The Family Integrity Program, Quality Assurance team, completed 12 Quality Service Reviews throughout the 2011-2012 year, averaging to three (3) QSR reviews a quarter. A random selection of cases was chosen from the sample generated by the Department of Children and Families. The first and second quarter cases that were selected contained children in Out of Home care for 12 months or longer. The third and fourth quarter cases that were selected contained children with a primary goal of reunification. Additionally, the cases selected for review were from different case managers and supervisors.

The strengths noted are the child’s overall Safety, Parent & Caregiver Functioning, Pathway to Independence, Physical and Dental Health, and Evaluating and Adjusting.

The Child & Family Status Indicator of Safety from exposure to threats and harm was scored at an overall 81.9%. The QSR interview process in conjunction with a review of the file demonstrated a 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 Family Integrity Program attributes this correlation to the fact that children are placed in homes, whether it is in licensed care or relative/ 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 safe living environment free of exposure to threats for these children.

The Pathway to Independence indicator scored an overall score of 88.9%. Of the 12 QSR’s completed, three cases met the criteria for this indicator. The Independent Living team works extensively with the children who are identified as meeting the criteria for the Independent Living Program (IL). In reviewing the files, it was noted that the IL team consistently matches the child’s individual needs with the appropriate life skills courses. The children’s assessments are completed in a timely manner and all staffings are signed off on by the child, the child’s caregivers, the case manager and the case manager supervisor.
The Physical and Dental Health Child & Family Status Indicator scored an overall 88.9% for the 12 month period. It should be noted that currently St. Johns County does not have a Dental provider that accepts Medicaid patients. The Family Integrity Program Dependency Case Managers have successfully navigated this obstacle, identifying appropriate resources in the community to ensure the children in the agency's care have the dental care they need. The agency has also improved its communication with the child's caregiver concerning the child's physical health and the importance of maintaining timely appointments/follow-up services. The appropriate documentation of the child's medical and dental health needs is located in both physical files and within the FSFN medical tab.

The highest percentage in the Practice Indictors was in the Evaluating and Adjusting standard (79.2%). It was noted that the agency consistently evaluated the participants in the case and adjusted the service needs based upon these evolving assessments. This ongoing process was particularly seen in regards to monitoring the child's progress throughout the case.

There is a correlation between the above mentioned Practice Standard and the Supporting Transitions and Life Adjustments standard (78.6%). Once again, the agency demonstrated the ability to assess and understand the participants ongoing strengths and needs and modifying the case plan objectives as needed.

The weaknesses that were noted were Teamwork, Implementation, Emotional Well-being, Child Vulnerability, and Academic Status.

The Teamwork Indicator (72.2%) remains a high priority and goal for the Family Integrity Program. During the cases reviewed, it was noted that there was an overall lack of “teaming” within the cases. Instances of a case manager not communicating with the child’s therapist, parents not communicating with providers and a lack of meetings with participants were all noted deficiencies. In one particular case, a child had 2 therapists and it was discovered that neither therapist had spoken with the other concerning the child’s treatment plans or progress. This standard is important in the overall functioning of a case because if there is no teamwork, then it is believed that there is no management of the case.

The Emotional Well-being (75.0%) and Child Vulnerability (73.6%) Indicators are inherently linked and not surprisingly a trend denoting a weakness in the agency’s findings. The children in Family Integrity Program’s care have all experienced a trauma in one manner or another. The Family Integrity Program strives to identify these issues and provide the child, parent, and caregivers with the natural support they will need to help improve these vulnerabilities. An initial assessment of the child, parent and caregivers aid in the identification of services needed. This assessment, usually through a Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment (CBHA), was completed in 11 of the 12 cases reviewed.

The Academic Status Indicator (73.8%) demonstrates a breakdown in communication with the Family Integrity Program and the St. Johns County school system. Although this indicator has improved greatly in the past year the score of 73.8% indicates that there is still work to be done in this area. Through efforts made by the Education Action Team, an important improvement was
accomplished in early December 2011 when shelter orders were augmented to specifically contain consent from the court for the case manager to have the authority to obtain any school records they may require in their line of work. It is a priority for the agency to continue to improve its relationship with individual educators, thereby allowing for a more active role on the part of the case managers in the child’s education. Ideally, the case managers would have an open line of communication with the child’s teacher(s), attending conferences or IEP staffings as needed.

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 (81.9%)
  - Overall, this measure was high in regard to the child’s safety, specifically in the Home Environment. There was a slight decrease in the score for the safety concerning the child’s “Other Environment”; this was mainly due to the fact that the caregiver is not in complete control over the child’s safety while they are not in the home environment, which was noted during some of the cases reviewed. There were no major concerns noted during any of the cases reviewed in regard to each individual child’s safety.

- Child Vulnerability (73.6%)
  - The overall score for vulnerability was low in comparison to many of the other scores, although there were strengths 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 88.9% 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. Additionally, four out of the twelve children reviewed presented with increased vulnerabilities due to their behavior, age, or past history of trauma which increased their susceptibility to victimization.

- Stability (75.0%)
  - This indicator demonstrates a high level of stability in the living arrangement for the children in the Family Integrity Program’s care. Additionally, management of risks to the child’s stability scored high as well. In the 12 cases reviewed, only 2 demonstrated a risk of disruption to living arrangement and school setting; this was due to a recent reunification and a pending to move the home of a relative caregiver. Additionally, instability in case managers decreased the overall score in this standard. The agency is working on stabilizing the workforce to help decrease the change in case managers.

- Living Arrangement (79.2%)
  - This indicator demonstrates that the living arrangements for the children in the Family Integrity Program’s care are placed in appropriate settings with caregivers who have the capacity to provide for their needs, educational support and understand the importance of permanency planning. The appropriateness of the
child’s educational setting was favorable as well. It is of note, that maintaining quality connections, specifically with the parents for the children while in care is recognized as a goal that the agency will continue to strive to improve upon.

