



Iowa Department of Human Services

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IOWA'S PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP) QUARTER 4 (JULY 1, 2012 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2012)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction:

The DHS' vision is that all children grow up safe from abuse and with permanent family connections. To achieve this vision, the DHS aligns child welfare resources, through utilizing a customer focus and a dedication to excellence, accountability, and teamwork.

Iowa's child welfare system focuses on the three CFSR domains of safety, permanency, and well-being:

- **Safety**
 - Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
 - Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- **Permanency**
 - Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.
- **Child and family well-being**
 - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
 - Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
 - Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Quarter Four PIP Activities:

Outcome/Systemic Factor:	Quarter 4 Targeted Strategies/Activities:
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision • Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC)
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Team Decision-Making meetings (FTDM) • Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) • Permanency Roundtables • Joint Substance Abuse Protocol • Iowa Children's Justice • Iowa Foster Care Youth Council
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Interaction

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caseworker Visits • Expand Responsible Fatherhood and Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) initiative • Expand Parent Partners
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed in the fourth quarter
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caseworker Visits
Systemic Factor: Service Array and Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed in the fourth quarter
Systemic Factor: Quality Assurance (QA) System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance (QA) system • Supervision

Quarter Four PIP Accomplishments:

Supervision: Iowa recognizes supervision as a key strategy to ensuring quality social work practice, recruiting and retaining quality social workers, and supporting those social workers.

The group continues to complete tasks identified by the CFSR PIP, with fourth quarter tasks completed below.

- Developed supervisory Model of Practice (MOP) training plan, webinar, and face-to-face training curriculum
- Implemented webinar to provide overview of MOP in August 2012 for DHS supervisors, social work administrators (SWAs), and service area managers (SAMs)
- Implemented the first of two face-to-face training modules in September 2012 for DHS supervisors, SWAs, and SAMs
- Developed plan to evaluate effectiveness of supervisory MOP, which includes a baseline survey, follow-up surveys, and SWA and SAM evaluation measures specific to each service area

Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC): Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) is an approach that neighborhoods, towns, cities and states can adopt to improve how children are protected from abuse and/or neglect. It aims to blend the work and expertise of professionals and community members to bolster supports for vulnerable families and children with the aim of preventing child abuse, reducing the number of children experiencing repeated maltreatment, safely decreasing the number of out-of-home placements, and promoting timely reunification when children are placed in foster care.

During quarter four, DHS staff conducted regional training in September 2012 discussing data collection and evaluation, website updates, and the use of 2011 Update on Community Partnership in Iowa.

Family Team Decision-Making meetings (FTDM): The FTDM process, a strength-based process, encourages families to draw upon formal and informal supports, promotes team

decision-making, and provides a healthy environment for resolving conflict and solving problems. Results of the 2010 CFSR identified differences in FTDM practices as a concern.

The workgroup accomplished the following tasks in quarter four:

- Reviewed initial and ongoing training required for FTDM facilitators
- Developed an education and training plan for attorneys, judges, and other child welfare system partners in collaboration with Children's Justice
- Finalized plan for facilitator training implementation

Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) for Placement Stability: Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) staff chose to focus PDSA efforts on one sub-measure of placement stability, which is children in out of home placement between 12 and 24 months will have 2 or fewer placements.

The following tasks were completed in quarter four:

- Continued to follow the five PDSA cases
- Analyzed preliminary PDSA results

Permanency Roundtables (PRTs): The DHS and Iowa Children's Justice (ICJ) collaborated with Casey Family Programs to conduct permanency roundtables in each service area in Iowa. Permanency roundtables examine cases where children have been in foster care for an extended period of time and need permanency. The purpose of the roundtables is to review the case to determine opportunities missed to pursue permanency and family connections for youth and develop an action plan to achieve permanency for the youth.

While there was no official PIP benchmark completed in quarter four, the DHS' Service Business Team (SBT) analyzed Round 2 participating service area analyses for statewide themes and implications.

