children did not have appropriate case plan tasks.
Appropriate steps were taken to identify and recruit an adoptive family that matched the child’s needs was completed in all of the applicable cases, as was the appropriate steps to approve the adoptive family.

On ongoing assessment of out-of-home care providers was conducted in order to ensure appropriate services in 92% of the cases which is up 25% from the previous quarter.

**Opportunity**

- The frequency of service workers visits with the mother, father, caregivers, and children showed a 34% decrease overall from the third quarter, Documentation did not reveal that the visits were being completed unannounced every 90 days. There is also a pattern of the parents not being seen monthly when there is a goal of reunification or maintain and strengthen.
- The quality of visits continues to be an opportunity for improvement. The fourth quarter showed a 13% increase, however the overall was only 31%. Often, it is not being documented that the verbal child is seen apart from the caregiver to discuss safety, concerns or well-being.
- Concerted efforts were made to assess the child’s dental needs in only 29% of the cases, which is down 15%. This was mostly due to children not having a dental appointment every 6 months when they are 3 or older.

**Practice Trends – Well-Being**

The findings of the base review in the domain of well-being identified particular strengths associated with engaging father’s services a continued effort with to assess the children’s ongoing needs.

During the third quarter, HKI performed well in assessing and addressing parent’s needs, however during the fourth quarter, this area scored lower than the third quarter. The fathers were engaged more than the mothers during the fourth quarter, which may be a result of over compensation from past identification of failure to engage fathers. During the third and fourth quarter, assessing the child’s needs remained the same at 100%.

The frequency and quality of visits continues to be an opportunity for improvement. QA has met with the agencies during unit meetings and discussed the need for documenting unannounced home visits every 90 days, face to face contact with the parents when a goal is reunification or maintain and strengthen, and documenting talking to the verbal child alone during visits.
**Practice Trends- Placement Stability**

A specialized review was conducted during the fourth quarter base review to collect data regarding placement stability. Of the seventeen cases randomly selected, seven cases were applicable to be assessed with the placement stability tool. Of the other ten, the children were either reunified, over eighteen or in an adoptive placement. Of the seven applicable children 3 were in licensed care and four with a relative or non-relative.

There were three applicable children who had two or more placements during the period under review. Of those three children, two moves were necessary to achieve permanency. One of those was also to step-down the child and one other child’s move was due to a placement disruption. In the one case where a child was moved due to a placement disruption, services were provided to support the out-of-home care provider in efforts to prevent the disruption. In all applicable cases, the frequency and quality of visits by the case manager with the caregiver and the child positively impacted the stability of the placement. Of the three children with two or more placements during the period under review, there were four different types of events that led to the need to move the child. Those are; to move the children closer to family, delinquency and neglect by out-of-home caregiver.

**Requests for Action**

In the 17 Base File reviews there were zero (0) Requests for Action (RFA’s) generated for safety concerns.

**Overall Performance Measures Analysis Based on FSFN Data**

It is important to note that there are limitations in comparing the base file review; mainly due to FSFN reporting primarily compliance based data while base file reviews are quality focused.

The number of missing children continues to be below our contract measure with approximately 31 children missing at a given time. This number last year was as high as 60 missing children. HKI has been working closely with Case Management Organizations and the FBI and focus has been placed on action plans to prevent future episodes of those children that do run.

Ensuring children reside in safe homes with appropriate caretakers is integral to child safety. In the month of March alone, HKI processed 940 back ground checks on caregivers. This information corresponds with the base review findings that 100% of applicable cases completed a thorough safety assessment was completed prior to reunification or placement of a child in an unlicensed out-of-home care setting.

From July 2008 to March 2009, the number of children in out of home care over 12 months has decreased by 307 kids. Our contractual goal is that no more than 1447 children will be in OOH care more than 12 months on June 30, 2009. At the end of
March, HKI was at 1313 children. These numbers affect multiple areas in the State tool including efforts to maintain important connections, placement stability, and placement changes made in planning efforts to achieve case goals.

**Comparison of Current Findings and Prior Performance Review Findings**
A comparison between the third quarter data and the fourth quarter using the Quality of Practice Standards for Case Management Tool is similar less one aspect. The files reviews for the 3rd quarter were children who entered care under the age of five. The file reviews for the 4th quarter consisted of children who entered care at age six or older.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter 3</th>
<th>Quarter 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFSR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well-Being</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>66%</td>
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**Summary and Recommendations**
Last quarter our major focus was on the domain of safety. The fourth quarter base review showed an increase in this area. There was also an increase in CFSR and well-being as compared to all previous quarters. As a result of the fourth quarter, major focus will be placed on permanency while maintaining efforts to improve all other domains. The results of the fourth quarters Case Management Base Reviews have provided HKI data in the areas that we had previously identified as being opportunities for improvement.

We have summarized the opportunities into two categories:

1. Family Assessments:
   *Every case should at this point have a Family Assessment completed in FSFN. HKI will continue to provide RFA’s on cases in which Family Assessments are not completed. Next steps will include training regarding quality of these Family Assessments.*

2. Modeling and Mentoring Guide:
   *HKI QA will provide monthly feedback to the directors regarding the utilization and quality of documented supervisory discussion located in FSFN.*

As HKI continues to utilize the Quality Practice Standards for Case Management Tool, we will be able to provide more qualitative feedback to our Care Management Organizations, in turn allowing us to better serve our families.