Department for Community Based Services

The Kentucky Child and Family Services Review Procedures Manual

Division of Protection and Permanency
Quality Assurance Branch
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Contents

Overview/Purpose of the Kentucky Child and Family Services Review

The Quality Assurance Branch (QA) is responsible for conducting the Kentucky Child and Family Services Review (KY CFSR) to assist the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) in improving child welfare outcomes around safety, permanency, and well-being. The KY CFSR assists with identifying trends to inform practice change and inform continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities.

QA has 10 dedicated case review staff and three dedicated staff to conduct QA on reviewed cases. These positions will rotate among the 13 staff members every six months, i.e., QA staff will rotate out with review staff. These are central office staff; however, many are in various areas of the state.

The KY CFSR evaluates the quality of practice through a review of the case file, TWIST, and interviews with key case participants. The case review team provides statewide data reports regarding findings to the central office leadership team, service region administrators (SRAs), service region clinical/administrator associate (SRCAs/SRAAs), family service office supervisors (FSOSs), and staff.

The KY CFSR identifies areas of practice that are strengths, as well as areas of practice that need improvement. The purpose of the KY CFSR is to:

- Measure 18 areas of practice identified in the CFSR Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) including:
    - meeting the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of children;
    - assessing the needs of and providing services to parents and caregivers;
    - family engagement; and
    - caseworker visits with children and parents.
- Provide key data at the office-level for CQ) activities. Individual office reports are utilized to develop a regional action plan. The action plan identifies practice improvement activities, learning, and prioritizes areas related to child safety.

Reviewers will review a minimum of 180 (30 cases per month) cases in a six-month period. This will be approximately four-five cases reviewed per area, per month. Reviews will occur in six-month increments. A statewide case record review will be conducted twice a year.

Practice Improvement Activities

A guiding principle of the KY CFSR is that reviews are designed to support the professional development of caseworkers, supervisors, and managers by focusing on key practice areas to improve outcomes for children and families through the following:

- For each case reviewed, individual feedback is provided to the central office leadership team, SRAs, SRCAs/SRAAs, FSOSs, and staff. Feedback will be shared with the SRAs, who will then distribute the feedback to the appropriate supervisor and caseworker.
- Use of semi-annual meetings facilitated by the QA staff and attended by SRAs, SRCAs/SRAAs, and QA/CQI staff. During these meetings, results from the KY CFSR (feedback tool and the online monitoring system (OMS) reports) are discussed to tell the story behind the data; strengths and areas needing improvement are identified; additional internal stakeholder feedback is shared; improvement strategies are shared; regional and/or office successes are identified; and future

plans for improvement are developed. A semi-annual patterns and trends report is created and shared with central office leadership team.

- Monthly data reports from OMS are shared with the central office leadership team and staff. In addition, an annual report is developed that contains results for all reviews that occurred during the previous calendar year; the report is also shared with the central office leadership team and staff.
- During regular monthly reviews, reviewers will use a detailed feedback loop to disseminate information from the reviews. As KY CFSR case reviewers complete a case review, this tool is completed and disseminated to the assigned worker, FSOS, SRCA/SRAA, and SRA with case responsibility, along with the regional CQI specialists. The tool includes all item justification summaries from the OSRI for the worker and regional management to understand assigned ratings for specific items. Review data will be incorporated into existing CQI activities to ensure that findings and trends are reviewed at the local, regional, and state level and used to inform action planning.
- Provide feedback to the Training Branch in order to address the training needs identified from the reviews. This will ensure that everyone is receiving the same information and provide the training branch the opportunity to create strategies in the curriculum to move case workers forward and to provide best practice for the case workers.

Training

New Reviewer Training

Formal training for the KY CFSR case reviewers includes completion of the federal web-based training modules, group study sessions, manual and review instrument review, and individual practice. The timeframes identified below are an estimate. Reviewers may complete sooner or later than estimated. A tracking spreadsheet has been developed to ensure that all new staff participate in each level of training. All review staff must successfully complete training in order to serve as a case reviewer or a QA staff.

