



CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS

Kansas

FINAL REPORT

2023



This page is intentionally blank.

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of Kansas. The CFSRs enable the Children’s Bureau (CB) to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Federal law and regulations authorize the CB, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families, to administer the review of child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSRs are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their child welfare practices and programs as well as institute systemic changes that will improve child and family outcomes.

The findings for Kansas are based on:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Kansas Department for Children and Families and submitted to the CB on February 12, 2023. The Statewide Assessment is the state’s analysis of its performance on outcomes and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan.
- The August 2022 State Data Profile, prepared by the CB, which provides the state’s Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) compared to national performance on 7 statewide data indicators.
- The results of case reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home), conducted via a CB-Led Review process at Brown, Crawford, and Sedgwick counties in Kansas April 17–21, 2023, that examined case practices occurring during April 2022 through April 2023.
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Attorneys representing the agency
 - Attorney representing parents
 - Child welfare agency and child placement agencies case workers and supervisors
 - Child welfare agency secretary, deputy secretary and regional directors
 - County and District Attorneys
 - Court Appointed Special Advocates
 - Court Improvement Project director
 - Foster and adoptive parents and relative caregivers
 - Foster and adoptive parent and childcare facility licensing staff
 - Guardian Ad Litem
 - Judges
 - Parents, parent advocates, and peer supporters
 - Service providers
 - Training partners and staff
 - Tribal representatives
 - Youth

Background Information

The Round 4 CFSR assesses state performance with regard to substantial conformity with 7 child and family outcomes and 7 systemic factors. Each outcome incorporates 1 or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed in the state. With two exceptions, an item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90% or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies to those items. For a state to be in substantial

conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. In addition, for Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1, the state’s RSP on applicable statewide data indicators must be better than or no different than national performance. This determination for substantial conformity is based on the data profile transmitted to the state to signal the start of that state’s CFSR. The state’s RSP in subsequent data profiles will be factored into the determination of indicators required to be included in the state’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state’s substantial conformity with the 7 systemic factors. Each item reflects a key federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the Statewide Assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity. An overview of the pathways to substantial conformity for the CFSR outcomes and systemic factors is in Appendix B of the Round 4 *CFSR Procedures Manual*.

The CB made several changes to the CFSR process, items, and indicators that are relevant to evaluating performance, based on lessons learned during the third round of reviews. As such, a state’s performance in the fourth round of the CFSRs may not be directly comparable to its performance in the third round.

I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

Kansas 2023 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

The CB has established high standards of performance for the CFSR based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country’s most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. The high standards ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families regarding safety, permanency, and well-being. This is consistent with the CFSR’s goal of promoting continuous improvement in performance on these outcomes. A state must develop and implement a PIP to address the areas of concern identified for each outcome or systemic factor for which the state is found not to be in substantial conformity. The CB recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in some outcome areas often take time to implement. The results of this CFSR are intended to serve as the basis for continued improvement efforts addressing areas where a state still needs to improve.

Table 1 provides a quick reminder of how case review items and statewide data indicators are combined to assess substantial conformity on each outcome:

Table 1. Outcomes, Case Review Items, and Statewide Data Indicators

Outcome	Case Review Item(s)	Statewide Data Indicators
Safety Outcome 1	Item 1	Maltreatment in foster care Recurrence of maltreatment
Safety Outcome 2	Items 2 and 3	N/A
Permanency Outcome 1	Items 4, 5, and 6	Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12–23 months Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more

Outcome	Case Review Item(s)	Statewide Data Indicators
		Re-entry to foster care in 12 months Placement stability
Permanency Outcome 2	Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11	N/A
Well-Being Outcome 1	Items 12, 13, 14, and 15	N/A
Well-Being Outcome 2	Item 16	N/A
Well-Being Outcome 3	Items 17 and 18	N/A

Kansas was found in substantial conformity with none of the 7 outcomes.

The following 3 of the 7 systemic factors were found to be in substantial conformity:

- Statewide Information System
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

CB Comments on State Performance

The following are the CB’s observations about cross-cutting systemic and practice themes for the Kansas DCF Round 4 CFSR:

In its Round 3 CFSR in 2015, Kansas was in substantial conformity with one outcome, Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect, and four systemic factors, statewide information system, quality assurance system, staff and provider training, and agency responsiveness to the community. Kansas entered into a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of non-conformity and successfully completed implementation of its PIP. In its Round 4 CFSR conducted by the Children’s Bureau in 2023, Kansas was not in conformity with any of the outcomes and is in conformity with three systemic factors, Statewide Information System, Agency Responsiveness to the Community, and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

The results of the case review identified practices that Kansas put into place during their Round 3 PIP and can continue to build on in their Round 4 PIP toward achievement of substantial conformity with the outcomes and systemic factors. The review noted strong practice to ensure children experience placement stability while in foster care; the majority (95%) of the children in foster cases reviewed were stable in their current or most recent placement and when children did have to change placements, those changes were planned by the agency in an effort to achieve the child’s case goals or to meet the needs of the child. The CB also noted that many of the children in these cases were placed with relatives, a strong agency practice that contributes to placement stability. However, more *consistent* efforts to identify, locate, and evaluate both paternal and maternal relatives of children in care are needed. It is important to note that the state’s performance on the statewide data indicator (SWDI) for Placement Stability is below national performance and continues to worsen. This indicator measures the number of moves per 1,000 days in care while the onsite case review considers if the moves were planned by the agency to achieve case plan goals and/or meet the needs of the child. Kansas has already identified improving placement stability for children in foster care as a priority. The Leading for Results workgroup has gathered state program staff, case management providers, technical assistance from the Capacity Building Center for States, and other partners to identify and address root causes of placement instability.

Kansas’ Round 4 CFSR also showed that concerted efforts were made to maintain a child’s important connections when in foster care. Most notable in the applicable cases reviewed were the connections that continued with extended relatives, particularly grandparents, older siblings not in foster care, and cousins. Foster and relative caregivers were key in assisting in various ways to help maintain children’s important connections.

Similar to the state's Round 3 CFSR, practice was strong in the area of assessing and meeting the educational needs of children. Cases reviewed provided examples of efforts by the agency, foster parents, and relative caregivers to ensure that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were in place and monitored, families were assisted in obtaining testing for special needs, and support was provided with pre-graduation services for older youth, such as purchasing caps and gowns, and assistance with college applications. While there were also efforts to ensure that children's physical and dental needs were assessed, the review found that there was inconsistency in children receiving routine well-child visits, particularly dental, as well as medication oversight and providing foster parents with medical and dental records. Findings were similar regarding mental/behavioral health. Accurate assessments were generally done, however, the agency ensured appropriate services were provided in half the applicable cases reviewed, despite children's significant needs. It should be noted that in-home services cases had much stronger ratings than foster care cases in meeting children's education and mental/behavioral health needs.

The review also identified other areas of strong practice with children. Children typically had monthly caseworker visits that were of good quality. If siblings were separated, the agency generally did a good job of arranging sibling visits, though the frequency of visits could be improved. Case reviews found that children were engaged in case planning (more often than parents), but youth did not believe their voice was always heard and represented in the decision-making process. However, young adults interviewed as stakeholders about the system and as participants about their individual case described strong Independent Living services within the state. They noted Independent Living caseworkers genuinely cared about them and engaged with them to develop youth-directed goals, plans, and services. Contact and communication were consistent and allowed youth to develop a meaningful relationship with their Independent Living caseworker. As noted above, Kansas will want to concentrate on ensuring *consistency* in these practices to achieve desired outcomes.

As a fully privatized child welfare system, Kansas partners with private agencies to provide services and case management to children and families. During the case reviews conducted across three sites, it was clear children and families in different areas experience markedly different systems and practices. Sometimes, promising practices—such as implementation of parent partners—benefitted families in one location but were not available to families in other locations. Other times, different variations and inconsistencies revealed fractures in data, communication, assessments, and service delivery. For example, during interviews with stakeholders, participants described different training systems and requirements for staff. The training curriculum, delivery, and evaluation varies by agency. Individual agencies are largely responsible for training their own staff, and there is insufficient monitoring and oversight by the state. Implementing and sustaining program improvement will require additional partnership and collaboration between the public agency and private providers. Developing new tools and strengthening existing processes for monitoring services and standards may lead to improvements to the entire statewide system.