Joint Substance Abuse Protocol: In 2008, the Iowa General Assembly passed House File 2310 (HF2310). The purpose of HF2310 was to identify effective means of reducing the incidence and impact of child abuse, including denial of critical care and interventions with families by the child welfare system caused, partially or wholly, by substance misuse, abuse, or dependency by a child's parent, guardian, custodian, or other person responsible for the child's care. The DHS, Iowa Children's Justice (ICJ), and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) worked together to develop a protocol for working with these families in the child welfare system. DHS, ICJ, and IDPH will expand the Joint Substance Abuse Protocol by rolling it out in two additional counties. Counties having higher rates of abuse per 1,000 will be targeted and recruited.

In quarter four, Iowa continued to work with local DHS staff and substance abuse providers to confirm Adams and Union counties participation in the protocol.

Iowa Children's Justice Place Holder: The CFSR Final Report identified differences in court permanency practices as a concern. The following tasks were accomplished to address this concern in quarter four:

- Continued work to establish a pilot project for a Cornerstone Family Representation (CFR) model in Black Hawk County, which focuses on advocacy in four key areas (visitation, placement, conferences, and appropriate services) during the first 60 days of an out-of-home placement case.
- Provided training in each judicial district, bringing together up to 100 multi-disciplinary participants per training, including parents and youth, as well as the professionals serving in the child welfare system. The same general agenda was adapted for each district based on the areas of interest identified by district team leadership. At the request of the individual district teams, CJ staff will provide assessments on achieving permanency for children, along with consultation on other child welfare issues.

Iowa Foster Care Youth Council: To improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children in foster care, Iowa believes that foster care youth and foster care alumni youth are essential partners. The Iowa Foster Care Youth Council (IFCYC) is a primary way to engage youth in the Iowa child welfare system.

The IFCYC serves as a support group for youth involved in Iowa's foster care system and foster care alumni. Chapter meetings are held in approximately ten sites across the state and provide an opportunity for youth to meet other youth having similar experiences, learn about programs and services, and an opportunity to impact policy and practice change in the child welfare system. The chapter meetings occur approximately two times a month. A trained, paid facilitator prepares an agenda, invites presenters, and leads the discussion.

During quarter four, mechanisms were developed and finalized to implement the Youth Bill of Rights into DHS and service providers' practice.

Family Interaction: The Family Interaction (FI) Planning model promoted throughout Iowa and based on the work of Norma Ginther seeks to achieve timely and safe reunification through systematic and frequent visitation between children and their parents after removal.

The PIP workgroup assigned to Family Interaction is the same PIP workgroup assigned to FTDM. In quarter four, the workgroup reviewed and modified the current FI training plan.

Caseworker Visits: DHS staff formed a group consisting of DHS and Juvenile Court Services (JCS) staff to complete tasks in the PIP regarding the quality, frequency, and documentation of caseworker visits.

In quarter four, the caseworker visit PIP workgroup developed information material for judges, attorneys, and Juvenile Court Services regarding the caseworker visit standards.

Expand Responsible Fatherhood and Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) initiative: DHS staff formed a committee, including staff representing field, policy, administration, and staff from the Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU), Parent Partners, Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC), and a domestic violence to complete tasks identified by the CFSR PIP.

The workgroup completed the following tasks in quarter four:

- Conducted engaging fathers training for DHS staff, service provider supervisors, and some Department of Corrections staff on engaging fathers
- Implemented the standard practice documents and Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) protocol for engaging fathers throughout the Life of the Case
- Integrated the standard practice documents and the FPLS protocol into existing new worker trainings
- Provided information to Children's Justice, Juvenile Court Services, and Child Advocacy Board staff

Expand Parent Partners:

Parent Partners (PP) are individuals who previously had their children removed from their care and were successfully reunited with their children for a year or more. PP provides support to parents that are involved with the DHS and are working towards reunification. PP mentor one-on-one, celebrate families' successes and strengths, exemplify advocacy, facilitate training and presentations, and collaborate with the DHS and child welfare. Their efforts support placement stability for children in care, support timely reunification, and support successful reunification to prevent re-entry.