Self-Guided *Orientation to the KY CFSR Process and Review Criteria-Estimated Completion Time: 1 Week*

- After the branch manager grants access, case reviewers will access the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) Information Portal and familiarize self with review site features.
- Case reviewers will receive the KY CFSR manual which includes the following:
    - Procedures Manual
    - CFSR General Fact Sheet
    - Onsite review instrument (OSRI)
    - CFSR Online Monitoring System User Manual
    - Technical and Security Requirements for CFSR OMS
    - Quick Reference Items List
    - Case-Related Interview Guides and Instructions
    - Reviewer Brief- Understanding the Federal Expectations for Rating Cases
    - Reviewer Brief- Strengthening How Reviewers Determine Effectiveness of Agencies' Assessment of Underlying Needs and Provision of Services
    - Talking Points: Applications of the OSRI to Cases Open as Both IH and Out of Home and FC During the PUR

    - OSRI quality assurance guide
    - Complete OSRI instruction manual
    - Uses the cases that the mentor is reviewing as their practice cases. This allows the trainee to participate in all of the interviews and complete case review process. This provides a better training experience and does not create more work for the mentor. This should include at least one in-home case and one out-of-home care (OOHC) case.
- Case reviewers will connect with assigned senior reviewer who will serve as a mentor throughout the training process.
- Within the manual, case reviewers will review the following documents:
    - Procedures Manual
    - CFSR General Fact Sheet
    - Onsite review instrument (OSRI)
- On the CFSR portal, case reviewers will review the following documents located in the E-Training Platform (OMS section), making notes in their manual as needed (hard copies are also available in the manual):
    - CFSR Online Monitoring System User Manual
    - Technical and Security Requirements for CFSR OMS
- Complete Module 1: OSRI
    - Case reviewers will listen to rationale videos, making note of any questions regarding the answers on the rationale video to discuss with the assigned senior reviewer.
    - Case reviewers should focus on the rationale behind the questions and findings according to the federal interpretation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), rather than interpreting according to departments standards of practice (SOP).
- On the CFSR portal, the case reviewers will review the following documents located in CFSR Round 3 Resources and make notes in their manual as needed (hard copies are also available in the manual):
    - Quick Reference Items List
    - Case-Related Interview Guides and Instructions
    - Reviewer Brief- Understanding the Federal Expectations for Rating Cases
    - Reviewer Brief- Strengthening How Reviewers Determine Effectiveness of Agencies' Assessment of Underlying Needs and Provision of Services
    - Talking Points: Applications of the OSRI to Cases Open as Both IH and Out of Home and FC During the PUR
- Case reviewers will meet with designated senior reviewer to review the following:
    - Overview of training guide and expectations
    - Module 1
    - Overview of conflict of interest and reporting safety concerns.
    - Overview of the case elimination process

Moving Forward-Completing Modules 2-4 Estimated Completion Time-1-2 Weeks

- On the CFSR portal, case reviewers will review the following documents located in the CFSR Round 3 Resources and make notes in their manual as needed (hard copies are also available in the manual):
    - OSRI quality assurance guide
    - Reviewer Brief-Understanding the Federal Expectations for Rating Cases
    - Reviewer Brief-Strengthening How Reviewers Determine Effectiveness of Agencies' Assessment of Underlying Needs and Provision of Services

- Read and review Module 2: Foster Care Mock Case   Read these cases but do not enter them into the OSRI.
- Read and review Module 3: In-Home Services Mock Case: Read these cases but do not enter them into the OSRI.
- Complete Module 4: Foster Care Mock Case: Read these cases but do not enter them into the OSRI.
- When completing the modules:
    - Case reviewers will note any questions that arise to discuss with the assigned senior reviewer.
    - Case reviewers should focus on the rationale behind the questions and findings according to the federal interpretation of ASFA rather than simply interpreting according to state SOP, with the exception of Items 1, as well as 17 and 18 regarding medication oversite.
        - Case reviewers are building competency on the item questions and nuances as demonstrated through critical thinking discussions on OSRI answer selections.
        - Case reviewers will have a basic understanding of key case participants who are necessary for interviews.
        - Case reviewers will have a basic understanding of needed key case participant interview questions to achieve a complete item summary.