Child welfare systems across the country face challenges maintaining a sufficient workforce for this very important work, and Kansas is no exception. The pervasive effects of caseworker staffing and turnover impact both case practice and overall system functioning. During the Kansas CFSR this was evidenced in case reviews, interviews with case participants, and systemwide interviews with stakeholders. Caseworker turnover is also identified as a contributing factor to several specific challenges in this report and impacted outcomes. As Kansas develops the PIP, recruiting and sustaining a quality workforce should be an important area of focus and may positively impact all safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families.

The cases reviewed revealed challenges in Kansas' safety practice. While the state's performance on the SWDIs related to safety was statistically better than national performance, Kansas initiated and made face-to-face contact with children in accepted child maltreatment reports within the timeframes established by agency policies in 69% of the applicable cases reviewed. Additionally, the state struggled to provide services to families to prevent placement and/or reentry into care once children were returned home. The state performed strongest in its efforts to initiate responses to maltreatment reports; however, children were not always seen timely, which the case reviews indicated to be partly due to delays in assigning reports once accepted. In addition, there were inconsistencies in the provision of needed risk and safety services to families, including some situations where parents did not participate in services for substance abuse or domestic violence, and/or did not have adequate housing or supervision for their children. The review also found that while Kansas

conducted comprehensive initial risk and safety assessments, the agency did not consistently conduct ongoing assessments that accurately assessed all concerns. Additionally, when identified safety concerns were present, the state did not always develop and monitor safety plans that adequately addressed the safety concerns. These findings were seen in both foster care and in-home services cases. It's important to note that caseworker turnover, communication challenges as a result of multiple caseworker involvement, as well as lack of engaging parents and conducting quality visits with parents could be underlying causes of challenges in safety practice.

In addition to safety-related practice, the case review revealed Kansas' struggles establishing appropriate permanency goals and achieving timely permanency - practice areas that will require a significant focus in the PIP. The review found that in 48% of the cases, the agency established permanency goals timely and that the goals were appropriate to the child's needs. In addition, only 33% of applicable cases reviewed were rated a strength for achieving timely permanency overall. The SWDIs for permanency reflect similar performance concerns with Kansas performing statistically worse than national performance in achieving permanency within 12 months for children entering care, in care 12-23 months, and in care 24 or more months. The strongest practice seen in the cases around timely achievement of permanency was making concerted efforts to place children with a goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) in permanent living arrangements. Performance on achieving reunification in a timely manner (27.3%) and efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner (19.2%) must be a focus for the state's Round 4 PIP. Children are waiting in care for long periods of time – even when parents have relinquished their rights – for DCF and the courts to achieve permanency. Reasons for delays included: lack of concerted efforts to provide reunification services and/or address reunification barriers with parents; not establishing concurrent goals and instead working on goals consecutively, (even if there were concurrent goals); delays in approval of the adoption plan by the agency and the court; significant time and/or delays identifying adoptive families, especially for children with special needs; paperwork errors and delays, including adoption home assessment; lack of permanency hearings (in one review site); the agency not processing voluntary relinquishment of parental rights timely; and court continuances. The review also found that worker turnover and multiple agencies being involved with a family were contributing factors to delays in permanency (1 site) and a lack of safety achievement (1 site).

During the stakeholder interviews, information gathered indicated that timely filing of TPRs varies across Kansas. Some reasons cited by stakeholders include: some courts do not want to TPR, if the child does not have an adoptive resource or do not want to create "legal orphans"; cases where one parent relinquishing parental rights, but the other parent might want a hearing; delays in the agency completing the "points of severance" document that the county/district attorney needs before filing a motion to TPR; and in rural areas the county/district attorneys are handling other criminal and civil matters and/or are not in full-time positions. It was also noted that there is not a consistent process to provide or demonstrate that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers are provided with notice of periodic reviews and permanency hearings, including the notification of the right to be heard. As stated in Kansas' Round 3 CFSR Final Report, these issues also affect the permanency planning process and timely permanency for children and families. Information from stakeholder interviews indicated that the Kansas child welfare system routinely ensures timely periodic reviews and permanency hearings occur statewide. The Children's Bureau recommends that DCF continue collaborating with the legal and judicial communities to clearly identify the key factors that support and impede the achievement of timely and appropriate permanency for children and families in Kansas and develop strategies that will effectively address barriers in both DCF and the courts.

Parent engagement is foundational for improving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families involved in the Kansas child welfare system. This will be a key practice area for Kansas to address in its PIP. In addition to concerns already articulated about efforts to reunify families, case review results show a lack of concerted efforts to ensure parents have regular visitation with children in care and to maintaining parents' relationships with their children in care outside of visitation. Improving how case workers assess parents' needs, ensure they are provided necessary services, and engage them in case planning is critical to achieving better outcomes. Requiring and building the capacity of caseworkers to build relationships with parents through regular, quality visits is also a cornerstone of child welfare practice that impacts safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes and will need to be reinforced through its inclusion in the state's PIP.

Icebreakers were introduced in Round 3 as part of the state's PIP. This began as a pilot and was then implemented statewide. It is recommended that the state continue to track case completion of Icebreakers for new cases/changes in placements and require documentation of reasons for those not completed.

Kansas is not in conformity with the Service Array systemic factor; this will need to be another major focus of the state's PIP. The CB finds that not only is the array of services insufficient, but that the state is not demonstrating the ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families. Stakeholders noted several services that assist families, such as Family Response Advocacy, parent skill building, mentoring for children and youth, Multi-Systemic Therapy, and KINVEST to support kinship caregivers. However, most agreed that there are major gaps in services, particularly mental health services, noting workforce challenges both within DCF and with contracted providers, including therapists. These were barriers which were also evident in the case reviews. Stakeholders discussed concerns that Senate Bill 367 has increased the number of "cross-over" youth with serious mental/behavioral health needs entering care, the difficulty finding services needed, and long wait lists. Some stakeholders explained that this creates placement challenges because many foster homes will not accept youth with serious mental health and behavior challenges. As a result, there are times when workers use "night-to-night" homes or "standby homes", or even house children temporarily in local offices. It is not known if this service population is contributing to, or causing, the high number of placement moves, affecting the Placement Stability statewide data indicator, but should be explored. In response to these challenges, CB learned that the state is making efforts to assist the current statewide network of community mental health centers (CMHCs) into becoming Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs). This effort is in the middle of a 3-year implementation plan.

The CFSR revealed that increased oversight by DCF of the processes and practices implemented by the contracted case management providers, including training – both initial and ongoing – as well as foster parent recruitment and retention, could have a positive impact on the child welfare system. It is noted that there isn't a statewide process for recording and tracking completion of training and ensuring that training provided by case management agencies fully provides workers with the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties. Further, the state submits and updates an annual recruitment and retention plan to CB but did not provide or publish data in the 2022 plans that shows the demographics of the children in care and how the recruitment of foster parents reflects the diversity of children needing placement. Kansas does, however, have foster care demographic data available on the state's website.

As Kansas DCF begins its work to develop a PIP and understand root causes, it will be important to consider and critically analyze evidence of disparities and propose solutions to decision-making processes, programs, and policies that may contribute to inequities in services and outcomes. The state's already-established process of engaging its legal/judicial partners, Tribes, parents, youth, and other community partners will be a strong foundation for this work. DCF also has an established Quality Assurance system that will have an important role in starting to collect and analyze data needed to examine contributing factors and underlying causes of practice and systems concerns, and to identify strengths to build upon in making improvements.

Equity Observations and Considerations

Ensuring that child welfare is serving all people equitably and with respect for all individuals is essential to the work in child welfare and is a focused priority at the Children's Bureau. To create a system that is effective and equitable for all, states must pay particular attention to variation in performance metrics because disparity in outcomes could signal inequity that should be explored and addressed. During Round 4 of the CFSR, there is a focus on using data and evidence to identify disparities in services and outcomes; understand the role that child welfare programs, policies, and practices may play in contributing to those disparities; and inform and develop system improvements to address them.