Tasks completed in quarter four were:

- Reviewed Parent Partner feedback and made recommendations for policy and practice changes
- Increased Parent Partner participation in DHS and provider trainings

Quality Assurance (QA): Because of Iowa's 2003 CFSR, Iowa implemented and continuously operates an identifiable Quality Assurance and Improvement (QA&I) system. The QA&I system serves all of Iowa's 99 counties. The QA&I system evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and addresses prioritized need areas of the service delivery system, and provides relevant analysis and reporting of the performance of Iowa's child welfare system. The 2010 CFSR identified areas needing improvement in Iowa's QA system.

Tasks completed during quarter four were:

- Developed plan to monitor family engagement throughout the Life of the Case, including a family survey and a quality assurance component, for FTDM
- Developed plan to monitor quality of family interactions
- Developed plan to identify, locate, and engage relatives within Family Interaction practice
- Implemented plan to monitor the frequency and quality of caseworker visits
- Analyzed the caseworker visit data and provided the analysis to central office and field staff to inform practice
- Implemented plan to evaluate effectiveness of training on practice for Responsible Fatherhood/Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) initiative
- Continued case reviews to determine PIP baseline related to select CFSR items

Following are the findings from the case reading for the first four quarters which will constitute Iowa's baseline period. Along with the factual findings for the items under on-going review, some analysis and interpretation is included for Well-Being Outcome 1. Fourth quarter case reading data continues to show minimal variation when evaluating the safety and

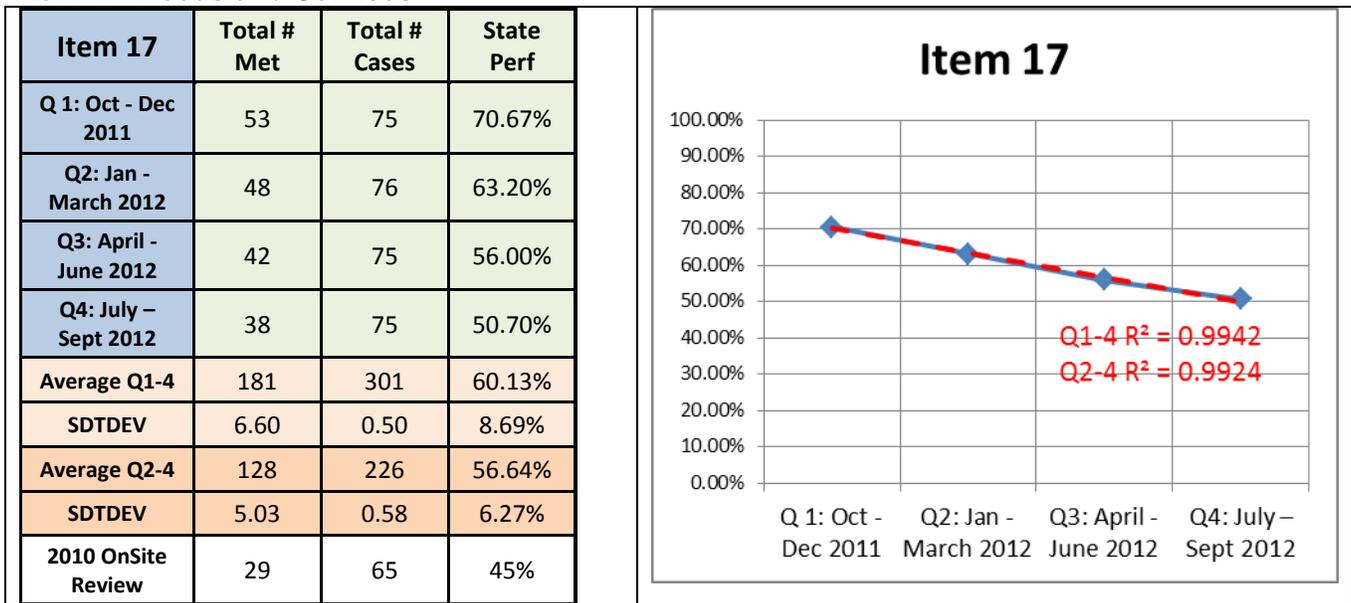
permanency outcome items. For these items, small sample size may still be the primary contributing factor to some fluctuations, but standard deviation does not indicate these are significant.