Practice Makes Perfect-Completing a Kentucky Practice Case-Estimated Time-1 Week

- Case reviewers will complete a case review utilizing one of the senior reviewer's cases. Case reviewers should consult with the assigned senior reviewer as necessary during the review.
    - Case reviewers will read the case summary and case file. After reading the case, the case reviewer will determine:
        - Which case participants should be interviewed to gain a better understanding of the case?
    - What questions need to be asked of each case participant to gain a better understanding of what occurred in the case? Case reviewers will enter the case review into the OMS training site and submit to assigned senior reviewer for quality assurance (QA review).
    - The senior reviewer will conduct QA on the case and pend back to case reviewers.
    - Case reviewers will make corrections based on the feedback from QA.
- Case reviewers will compare finalized review in training site to the review approved and finalized by the Children's Bureau. Case reviewers should document any questions on discrepancies to discuss with the senior reviewer.
- Continue to assist with eliminations.
- Sit in on all interviews with the mentor

Gaining Confidence and Building Knowledge-Estimated Completion Time-2 Weeks

- Case reviewers will meet with the assigned senior reviewer to discuss the following:
    - Answer key ratings.
    - Rationale of items identified as strengths or areas needing improvement.

Shadow? Whose Shadow?-Estimated Completion Time-3-4 Weeks

- Case reviewers will shadow various senior reviewers during their assigned monthly reviews, in order to complete the following expected progression:

    - First two cases (one in-home and one OOHC) - Reviewer will shadow senior reviewer through two cases start to finish while completing a separate OSRI, then comparing their answers with the senior reviewer's completed OSRI.
    - Third case- Reviewer will complete a hard file review along with the senior reviewer, identify key participants to interview, and develop a list of questions with the senior reviewer to ask during key case participant interviews. A discussion will occur regarding the reason for and importance of the questions.
    - Fourth and Fifth case (one in-home and one OOHC) - Case reviewers conduct key case participant interviews with a senior reviewer present for assistance.
    - Expected outcomes:
        - Case reviewers show emerging skill of understanding the OSRI and are able to discuss/justify ratings based upon facts documented in the paper file, electronic file, and key case participant interviews
        - Case reviewers show emerging skill in presenting results of the review in positive and constructive terms.
        - Level of competency is confirmed by the various senior reviewers who have monitored the trainee case reviewer during this phase.

Lead The Charge-Estimated Completion Week-1 Week

- Case reviewers will review one case from the current case listing with close supervision from the assigned senior reviewer.
    - Case reviewers will meet with those who completed QA on the case and discuss the following:
        - Case ratings and discrepancies between case reviewers' ratings and QAs suggestions.
        - According to ASFA criteria and review protocols, case reviewers will be able to articulate and justify rationale of items identified as strengths or areas needing improvement.

QA Training

All QA staff will complete the new case reviewer training, as outlined in the New Reviewer Training section above. New QA staff will shadow senior QA staff to learn the intricacies of the process through the QA of, at a minimum, three cases. Technical assistance is available from the Children's Bureau through secondary oversight and phone calls to assist in capacity building for QA within the state.

Ongoing Training

Formal ongoing training will occur when there are updates to the OSRI. Ongoing informal coaching and training will occur through discussions on specific cases or when a refresher is needed. Trainings can be repeated at any time at the request of the reviewer or at the discretion of the section supervisor or branch manager. CFSR online modules will be repeated by each reviewer on at least a yearly basis and as needed.

Reviewers will access the CFSR portal for resources during reviews to increase competencies and provide clarification. Reviewers will document questions/concerns that arise during reviews and submit to the branch manager, via email. Additionally, these questions/concerns will be discussed during monthly staff meetings; these discussions will also be utilized as a training tool for the entire team. When additional clarification is needed beyond what the branch manager can provide, the Children's

Bureau will be contacted for consultation. All questions are documented in the excel database, Federal Guidance Items, located on the QA public drive.

Reviewers meet monthly with QA staff in order to discuss any changes made to the OSRI. Discussions also include any trends or changes in state agency policy, including temporary changes made to current practice due to an emergency or to meet agency needs (example: the COVID-19 pandemic) and how to incorporate those changes into the case reviews. Training and mentoring is also offered as needed on an ongoing basis.

Case Review Sample

A rolling statewide random sample will be utilized for both in-home and OOHC. Samples will be pulled monthly (two months prior to the date of the review) by the CCWIS team and assignment of randomly selected cases will be made by a branch staff member who is neither a case reviewer nor a staff who will complete QA on reviews.

Reviewers will review a minimum of 180 (30 per month) cases, which results in three cases per reviewer, per month. Each month, 18 in-home and 12 OOHC cases will be reviewed per area. This ratio was calculated based on the average state ratio of workload in regards to in home and OOHC cases (60.8% and 39.2%, respectively). Reviews will occur in six month increments. A statewide case record review will be conducted twice per year. A breakout of review areas/sections based on workload has been provided below. One area will be reviewed per month, with each area being reviewed every six months.