As noted below in the sections on notable changes and observations in performance on the Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1 data indicators during Round 4, the data for these statewide indicators showed the following performance-related information by race/ethnicity in Kansas:

Maltreatment in care: Although White children comprised the racial group with the greatest percentage of days in care and victimizations in care, in the most recent reporting period, children of two or more races experienced the highest rate of maltreatment in care. Black children experienced a decrease in the rate of maltreatment in care during the past 3 reporting years.

Recurrence of maltreatment: Although White children comprised the racial group with the majority of initial and subsequent victimizations during the most recent reporting period, Hispanic children experienced the highest percentage of recurrence of maltreatment, followed by Black children.

Timeliness to permanency: Black children are over-represented in the proportion of children entering foster care compared to the overall child population, and have experienced the highest entry rates and lowest percentages of permanency regardless of length of stay. Permanency for children of two or more races has substantially increased over the last 3 reporting years.

Reentry into care: Black children and children of two or more races are over-represented in the total percentage of reentries compared to exits and experienced the highest percentage of reentries.

Placement stability: Black children are over-represented in the number of placement moves and experienced the highest rate of moves for the most recent reporting period. Their rate of moves has increased over the past 3 reporting years. American Indian/Alaska Native children also experienced a high and increasing rate of moves, while children of two or more races experienced the lowest rate.

As further noted in the CB Comments on State Performance, the state continues to be challenged with finding appropriate and stable placements for children and, although the state submits and updates an annual diligent recruitment and retention plan to the CB, Kansas did not provide or publish data in its 2022 plan that shows the demographics of the children in care and how the recruitment of foster and adoptive parents reflects the diversity of children needing placement in foster care.

In its Statewide Assessment, Kansas notes its partnership with Kansas University and the Court Improvement Project, in a statewide effort for addressing racial disproportionality and disparities in child welfare. The partnership began with the Strengthening Child Welfare Systems grant which is entitled Kansas Strong. Initiatives developed from the grant include the Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative and Change the WORLD (Workgroup On Racial Disparities) which is an initiative that focuses on understanding and addressing structural racism to advance racial equity in child welfare.

As Kansas DCF begins its work to develop a PIP and understand root causes and contributing factors of areas needing improvement, it will be important to continually consider and analyze evidence of disparities, and propose solutions to decision-making processes, programs, and policies that may contribute to inequities in services and outcomes. Kansas will be most effective in achieving its vision and goals to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families when all partners who have a role in its child welfare system contribute to its design and operation. It is important to ensure that individuals with lived experience, as well as other community partners participating in the CFSR and PIP processes, represent the diversity of individuals and families who live in the community and are served by the system.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide the state's performance on the applicable statewide data indicators from the data profile that was transmitted to the state to signal the launch of the CFSR and performance summaries from the case review findings of the onsite review. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. A summary of the state's performance for all outcomes and systemic factors is in Appendix A. Additional information on case review findings, including the state's performance on case review item rating questions, is in the state's practice performance report in Appendix B.

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

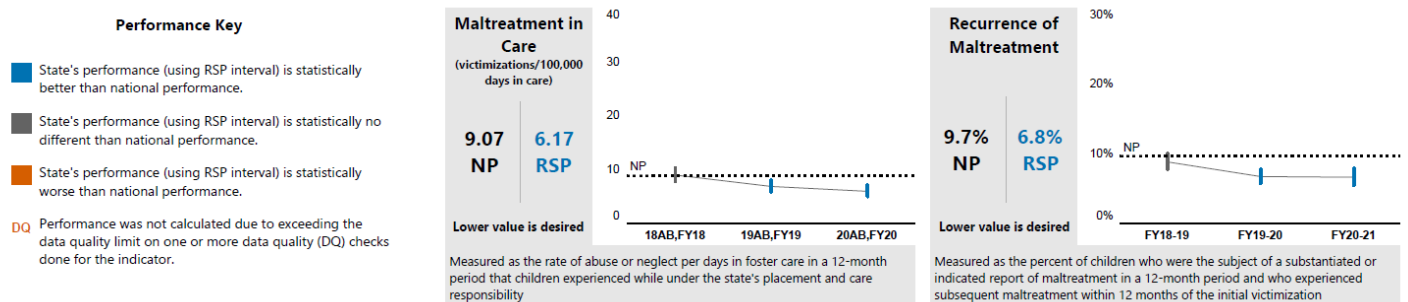
The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s RSP on two statewide data indicators and the state’s performance on Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.

State policy requires that an intake needing investigation or further assessment be assigned a Same Day or 72-hour response depending on whether there is reason to believe that a child has been seriously harmed or is in immediate danger. A 7 Working-Day response is required for reports accepted for Family in Need of Assessment (FINA) and there is no reason to believe a child is in immediate danger. For intakes assigned a Same Day or 72-hour response, the response requirement is met when there has been in-person contact with the child or reasonable efforts to make in-person contact. To meet the reasonable efforts requirements, there must have been either two attempts within the response time, or at least one attempt within the response time, and a second attempt by the close of business the next working day for a Same Day response time, or within 72 hours, excluding weekends and state holidays, of the initial attempt on a 72-hour response time. For an intake assigned for a 7 Working Day response, in-person contact with the child must be made with the identified child or reasonable efforts to make contact must have been made. To meet the reasonable efforts requirements, two attempts must be made within the 7 Working Day response time.

Statewide Data Indicators

The chart below shows the state’s performance from the August 2023 data profile that signaled the start of the statewide assessment process and was used to determine substantial conformity for Safety Outcome 1.

Figure 1. State’s Performance on Safety Outcome 1 Indicators



Case Review

Figure 2. Performance on Safety Outcome 1 and Supporting Items



Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1:

- The state’s performance on the “maltreatment in foster care” data indicator was statistically better than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “recurrence of maltreatment” data indicator was statistically better than national performance.
- Less than 95% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 1.

Notable Changes and Observations in Performance on the Safety Outcome 1 Data Indicators During Round 4¹

Table 2. Risk-Standardized Performance Compared to National Performance—Safety 1 Data Indicators

Statewide Data Indicator	Data Profile Transmitted With Statewide Assessment and Used to Determine Substantial Conformity	February 2023 Profile	Inclusion in PIP?
Maltreatment in Foster Care	Better	Better	No
Recurrence of Maltreatment in 12 months	Better	Better	No

Kansas has performed increasingly better than national performance over the past 3 reporting years on both indicators associated with Safety Outcome 1. For Maltreatment in Care, the total number of days children in care has remained steady while the number of victimizations experienced a 35% drop between FY 2018 and FY 2020.

- There is substantial variation by county in the rate of maltreatment in care.
- Children with entry ages of 1–5 and 11–16 experience the highest rates of maltreatment in care.

For Recurrence of Maltreatment, the number of children with an initial substantiated or indicated maltreatment report decreased by 35% between FY 2018–19 and FY 2020–21, and the number of children who experienced recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months also decreased by over 52% during the same timeframe.

- There is substantial variation by county in the percentage of recurrence of maltreatment and performance across the past 3 reporting years.
- During the past 3 reporting years, children 5 years and younger experienced the greatest number of initial and subsequent victimizations and had the highest percentage of recurrence of maltreatment.