Case Reading Item	Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4		
	Total # Met	Total # Cases	State Perf	Total # Met	Total # Cases	State Perf	Total # Met	Total # Cases	State Perf	Total # Met	Total # Cases	State Perf
Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations	35	40	88.0%	30	32	93.8%	25	30	83.3%	34	37	91.9%
Item 3: Services in the Home to Prevent Removal / Re-entry	39	44	88.6%	46	54	85.2%	42	46	91.3%	41	49	83.7%
Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management	62	75	82.7%	65	76	85.5%	62	75	82.7%	59	75	78.7%
Item 7: Permanency Goal	42	48	87.5%	46	49	93.9%	42	52	80.8%	45	50	90.0%
Item 10: APPLA	5	7	71.4%	7	9	77.8%	5	6	83.3%	5	6	83.3%
Item 17: Needs and Services	53	75	70.7%	48	76	63.2%	69	75	92.0%	38	75	50.7%
Item 18: Involvement in Case Planning	54	75	72.0%	46	73	63.0%	40	73	54.8%	32	70	45.7%
Item 19: Worker Visits with the Child(ren)	47	75	62.7%	31	76	40.8%	25	75	33.3%	20	75	26.7%
Item 20: Worker Visits with the Parent(s)	26	71	36.6%	13	65	20.0%	12	68	17.6%	9	67	13.4%

Well-Being Outcome 1

Iowa's performance in Well-Being Outcome 1 continues to be significantly impacted by Department efforts around consistently identifying, locating, and engaging non-custodial parents.

Item 17: Needs and Services



Graph: Blue Line is State Performance, and dotted red line is linear trend and R-value.

Following is further breakout of Item 17:

Child	Assess	Service
Q 1: Oct - Dec 2011	98.70%	94.10%
Q2: Jan - March 2012	94.70%	88.90%
Q3: April - June 2012	90.70%	94.40%
Q4: July - Sept 2012	96.00%	86.00%
Average Q1-4	95.03%	90.85%
SDTDEV	3.33%	4.10%

Mother	Assess	Service
Q 1: Oct - Dec 2011	95.80%	91.40%
Q2: Jan - March 2012	84.60%	84.90%
Q3: April - June 2012	86.80%	89.10%
Q4: July - Sept 2012	84.80%	88.10%
Average Q1-4	88.00%	88.38%
SDTDEV	5.29%	2.70%

Father	Assess	Service
Q 1: Oct - Dec 2011	84.70%	86.80%
Q2: Jan - March 2012	67.90%	72.30%
Q3: April - June 2012	68.90%	69.20%
Q4: July - Sept 2012	50.80%	62.50%
Average Q1-4	68.08%	72.70%
SDTDEV	13.85%	10.25%

Analysis Item 17

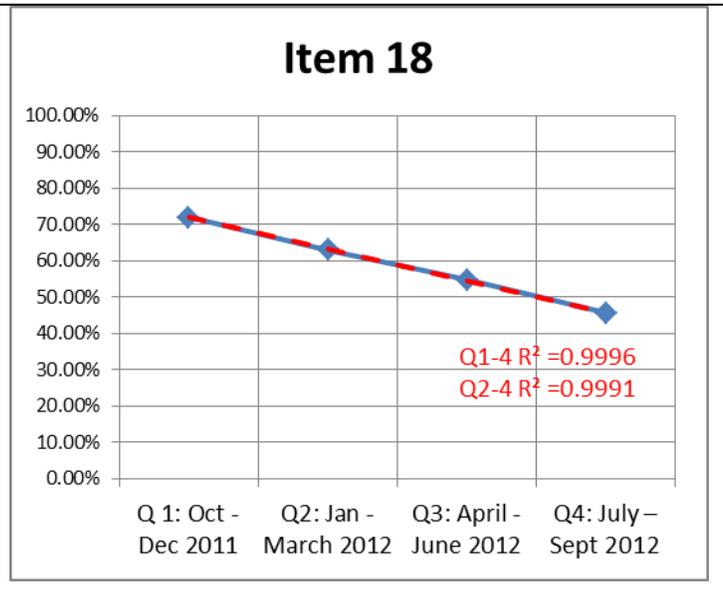
When looking at item 17, the twenty point downward trend is very linear with a high R-value and a small variation across all four quarters.