Case Review Areas

Geographical Areas	Sections	Kentucky Counties
Area 1	**1A**	Bath, Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Lawrence, Magoffin, Martin, Morgan, Rowan
	1B	Bracken, Campbell, Greenup, Lewis, Fleming, Mason, Robertson, Pendleton
	1C	Boone, Kenton

Area 2	**2A**	Jefferson
Area 3	**3A**	Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Henry, Oldham, Owen, Shelby, Spencer, Trimble
	3B	Breckinridge, Bullitt, LaRue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, Washington
	3C	Daviess, Hancock, Grayson, Hardin, Edmonson
Area 4	**4A**	Anderson, Boyle, Casey, Garrard, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Mercer, Woodford
	4B	Fayette
	4C	Bourbon, Clark, Estill, Franklin, Harrison, Menifee, Montgomery, Nicholas, Powell
Area 5	**5A**	Breathitt, Floyd, Harlan, Johnson, Knott, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Wolfe
	5B	Bell, Clay, Jackson, Knox, Laurel, Rockcastle, Whitley
	5C	Adair, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, Hart, Metcalfe, McCreary, Pulaski, Russell, Taylor, Wayne
Area 6	**6A**	Caldwell, Christian, Crittenden, Henderson, Hopkins, Lyon, McLean, Muhlenberg, Ohio, Trigg, Union, Webster
	6B	Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Livingston, McCracken, Marshall
	6C	Allen, Barren, Butler, Logan, Monroe, Simpson, Todd, Warren

In-Home Sample

An in-home case universe will be created utilizing the logic previously approved for CFSR, as well as additional logic based on the needs of a statewide sample. The parameters for the in-home case universe that were approved and are still appropriate are as follows:

- Unduplicated list of cases by family (family ID/TWIST case number).
- No cases have a child with an out-of-home episode during the sample period.
- Case was open at least 45 consecutive days during the sample period (this is inclusive of cases that are open for investigation only and are past due. Past dues, or investigations open past 45 days, will be permitted, however, no more than six will be reviewed per each six-month period).
    - The most recent open date for the case that is within the reporting (sample) period or before the reporting (sample) period based on the 45 consecutive day logic.
    - Open refers to any active case within TWIST, (i.e., open does not refer to a case that is in the ongoing function for 45 days).

Additional logic needed for a statewide sample includes:

- In-home sample frame will be pulled by designated geographical areas (as outlined in the table below) two months prior to the review.
- In-home sample period will be a rolling six months plus 45 days, with the first month dropping off each consecutive rolling sample period.
- Only cases with a CPS component will be included in the sample, i.e., the sample will filter out adult protective services (APS), Non-Agency, and Provide cases.
    - APS investigates all known or suspected incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults and provides both preventative and protective services to adults.
    - Non-agency cases are those in which a party other than DCBS is responsible for the management of the child's permanency, (e.g., step-parent adoptions). The children in non-agency cases are not reported in the AFCARS population and are not in agency custody.
    - Provide cases are foster parent cases, (i.e., the foster home case, which includes home studies, background checks, etc.).

OOHC Sample

The OOHC case sample will be pulled utilizing the AFCARS defined case population. This will be a rolling six months, with the first month dropping off each consecutive rolling sample period. The OOHC sample will be pulled by designated geographical areas two (2) months prior to the review.

Period Under Review (PUR)

The period under review (PUR) starts at the beginning of the sampling period and ends when the case is reviewed. This includes all information gathered through the last day of the case file review and key case participant interviews.

The sampling period for an area is identified as the six-month period the year prior to the review for foster care cases and allows for an additional 45 days for in-home service cases. For example, cases reviewed in June of 2018 will be pulled from June 1, 2017 – November 30, 2017 for OOHC cases and from June 1, 2017 – January 14, 2018 for in-home cases. The PUR would be from June 1, 2017 until the date of the review in June of 2018.

Case Elimination

Initial Case Elimination

The following federal guidelines will be utilized for case elimination determination:

- An in-home services case open for fewer than 45 consecutive days during the period under review.
- An in-home services case in which any child in the family was in foster care for more than 24 hours during the period under review.
- A foster care case open fewer than 24 hours during the period under review, which starts at the beginning of the sampling period and ends when the case is reviewed.