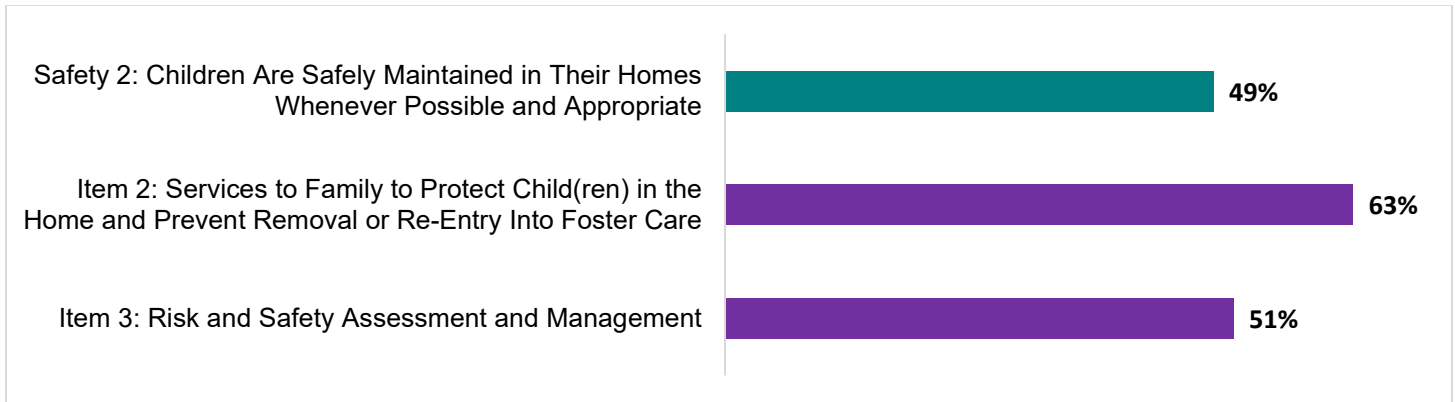
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s performance on Items 2 and 3.

¹ Observations specific to safety and permanency statewide data indicators are based on the more detailed performance information provided in the state’s most recent Context Data, distributed with each Data Profile.

Case Review

Figure 3. Performance on Safety Outcome 2 and Supporting Items



Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2:

- Less than 95% or more of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 2.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 3.

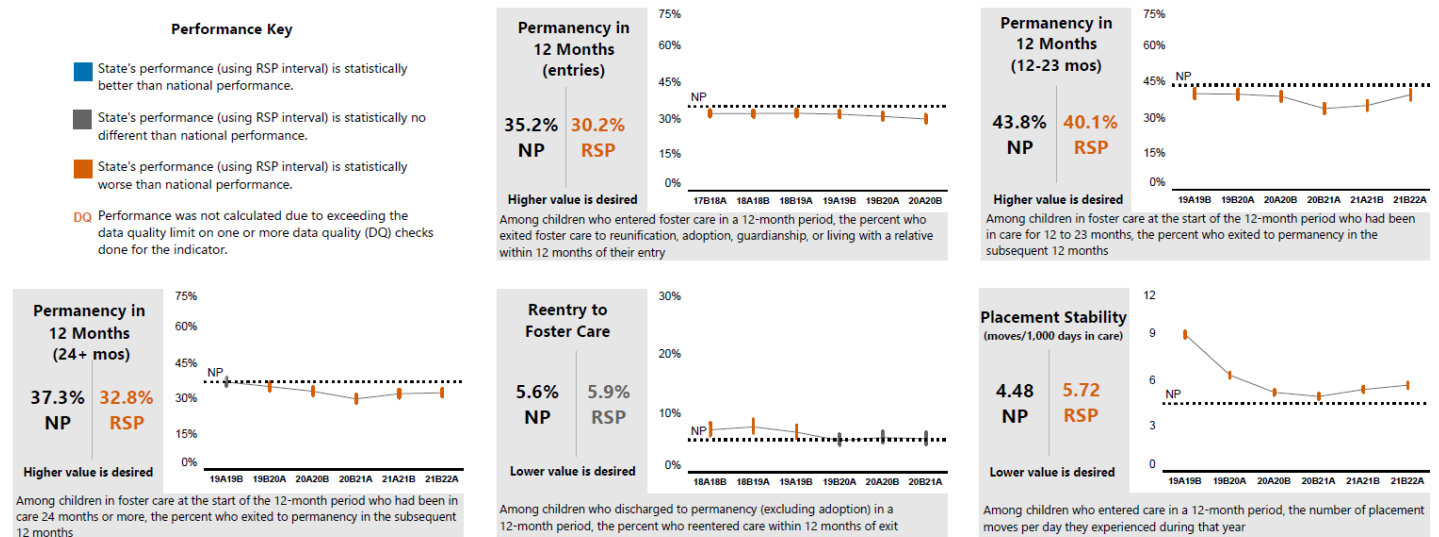
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s RSP on 5 statewide data indicators and the state’s performance on Items 4, 5, and 6.

Statewide Data Indicators

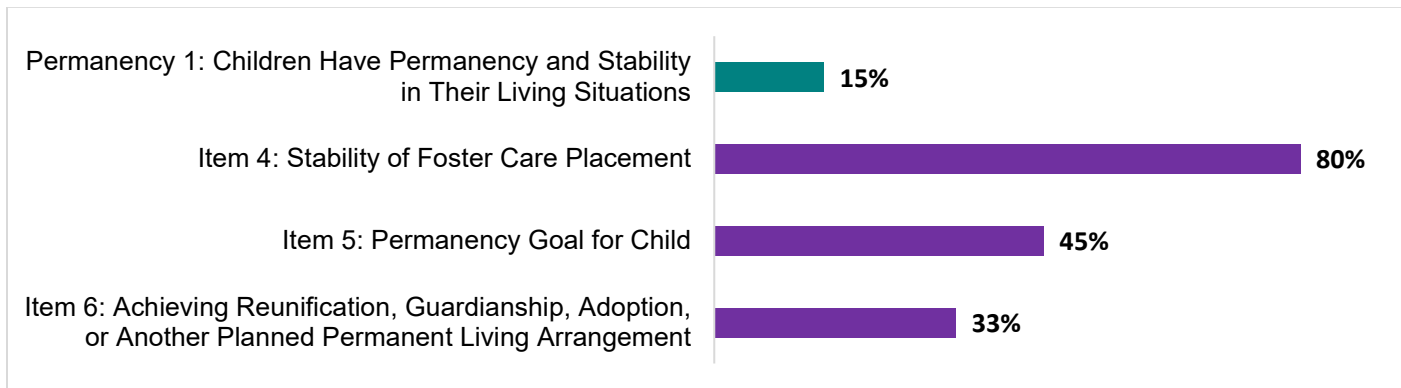
The chart below shows the state’s performance from the August 2023 data profile that signaled the start of the statewide assessment process and was used to determine substantial conformity for Permanency Outcome 1.

Figure 4. State’s Performance on Permanency Outcome 1 Indicators



Case Review

Figure 5. Performance on Permanency Outcome 1 and Supporting Items



Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1:

- The state’s performance on the “permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care” data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12–23 months” data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more” data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “re-entry to foster care in 12 months” data indicator was statistically no different than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “placement stability” data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- Less than 95% or more of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 4.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 5.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 6.

Notable Changes and Observations in Performance on the Permanency Outcome 1 Data Indicators During Round 4²

Table 3. Risk-Standardized Performance Compared to National Performance—Permanency 1 Data Indicators

Statewide Data Indicator	Data Profile Transmitted With Statewide Assessment and Used to Determine Substantial Conformity	February 2023 Profile	Inclusion in PIP?
Permanency in 12 months for children entering care	Worse	Worse	Yes
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12–23 months	Worse	Worse	Yes

² Observations specific to safety and permanency statewide data indicators are based on the more detailed performance information provided in the state’s most recent Context Data, distributed with each Data Profile.

Statewide Data Indicator	Data Profile Transmitted With Statewide Assessment and Used to Determine Substantial Conformity	February 2023 Profile	Inclusion in PIP?
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more	Worse	Worse	Yes
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	No Different	No Different	No
Placement stability	Worse	Worse	Yes

Kansas continues to struggle to achieve permanency in 12 months for children in care regardless of how long the children are in care, with performance remaining largely unchanged over the last 3 years. The numbers of children entering care and in care 12–23 months decreased over the last 6 reporting periods by 32% and 23%, respectively, while the number of children in care 24 or more months increased 11% over the same period.

- Children aged 11–16 consistently have lower permanency rates when compared to state performance.
- As noted above, Black/African American children also have consistently lower permanency rates.
- There is a lot of county variation in permanency, with some larger counties performing above state performance on the permanency measures (Sedgwick) and others below state performance.