When breaking out the data and looking at results by the child, and by the mother, they reflect relatively stable performance with the assessment of needs and provision of services. The performance regarding fathers falls consistently below that for mother and child, and trends downward thirty points which is a rate significantly greater than either child or mother, and is the element impacting the overall rating of Item 17.

Worker interviews were conducted on 53 of the 226 cases reviewed in quarters 2 through 4. The interviews impacted the rating in 11 cases or about 20% of the total, each time the result was a positive impact upon the item score.

Item 18: Involvement in Case Planning

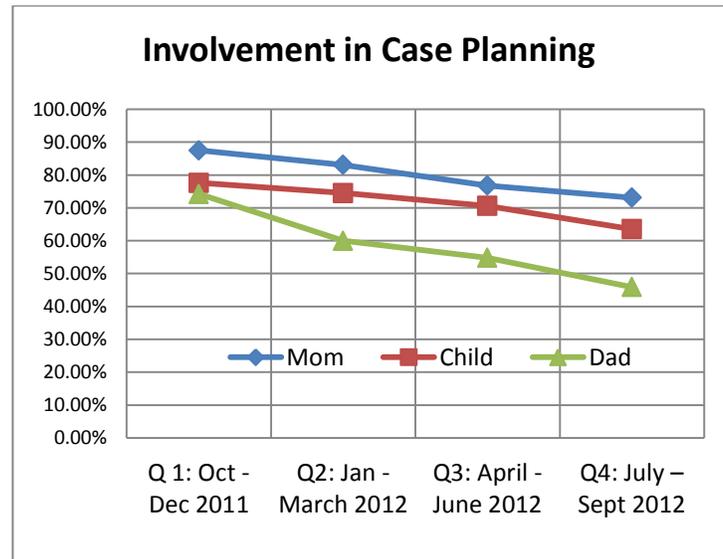
Item 18	Total # Met	Total # Cases	State Perf
Q 1: Oct - Dec 2011	54	75	72.00%
Q2: Jan - March 2012	46	73	63.00%
Q3: April - June 2012	40	73	54.80%
Q4: July - Sept 2012	32	70	45.70%
Average Q1-4	172	291	59.11%
SdTDEV	9.31	2.06	11.25%
Average Q2-4	118	216	54.63%
SdTDEV	7.02	1.73	8.65%
2010 OnSite Review	30	61	49%



Graph: Blue Line is State Performance, and dotted red line is linear trend and R-value.

Following is further breakout of Item 18

Involvement in Case Planning	Mom	Child	Dad
Q 1: Oct - Dec 2011	87.50%	77.60%	74.20%
Q2: Jan - March 2012	83.10%	74.50%	60.00%
Q3: April - June 2012	76.80%	70.60%	54.80%
Q4: July - Sept 2012	73.10%	63.50%	45.90%
Average Q1-4	80.13%	71.55%	58.73%
SdTDEV	6.42%	6.08%	11.85%