- Permanency (76.4%)
  o The first two quarter cases reviewed were for children who had been in Out of Home care for 12 months or longer. While the overall progress toward adoption was positive, the progress toward reunification was less than favorable. This standard can correlate with many other standards, including teaming and engagement efforts, which the agency scored average on. The third and fourth quarter cases that were selected contained children with a primary goal of reunification. The Family Integrity Program recognizes the issue with this aspect of the progress toward reunification indicator and needs to continue to engage the parents, empowering them to participate in their case plan.

- Physical and Dental Health (88.9%)
  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. The children’s physical and dental health care records were well documented.

- Emotional Well-being (75.0%)
  o 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. 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 should be a focus, especially in assessments and planning.

- Early Learning and Development (76.7%)
  o The Family Integrity Program supports early learning and development for the children in care. 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 the tools, support needed to address the problem in a systematic, knowledgeable fashion.

- Academic Status (73.8%)
  o The Family Integrity Program continues to seek marked growth in this indicator and endeavors to establish a presence in the school system in St. Johns County. The cases reviewed have seen an improvement in educational achievements, although the agency needs improve in becoming a primary supporter in the child’s educational career. Ideally case managers will have established rapport with the educators, including attending IEP’s and “staffings” building a educational team for the child.
Pathway to Independence (88.9%)
  - There were three (3) children that qualified for Independent Living services (13+ years old and in licensed care). In regard to Independent Living Services, the agency excels at providing the children with timely staffings and life skills courses, tailored to meet each child's individual needs. The IL team staffs the child's assessments with the child, caregivers, case manager and case manager supervisor.

Parent and Caregiver Functioning (79.2%)
  - The Family Integrity Program recognizes 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. The agency needs 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 (77.8%)
  - The Family Integrity Program understands the need for strategizing and coordinating with case participants throughout the life of the case. Overall, the Family Integrity Program has achieved success in engaging the child, and caregivers. However, engagement efforts extended to the mothers and fathers has been less successful, especially regarding the engagement on the father's behalf. The agency recognizes the importance of this effort, as it impacts many other practice indicators.

- Voice and Choice (76.4%)
  - The Voice and Choice Practice Indicator demonstrates a fair practice trend as it relates to the caregiver and participant's assessment of their goals. Also, through the interview process it was determined the frequency and quality of monthly visits were sufficient to establish rapport with the child and caregiver. Both the mother and father's participation in the assessment of goals and in service selection is lacking. A correlation to the Engagement Practice Indicator may be drawn in this instance.

- Teamwork (72.2%)
  - The Family Integrity Program employees function at a high level of competency, knowledge and skill within their roles in the agency. Improvement is needed in the areas of team meetings, team functioning and team effectiveness. During the QSR process it was noted that if a child/participant were in crisis the unit was capable of mobilizing and functioning as a highly effective team to meet the needs of the child and solve the crisis. Ideally, the agency would like to demonstrate this level of
competency in teaming on a continual, on-going basis for their children and families.

- Assessment and Understanding (77.8%)
The Family Integrity Program understands 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 does not extend to the mothers and 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 engagements efforts are implemented for the upcoming fiscal year.

- Planning for Safe Case Closure (77.8%)
The Family Integrity Program demonstrates 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 (78.6%)
The Family Integrity Program does well with identifying the next life changes for the child, planning and arranging appropriately to ensure a smooth transition and life adjustment occurs. The QSR process revealed that careful consideration was taken in the overall planning, staging and implementation process prior to any transition taken with the cases reviewed. Additionally, the agency ensured that case participants were informed and prepared throughout the process in order to be successful after the transition occurred by identifying potential future needs.

- Implementation (73.6%)
The Family Integrity Program demonstrates a competent understanding of the Implementation Practice Standard. 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.

- Maintaining Quality Connections (74.2%)
The Family Integrity Program understands the importance of maintaining quality connections and whenever possible strives to foster these relationships. The QSR process revealed that family connections were adequately identified and maintained for most family members through appropriate visits. There remains room for improvement in maintaining these visits with the mothers and fathers involved with the agency. 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.
- **Evaluating and Adjusting (79.2%)**
  The Family Integrity Program demonstrates of level of competency in the evaluation and monitoring of the family's progress throughout the life of the case. The agency has had success in evaluating services and modifying those services in response to the changing needs of the family. The QSR process revealed the case managers efforts to gather and assess information in order to plan and strategize effectively for the family.

- **Psychotropic Medication Management (83.3%)**
  The Family Integrity Program strives to carefully monitor all children prescribed psychotropic medication by ensuring its use is necessary, safe and effective. Additionally, 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 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 it’s circumstances, the overall trends noted during the reviews will determine which direction the agency needs to take to improve or maintain service delivery to the children and families in its care. Noted deficiencies help to establish the focus for the Quality Management plan and influence trainings needed 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 illustrate 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 medical/ dental service delivery, Independent Living services, evaluating and adjusting according to needs and in assistance with transitions. These areas have been identified as strengths within case management team and may be utilized as examples of quality service delivery.

An overall lack of Teamwork was noted as a theme within the cases reviewed and reported to the staff of the agency, at both the case manager/ supervisor debriefings as well as at the management debriefings. Teamwork is a critical function and area in which the agency will seek to improve upon. This standard is directly correlated with many of the other standards to include 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.
St Johns County Board of County Commissioners
Family Integrity Program
Summary of Case Management Practice Trends FY 2011-2012
(Continued)

Lisa Crane - Compliance Specialist

Date

Kelly Wilkerson - Compliance Specialist

Date

Thomas Mitchell, LCSW - Compliance Coordinator

Date