Performance on Placement Stability continued to decline; while the number of total days children spend in care has decreased by nearly 32%, and the number of placement moves per 1,000 days in care increased over the last 6 reporting periods.

- Children aged 11–16 experienced the highest rate of placement moves over the last 3 reporting years.
- As noted above, Black children were over-represented in the number of placement moves and experienced the highest rate of moves for the most recent reporting period.
- The three counties with the greatest days in care were Sedgwick, Shawnee, and Johnson, and all three had a higher rate of placement moves than the state for the most recent reporting period.

Finally, over the last 3 reporting years, the number of children discharged to reunification, living with relative, and guardianship declined, along with the proportion of those children reentering foster care—by 19% and 40%, respectively.

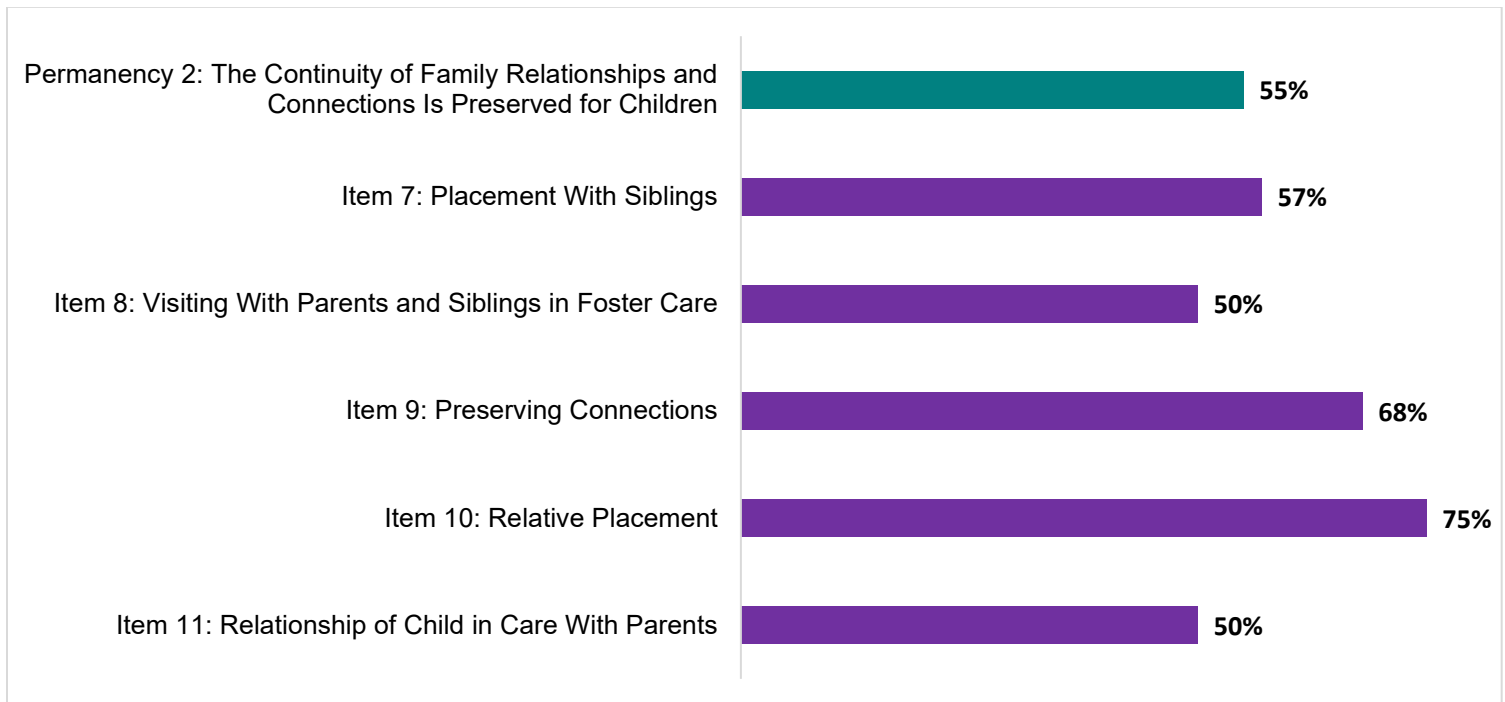
- Children aged 11–16 years were over-represented in the percent of reentries compared to the percent of exits and consistently experienced the highest percent of reentries.
- As noted above Black children, and children of two or more races were over-represented in the total percent of reentries compared to exits and experienced the highest percent of reentries.
- Sedgwick County (metro) had the greatest number/proportion of children reentering care and a high percentage of reentries, while Johnson County consistently had a low number and percent of reentries.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

Case Review

Figure 6. Performance on Permanency Outcome 2 and Supporting Items



Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2:

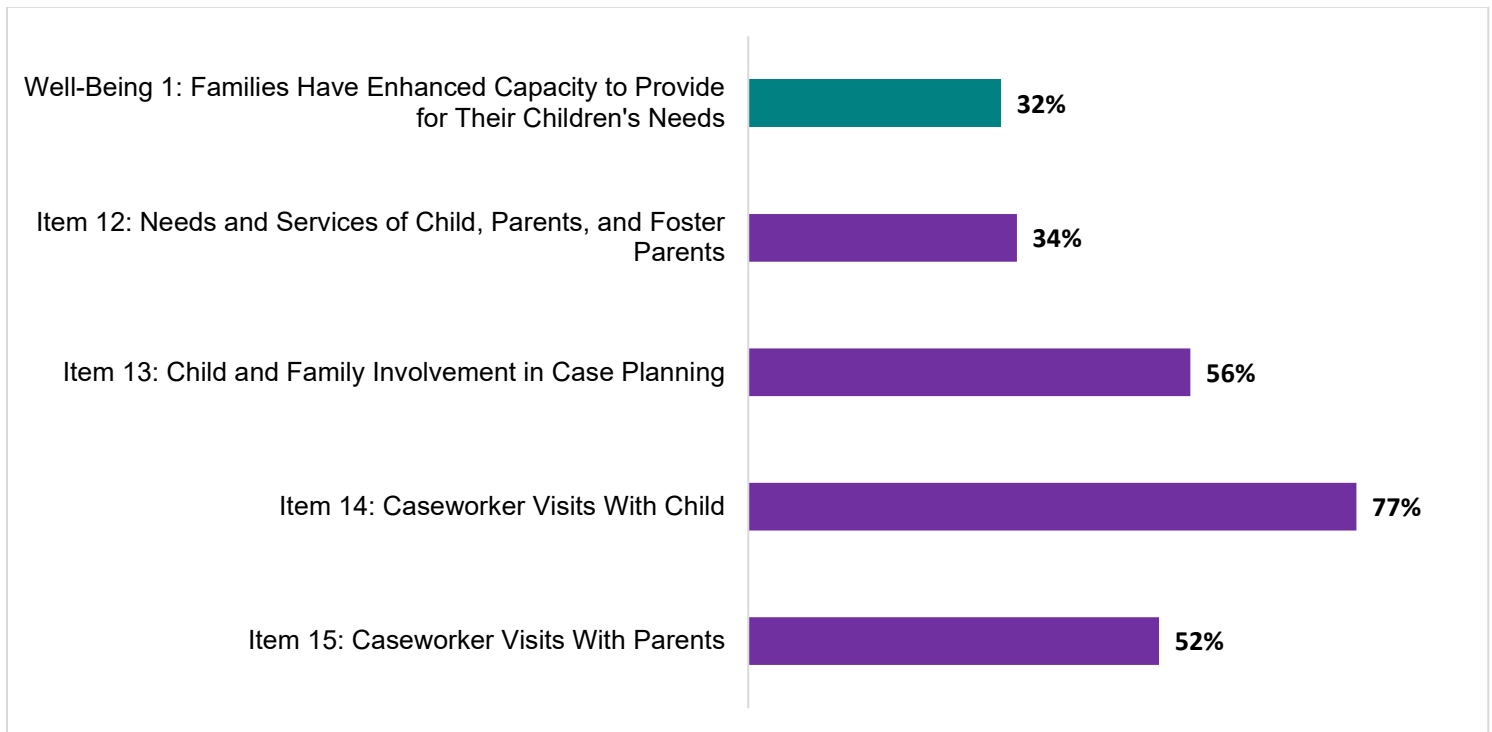
- Less than 95% or more of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 7.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 8.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 9.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 10.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 11.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