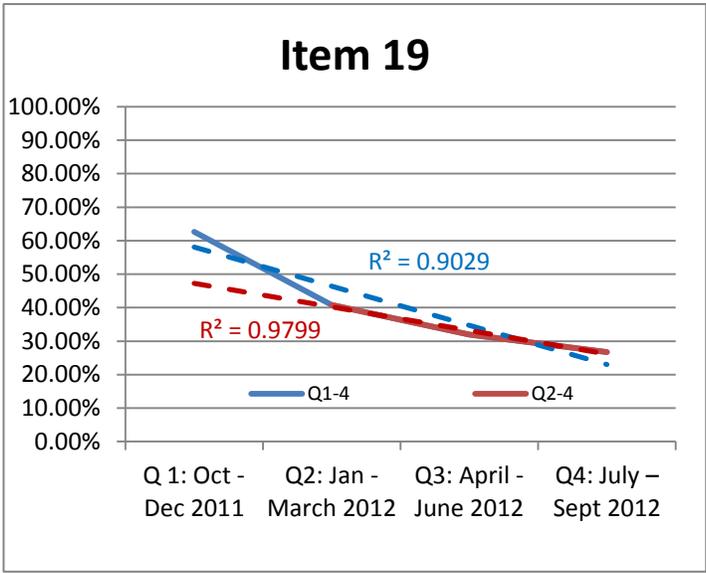
Analysis Item 18

When looking at item 18, the twenty-five point downward trend is very linear with a high R-value and a small variation across all four quarters.

The breakout table for Item 18 clearly shows that mothers are most consistently involved in case planning, followed closely by the child, then fathers. The performance regarding fathers falls consistently below that for mother and child, and trends downward thirty points which is a rate significantly greater than either child or mother, and is the element impacting the overall rating of Item 18.

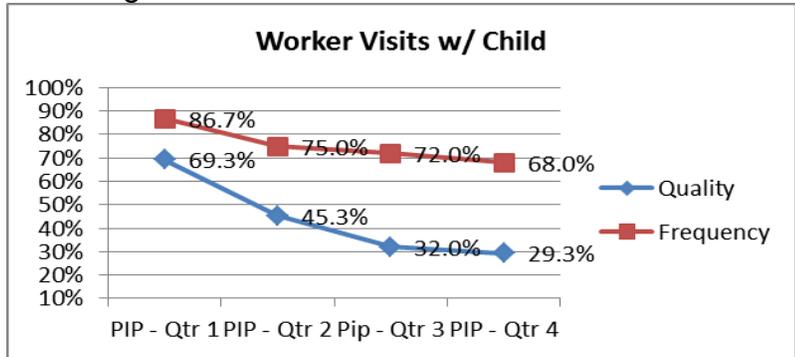
Item 19: Worker Visits with the Child(ren)

Item 19	Total # Met	Total # Cases	Q1-4
Q 1: Oct - Dec 2011	47	75	62.67%
Q2: Jan - March 2012	31	76	40.80%
Q3: April - June 2012	25	75	33.33%
Q4: July - Sept 2012	20	75	26.70%
Baseline Q1-4	123	301	40.86%
SDTDEV	11.73	0.50	15.86%
Baseline Q2-4	76	226	33.63%
SDTDEV	5.51	0.58	7.12%
2010 OnSite Review	43	65	66%



Graph: Blue Line is State Performance, and dotted lines are the linear trend and R-value.

Following is further breakout of Item 19



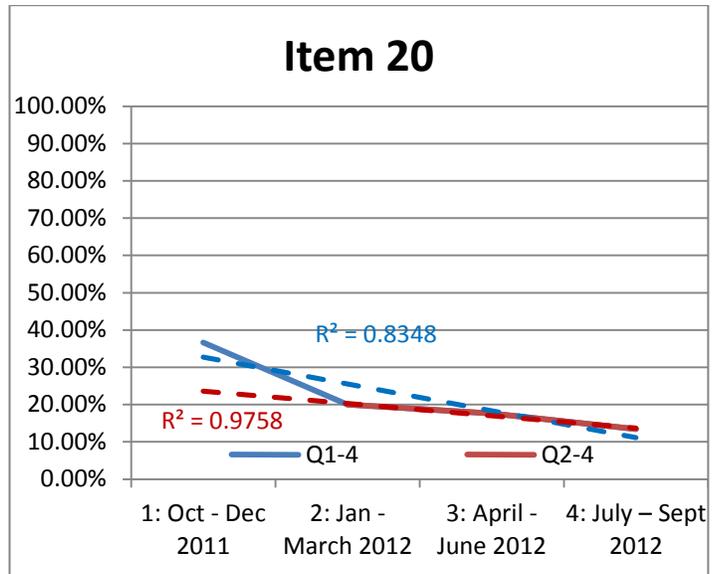
Analysis Item 19

When looking at item 19, there are two trends, one representing quarters one to four and another quarters two to four. The trend from quarter two to quarter four is more linear with a higher R-value and a smaller variation.