Case Review

Figure 7. Performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 and Supporting Items



Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1:

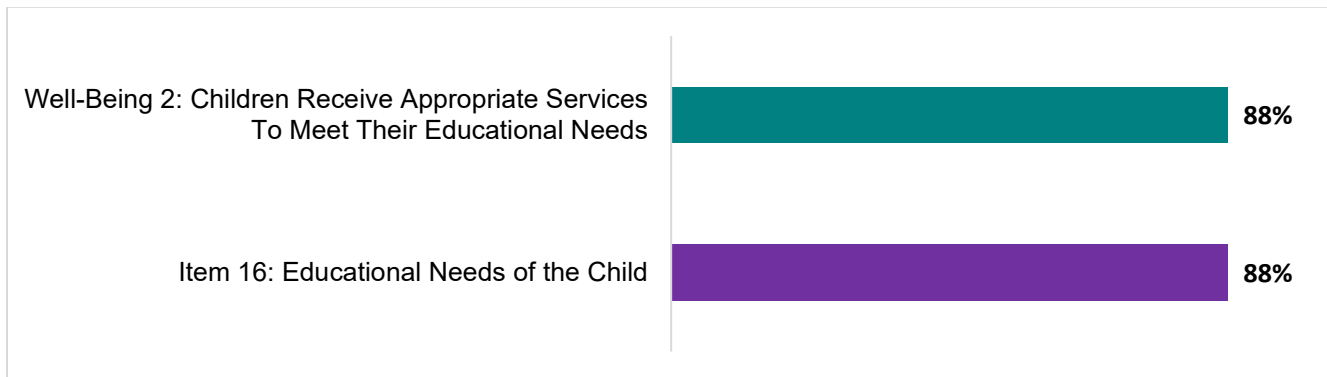
- Less than 95% or more of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 12.
 - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 12A.
 - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 12B.
 - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 12C.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 13.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 14.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 15.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Item 16.

Case Review

Figure 8. Performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 and Supporting Items



Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2:

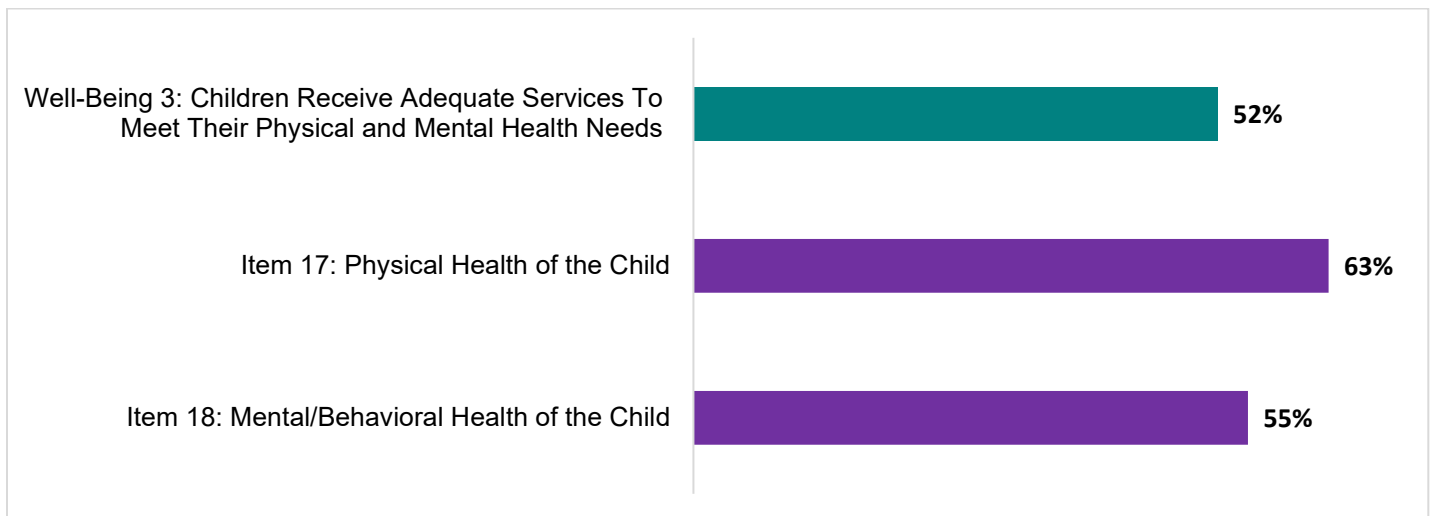
- Less than 95% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 16.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

Case Review

Figure 9. Performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 and Supporting Items



Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3:

- Less than 95% or more of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 17.
- Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 18.

III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The CB determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined based on ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the CB must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the CB must find that the item is functioning as required. For each systemic factor below, we provide performance summaries and a determination of whether the state is in substantial conformity with that systemic factor. In addition, we provide ratings for each item.

Statewide Information System

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s performance on Item 19.

Item	Rating
Item 19: Statewide Information System	Strength

Kansas was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System.

Item 19: Statewide Information System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The statewide information system is functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 19 based on information from the Statewide Assessment.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas provided a description of the statewide information system (FACTS) and the process for updating information in the system. Kansas provided performance data for each of the 7 most recent state fiscal years measuring the accuracy of data contained in the statewide information system compared to information contained in the case file. Performance is assessed through case reviews using a random, statewide sample of cases. These findings demonstrate that Kansas can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, placement location, and permanency goals for all children in foster care or who had been in foster care within the immediately preceding 12-month period.

Case Review System

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

Items	Rating
Item 20: Written Case Plan	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21: Periodic Reviews	Strength
Item 22: Permanency Hearings	Strength
Item 23: Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
Item 24: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Area Needing Improvement

Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System.

Item 20: Written Case Plan

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the Statewide Assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders indicated that the state has a process to ensure case plans are completed timely and that case plans are in place for most cases. However, information from stakeholder interviews found that parents are not consistently involved in case planning. Stakeholders noted that some case plans appear to be written before case planning meetings and parents are asked to sign them when they arrive; case plans seem to be “cookie cutter” and include many predetermined tasks based on court orders, which can create challenges in engaging parents and can be overwhelming for parents; sometimes parents do not understand the case plan and there is not time to explain it; and case planning meetings are scheduled and/or cancelled without notification to parents.

Item 21: Periodic Reviews

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the Statewide Assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders reported that periodic reviews were routinely occurring across the state. Stakeholders said the periodic reviews occur based on the circumstances of the case. The courts typically hold periodic reviews at least every 6 months, and some courts often hear cases more frequently. The courts, the district/county attorneys, and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) track the timeliness of periodic reviews. These court hearings are the mechanism for ensuring a periodic review, rather than the case planning conferences described in the Statewide Assessment.

Item 22: Permanency Hearings

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the Statewide Assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders found that permanency hearings were routinely occurring across the state. The courts typically hold permanency hearings every 12 months and sometimes more frequently. The court case management systems track the frequency of permanency hearings, and the judiciary can run reports to determine the timeliness of permanency hearings. DCF and some district/county attorneys also track the timeliness of permanency hearings. Kansas recently used statewide data to examine the timeliness of permanency hearings and found that approximately 98% of the children requiring a permanency hearing during the year had a timely hearing.

Item 23: Termination of Parental Rights

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the Statewide Assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the process for timely filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) varies across the state and is not uniformly tracked. There was no indication that compelling reasons not to file or exceptions are tracked. Stakeholders said that although the 15-out-of-22-month deadline date is captured on the first page of some court reports, it does not appear to assist with the timely filing of TPR. Filing of TPR typically occurs after the court finds that reintegration is no longer viable, which happens at inconsistent timeframes across the state. Stakeholders also noted other challenges to the timely filing of TPR, such as some courts requiring that an adoptive resource be identified before TPR is filed, some county/district attorneys wanting the agency to make more efforts before they agree to file the TPR, the extensive time required by workers to provide county/district attorneys with all the information needed to prepare the motion for TPR, and some county/district attorneys handling other types of cases, including criminal matters, that can take precedence.