When adjusting after quarter one, additional case reading scoring criteria were developed to eliminate scoring variation across reviewers identified when examining quarter one results. That adjustment resulted in somewhat lower but more consistent scoring.

Item 20: Worker Visits with the Parent(s)

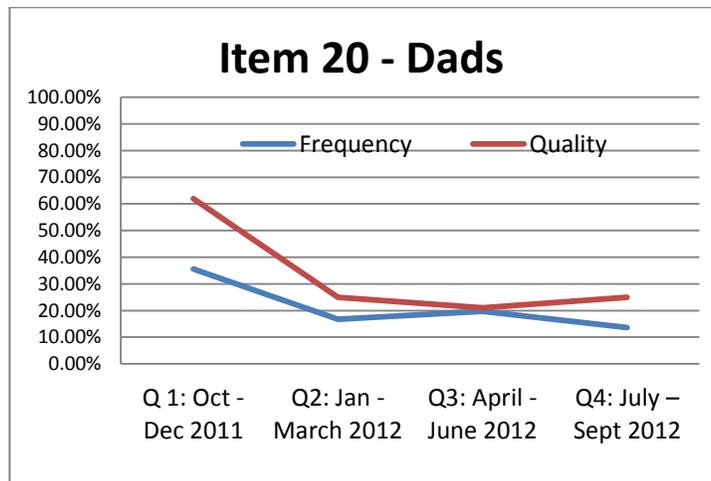
Item 20	Total # Met	Total # Cases	Q1-4
1: Oct - Dec 2011	26	71	36.62%
2: Jan - March 2012	13	65	20.00%
3: April - June 2012	12	68	17.60%
4: July - Sept 2012	9	67	13.40%
Average Q1-4	60	271	22.14%
SDTDEV	7.53	2.50	10.18%
Average Q2-4	34	200	17.00%
SDTDEV	2.08	1.53	3.34%
2010 OnSite Review	23	54	43%



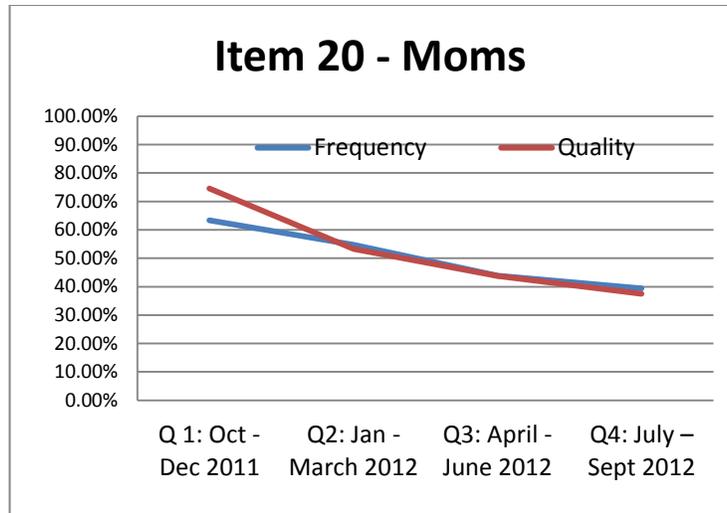
Graph: Blue Line is State Performance, and dotted lines are the linear trend and R-value.

Following is further breakout of Item 20

Item 20 - Dads	Frequency	Quality
Q 1: Oct - Dec 2011	35.60%	62.00%
Q2: Jan - March 2012	16.70%	25.00%
Q3: April - June 2012	19.70%	21.00%
Q4: July - Sept 2012	13.60%	25.00%
Average Q1-4	21.40%	33.25%
SDTDEV	9.79%	19.26%
Average Q2-4	16.67%	23.67%
SDTDEV	3.05%	2.31%