Item 24: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the Statewide Assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state does not have a consistent process for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of periodic reviews and permanency hearings that includes notification of their right to be heard. Stakeholders described multiple methods for providing notice of court hearings. There is no statewide process for tracking whether foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and caregivers receive court notifications that includes their right to be heard.

Quality Assurance System

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Item 25.

Item	Rating
Item 25: Quality Assurance System	Area Needing Improvement

Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System.

Item 25: Quality Assurance System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) is operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas provided a description of the state’s quality assurance structure, process, and functional components, operating in all the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided. Kansas uses established standards, contract outcomes, and success indicators to evaluate the quality of services. The quality assurance system provides relevant reports and utilizes ongoing case reviews and targeted case reviews to evaluate and identify strengths and needs of the service delivery system. The case review instruments Kansas uses for in-home and foster care cases are based on the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions (OSRI) and assess safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. Kansas does not have a clear process or mechanism for using evidence collected through its quality assurance activities to inform, implement, or assess program improvement activities as the information in the Statewide Assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders did not demonstrate how the quality assurance system uses case review data and relevant reports to improve service delivery and the quality of services.

Staff and Provider Training

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

Items	Rating
Item 26: Initial Staff Training	Area Needing Improvement
Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength

Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training.

Item 26: Initial Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas described initial pre-service training requirements for new DCF Child Protective Services (CPS) workers and case management provider caseworkers. Kansas recently implemented the Kansas Practice Model, and new and revised training courses have been added. These courses focus on safety assessment, engagement, connections, well-being, trauma, and family safety networks. Kansas provided a table listing all the pre-service training courses for DCF CPS workers as well as the credit hours and timeframes for completion. The number of participants completing the courses was listed for about half of the courses. DCF is continually hiring CPS workers, and courses are offered on a frequent, ongoing basis. However, the standards and requirements for initial training completed by new staff at the contract case management providers are less certain. While contract in-home and foster care caseworkers must complete basic online courses prescribed by DCF, the remainder of the curriculum, process, and timeframes seems to vary by agency. Each agency is responsible for ensuring that their staff complete initial training, and there appears to be very little oversight or monitoring by DCF. Additionally, stakeholders expressed varying levels of confidence about whether the initial training addressed the basic skills and knowledge needed by new staff to carry out their duties.

Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas described a requirement for staff to complete 40 hours of ongoing training every 2 years. This mirrors the regulatory requirement for continuing education for staff with a professional license through the state's behavioral sciences licensing board. Information gathered from the Statewide Assessment and during interviews with stakeholders showed that Kansas does not have a clear, consistent process and mechanism for ensuring that ongoing training requirements for staff are met. While some opportunities for joint training exist, each agency appears largely responsible for the ongoing training provided to their staff and independently ensuring staff meet ongoing training requirements. The result is a fragmented training and recordkeeping system, and the state was unable to provide data and evidence showing that staff consistently completed ongoing training as required and demonstrating that staff are provided ongoing training that addresses the basic skills and knowledge they need to carry out their duties.

Item 28: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 28 based on information from the stakeholder interviews.
- During stakeholder interviews, stakeholders described the process for licensing and approving foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and staff at state-licensed facilities. This process ensures that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and staff have the initial and ongoing training necessary to care for children in foster care. Prospective foster parents and pre-adoptive parents must complete 30 hours of approved initial training. This training is managed and provided through an alliance of licensed sponsoring agencies. All prospective foster parents must complete initial training before Kansas issues a foster home license. Stakeholders agreed that the initial training addresses the basic skills and knowledge foster and adoptive parents need to care for a child placed in their care. Similarly, all state-licensed facilities must meet all training and licensing requirements before Kansas issues a group home or facility license. Foster home licenses are renewed annually. Foster parents must complete 8 hours of annual training, and the renewal process ensures that foster parents complete required annual training hours before renewal of their license. All foster and pre-adoptive homes also must be sponsored and supported by a licensed child-placing agency. The sponsoring agency assesses the training needs of foster and pre-adoptive parents to ensure that ongoing training addresses the skills and knowledge base that foster parents need to care for children in foster care placed in the home. Initial and ongoing training for foster parents and pre-adoptive parents is monitored by the alliance of sponsoring agencies. Kansas completes an annual survey visit to each licensed foster home and state-licensed facility. The survey includes a review of training logs for staff.

Service Array and Resource Development

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

Items	Rating
Item 29: Array of Services	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30: Individualizing Services	Area Needing Improvement

Kansas was found not to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development.

Item 29: Array of Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas described efforts to identify, understand, and address gaps in the array of services for children and families. Notably, Kansas has created a regional network of interagency and community advisory boards, maintained community mental health centers serving the entire state, implemented an array of Family First prevention services, and supported access to mental health services in schools and a statewide helpline designed to respond to child/youth mental health crises. However, stakeholders reported significant service gaps and waitlists to access services affecting all areas of the state. Stakeholders frequently cited gaps in mental health services and waitlists for community-based mental health services, youth psychiatric residential treatment, and in-home family preservation services. Stakeholders also noted gaps in the service array for other services, such as domestic violence services, assessment services, substance use services, disability services, and behavioral health services for youth. Stakeholders said that the range of available services varies across the state. Rural areas of the state are more likely to lack services and service providers, while more urban areas of the state struggle with waitlists to access needed services.

Item 30: Individualizing Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas described implementation of evidence-based assessments and a supervisory coaching program as strategies to ensure that the array of services can be individualized to meet the needs of children and families. The data collected from a focus group of legal and judicial stakeholders asked whether services were developmentally appropriate was inconclusive as nearly half of the participants said they did not know. Data collected from a survey of two citizen review panels provided a mixed response about the state’s effectiveness in individualizing services. Information gathered during stakeholder interviews also varied. Some stakeholders believed services were linguistically appropriate while others noted a need for more bilingual service providers. Stakeholders also noted challenges in locating placement and specialized services to address specific needs, such as for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, youth with criminal charges or behaviors, and LGBTQ services for youth. Some stakeholders also reported that children and families were

provided general services when services tailored to specific needs were not available, e.g., parents may have to attend general parenting classes when they really need education and information on parenting teenagers. While Kansas is able to individualize some services, the state did not demonstrate the ability to ensure that services can routinely be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and families served by the agency.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s performance on Items 31 and 32.

Items	Rating
Item 31: State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Strength
Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength

Kansas was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

Item 31: State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 31 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas described the process and structure for ongoing consultation with a wide variety of partners including Tribal representatives, parents, youth, foster parents, adoptive parents, service providers, contractors, court/legal, and other community-based services for children and families. Consultation and coordination include community listening sessions, statewide workgroups, committees, advisory boards, and community-based convenings. During stakeholder interviews, stakeholders described the formal and informal ways the state consults with a wide variety of partners. Many stakeholders reported that the state communicates information and shares data with partners and seeks input from them to inform services and decision-making. Kansas recently established support for a Family Advisory Council comprising parents, relative caregivers, and adoptive parents. The state has also moved forward with collaborations focused on addressing systemic racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes. This work was born out of an analysis in one county and has grown to include strategies for consulting and coordinating with an array of multidisciplinary and community partners in the work.

Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state’s services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.

- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas described regular, ongoing communication with other divisions and agencies administering federal or federally assisted programs and services. DCF coordinates and administers several federal or federally assisted programs and services, such as food assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and has Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with other state agencies and military bases within Kansas, e.g., with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, which administers Medicaid programs, and with the Kansas Department of Education, to coordinate educational enrollment and services for children in foster care. Kansas coordinates with another educational program to ensure that youth in foster care receive individualized support in completing high school and attending post-secondary education. On a community level, Kansas coordinates with several local housing authorities. Overall, the information demonstrates that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

Items	Rating
Item 33: Standards Applied Equally	Strength
Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Strength
Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Area Needing Improvement
Item 36: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Strength

Kansas was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

Item 33: Standards Applied Equally

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 33 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas provided information on the state's licensing and license renewal processes and how those processes are completed and monitored by the Foster Care Licensing Division within DCF. The regulations apply statewide, and the licensing staff and surveyors are centrally supervised. The provider agreements have the same standards and requirements for licensing. Licensing tools and tracking and monitoring mechanisms are all housed within the Childcare Licensing and Registration Information System (CLARIS). Licensing renewals include an annual site visit to each licensee to monitor standards. Information collected during stakeholder interviews showed that the standards are applied equally. Stakeholders said that the assessment process and required documentation are clear, and the standards and process are the same for each provider and institution type. The state has an established process for waivers and exceptions. Licensed relative homes may be granted waivers, such as for delaying foster parent training or health assessments. No waivers are granted for safety-related requirements. The agency only has 24 licensed relative homes, and not many waivers have been required/granted. Foster family homes and group homes may request an exception; however, exceptions are not approved for safety-related requirements and are time-limited. In general, exceptions are made if the adjustment meets the intent of the regulations. Kansas received approximately 150 exception requests per month. Most requests are related to temporary overcapacity

due to providing respite care. Requests for waivers and exceptions are reviewed by program administrators for approval. Approved exceptions are documented in the state's licensing information system.

Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas described the state's process for ensuring compliance with federal requirements for criminal background clearances for all foster homes. Kansas requires a fingerprint-based federal background check, a child abuse and neglect central registry check, and a national sex offender registry check on any prospective foster parent and any other adults and children aged 14 and older (excluding children in foster care) living in the home. Kansas also requires a name-based criminal background clearance through the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, child abuse and neglect central registry check, and national sex offender registry check on any children aged 10–13 living in the home. Kansas will not issue a foster home license until the requirements for criminal background checks are met and will not place a child in a home until the license has been issued. Kansas described the criminal background checks and approval process for relative and non-relative kinship placements required prior to placing a child in the home. During interviews, stakeholders confirmed the background check requirements and the process for monitoring the ongoing safety of foster care placements for children. Kansas is notified if a person in a licensed foster home is subsequently charged with a crime after the criminal background checks have been completed. During the annual license renewal process, licensing surveyors review the record and make an in-person visit to the foster home to ensure background checks comply with the state's standards.

Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas described a Diligent Recruitment Plan that has a goal of recruiting potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in foster care needing foster and adoptive homes. Kansas noted that each child welfare case management provider and licensed child-placing agency across the state has developed an individualized recruitment plan that includes general, targeted, and individual recruitment strategies specific to their needs, resources, and communities. While Kansas described a goal focused on diligent recruitment, the strategies and intentional efforts made to recruit foster and adoptive families who reflect the children in foster care and their unique needs was not clear. Stakeholders acknowledged the deficit of a diverse pool of potential foster and adoptive homes, and the information in the Statewide Assessment and gathered during stakeholder interviews did not demonstrate how demographic data are used to target recruitment efforts.

Item 36: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

- Kansas received an overall rating of Strength for Item 36 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Kansas said that the state seeks relatives for placement when a child enters foster care and on an ongoing basis. Relatives receive priority consideration for placement of children in foster care regardless of where the relatives reside. Kansas described the structure in place for sending and responding to Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) requests. Kansas has an ICPC workgroup, comprising ICPC staff from both DCF and the child welfare case management providers, that focuses on streamlining ICPC processes and resolving issues with other states. In 2018, Kansas implemented the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE), the national electronic system to facilitate the efficient and secure exchange of information with other states to support assessing cross-jurisdictional resources. Kansas completed 403 home studies for ICPC home study requests from other states. Of the 403 home studies, Kansas completed 353 (88%) timely. Information collected during stakeholder interviews also referenced a border agreement with the state of Missouri to allow placement and supervision within a specific distance of the state border.

APPENDIX A

Summary of Kansas 2023 Child and Family Services Review Performance

I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items and Performance on Statewide Data Indicators

Outcome Achievement: Outcomes may be rated as in substantial conformity or not in substantial conformity. 95% of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the state to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

Item Achievement: Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement. For an overall rating of Strength, 90% of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of Item 1 and Item 16) must be rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies.

Statewide Data Indicators: For Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1, the state's performance is also considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator. State performance may be statistically better, worse, or no different than the national performance. If a state did not provide the required data or did not meet the applicable item data quality limits, the CB did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

RSP (Risk-Standardized Performance) is derived from a multi-level statistical model, reflects the state's performance relative to states with similar children, and takes into account the number of children the state served, the age distribution of these children and, for some indicators, the state's entry rate. It uses risk adjustment to minimize differences in outcomes due to factors over which the state has little control and provides a fairer comparison of state performance against national performance.

RSP Interval is the 95% confidence interval estimate for the state's RSP. The values shown are the lower RSP and upper RSP of the interval estimate. The interval accounts for the amount of uncertainty associated with the RSP. For example, the CB is 95% confident that the true value of the RSP is between the lower and upper limit of the interval.

Data Period(s) Used refers to the initial 12-month period and the period(s) of data needed to follow the children to observe their outcomes. The FY or federal fiscal year refers to NCANDS data, which spans the 12-month period October 1–September 30. All other periods refer to AFCARS data. "A" refers to the 6-month period October 1–March 31. "B" refers to the 6-month period April 1–September 30. The 2-digit year refers to the calendar year in which the period ends.

SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Not in Substantial Conformity	69% Substantially Achieved
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	69% Strength

DATA INDICATORS FOR SAFETY OUTCOME 1

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Overall Determination	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP	RSP Interval	Data Period(s) Used
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	9.07	Better Than National Performance	Lower	6.17	5.21–7.31	20A–20B, FY20–21
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.7%	Better Than National Performance	Lower	6.8%	5.6%–8.1%	FY20–21

SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	Not in Substantial Conformity	49% Substantially Achieved
Item 2: Services to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	63% Strength
Item 3: Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	51% Strength

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	Not in Substantial Conformity	15% Substantially Achieved
Item 4: Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Item 5: Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	45% Strength
Item 6: Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or another planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	33% Strength

DATA INDICATORS FOR PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Overall Determination	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP	RSP Interval	Data Period(s) Used
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	35.2%	Worse Than National Performance	Higher	30.2%	28.7%–31.9%	20A–22A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12–23 months	43.8%	Worse Than National Performance	Higher	40.1%	37.9%–42.2%	21B–22A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	37.3%	Worse Than National Performance	Higher	32.8%	31.2%–34.5%	21B–22A
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	5.6%	No Different than National Performance	Lower	5.9%	4.9%–7.0%	20B–22A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.48	Worse Than National Performance	Lower	5.72	5.53–5.92	21B–22A

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	Not in Substantial Conformity	55% Substantially Achieved
Item 7: Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	57% Strength
Item 8: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	50% Strength
Item 9: Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	68% Strength
Item 10: Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	75% Strength
Item 11: Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	50% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	Not in Substantial Conformity	32% Substantially Achieved
Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	34% Strength
Sub-Item 12A: Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	69% Strength
Sub-Item 12B: Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	43% Strength
Sub-Item 12C: Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	48% Strength
Item 13: Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	56% Strength
Item 14: Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	77% Strength
Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	52% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	Not in Substantial Conformity	88% Substantially Achieved
Item 16: Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	88% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	Not in Substantial Conformity	52% Substantially Achieved
Item 17: Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	63% Strength
Item 18: Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	55% Strength

II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The CB determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined on the basis of ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the CB must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the CB must find that the item is functioning as required.

STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment	Substantial Conformity
Item 19: Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment	Strength

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Case Review System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 20: Written Case Plan	Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21: Periodic Reviews	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 22: Permanency Hearings	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 23: Termination of Parental Rights	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 24: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 25: Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Staff and Provider Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 26: Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Service Array and Resource Development	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 29: Array of Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30: Individualizing Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 31: State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 33: Standards Applied Equally	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 36: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