Item 20 -Moms	Frequency	Quality
Q 1: Oct - Dec 2011	63.40%	74.60%
Q2: Jan - March 2012	54.70%	53.30%
Q3: April - June 2012	43.90%	43.80%
Q4: July - Sept 2012	39.40%	37.50%
Baseline Q1-4	50.35%	52.30%
SdTDEV	10.81%	16.22%
Baseline Q2-4	46.00%	44.87%
SdTDEV	7.86%	7.95%



Analysis Item 20

When looking at item 20 like item 19, there are two trends, one representing quarters one to four and another quarters two to four. The trend from quarter two to quarter four is more linear with a higher R-value and a smaller variation

When adjusting after quarter one, additional case reading scoring criteria were developed to eliminate scoring variation across reviewers identified when examining quarter one results. That adjustment resulted in somewhat lower but more consistent scoring.

Conclusions:

The case reading findings indicate each of the well-being items #17 through #20 show downward trends for the CFSR Round Two baseline period. When evaluating the Well-Being Outcome 1 items, three of these items (17, 18, and 20) focus significantly on interactions with the parents; when looking deeper into the case review data, it appears the trend in Iowa's performance continues to be significantly impacted by Department efforts around identifying, locating, and engaging non-custodial parents.

As seen in items 17 and 18, worker efforts to visit with the non-custodial parent (generally dad) results in low scores in Item 20. Involvement in case planning, assessment of needs and service provision, and worker visits are all intertwined and reflect this correlation in the case review data. In addition, this item looks specifically at a minimum of monthly visits during the period under review, more frequently if needed.

The root causes resulting in lower scores for Item 19, include insufficient documentation regarding elements of quality and the sometimes complicated issue of coordinating visits with both parents (Item 20) at least monthly. Although the case reading data does not specifically separate non-custodial parents from custodial parents in this item, based on the review of

data for 17 and 18, it would follow that item 20 also would be impacted by Department efforts around identifying, locating, and engaging non-custodial parents.

Reviewer training on the case review process had been completed just prior to starting the first quarter reviews. Due to new reviewers and the learning curve associated with case reviews, the consistency in application of some the standards may have been less than desired in the first quarter, resulting in variation in ratings. Since that time, the Quality Improvement Bureau established a system of mentoring, feedback, and second level reviews that we believe are positively impacting the inter-rater reliability especially for the the two monthly visit items, item 19 and item 20. Following preliminary discussion between Iowa and our Federal partners, a suggestion was made to consider excluding the first quarter review results due to the variation in items 19 and 20 in the first quarter. After review of the data, which does in fact point to differences between quarter one scores and scores for quarters 2, 3 and 4, Iowa recommends using only quarters 2, 3, and 4 for baseline. Each of the measures had adequate population (an N larger than in the onsite review) for the quarters 2, 3, an 4.

There appear to be two barriers to improved performance in the area of worker visits with children that have been identified through case reviews and interviews with case workers: the first is lack of documentation that clearly reflects the interactions and conversations that are occurring during the visits; the second is engaging younger children in conversation at their developmental level in order to gain insight relevant to family functioning, safety, goals, etc. Due to the relationship between frequent and quality visits and the success of the family, Iowa has set clear criteria for evaluation of this item, based on federal case reading and IVB requirements. A work group has developed guidelines for documentation in case notes, including worker visits with parents and children. Training on this is in process (details found in the PIP).

When evaluating the trends identified through case reviews, the majority of areas needing improvement (ANIs) involved Department efforts regarding non-custodial parents, incarcerated parents, and parents who live out of state. PIP strategies specifically target initiatives to increase the engagement of non-custodial and incarcerated parents. Performance in these areas will continue to be monitored through case reviews.

Iowa will negotiate target improvement goals for the select CFSR items based upon data from quarters two through four. These negotiated improvement goals will be noted in the next quarter's Executive Summary.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Iowa's child welfare system completed the identified PIP benchmarks for quarter four. The benchmarks continue to build upon tasks completed in quarters one through three. The child welfare system will continue its promising practices throughout the PIP implementation period to improve Iowa's child welfare system.

For more information regarding the CFSR and the PIP, please contact Kara L. Harvey at (515) 281-8977 or kharvey@dhs.state.ia.us.