- A foster care case in which the child was on a trial home visit (placement at home) during the entire period under review.
- A foster care case that was closed according to agency policy before the sample period begins, resulting in no state responsibility for the case.
- A case open for subsidized adoption or guardianship payment only and not otherwise inclusive of a child in foster care or open for in-home services during the period under review.
- A case in which the target child reached the age of majority as defined by state law (18 years old in most states) before the period under review.
- A case in which the child is or was in the placement and care responsibility of another state, and the state being reviewed is providing supervision through an Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) agreement.
- A case appearing multiple times in the sample, such as a case that involves siblings in foster care in separate cases or an in-home services case that was opened more than one time during a sampling period.
- A foster care case in which the child's adoption or guardianship was finalized before the period under review and the child is no longer in foster care.
- A case in which the child was placed for the entire period under review in a locked juvenile facility or other placement that does not meet the federal definition of foster care at 45 CFR 1355.20.

The following additional state specific guidelines, as approved during CFSR and modified to accommodate a statewide sample, will be utilized for case elimination determination:

- After six past due investigations have been selected per each six month cycle, past due investigations can be eliminated as they arise in the sample.
- Situations in which case selection would result in an overrepresentation of agency staff, which is when more than two cases in one section are from the caseload of a single caseworker.
- Situations when the minimum number of case-specific interviews cannot be completed despite diligent efforts (diligent efforts must be documented on the case elimination sheet. Requirements for reasonable efforts are outlined under the *Interviews* section). Extenuating circumstances for not interviewing family members must be approved by branch manager.

When a reviewer determines that a case is eligible for elimination, the reviewer must discuss with branch manager. If the case meets the requirements for case elimination, it will be documented on the case elimination worksheet, along with appropriate justification for elimination. Eliminated cases will be replaced by a case from the same program from the over sampling list. The next case available for review will be selected.

Eliminations During the Review Process

During the review process, it may be determined that additional cases will need to be eliminated. Reasons for elimination during the review process include:

- Lack of available interviews due to "no shows."
- Conflicts of interest that are identified once the case interviews have started.

- If a required key case participant interview with a parent, child, or caregiver could not be completed or was cancelled at the last minute with no added interview to ensure sufficient information on family's/child's perspective.

All final case elimination decisions will be made through consultation with the branch manager, and will be documented on case elimination worksheet. Back-up cases selected from the over-sample will be prepared for each area using the same process as described above. A minimum of three back-up OOHC and three back-up in-home cases will be prepared in each area.

Ongoing Case Review Process

Once cases have been identified and approved for review, the branch manager or designee will partner with QA leads in each region to ensure that case materials are available for review. Case reviews will consist of a hard file and/or TWIST review of the case, utilizing the OSRI, as well as key case participant interviews. After the hard file review, case reviewers will contact the current/most recent case manager to obtain contact information for all case participants requiring an interview, if not available in the case file or TWIST.

Each reviewer will review three cases per calendar month. On average, each reviewer will have approximately four days to complete one review (this includes first and second level QA). Case reviewers will have three weeks to complete all case reviews for the month, with finalization of cases occurring by the end of each calendar month. Time has been built into the month to ensure flexibility when attempting to schedule interviews, eliminating cases, and other unexpected situations. Review areas will be made aware of the identified cases that will be reviewed for that month approximately one month prior to review. Case reviewers will have approximately two and half days to review the case, when possible, to include continuous first level QA during the review process.

First level QA will occur continuously during the case review as modeled during the 2016 CFSR. Upon initial review of the hard file, reviewers will discuss the case with designated first level QA staff. Conversations regarding the quality of the review will occur utilizing face to face meetings, OMS QA notes, virtual meeting platforms (Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc.), and/or conference calls. When an issue arises that a case reviewer and QA staff cannot resolve, this will be brought to the branch manager or designee for a final decision. Upon completion of the case review in OMS, the case will be submitted to the second level QA staff member to complete final QA. Second level QA must be completed by the end of the third review day (when possible).

Case reviewers will make any needed corrections as determined through the second level QA process by midday of the fourth review day. Second level QA staff will confirm that corrections were made and approve for finalization by the end of the fourth review day. A case must go through second level QA in order to be finalized. Additional details on the case review process is outlined below.

QA staff will track trends that arise during the QA of cases, as well as any additional feedback received from the Children's Bureau during technical assistance discussions. This will assist in monitoring trends of corrections based on items, as well as training opportunities for review staff.

Safety Concerns

Case reviewers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse, neglect, and dependency. If the reviewer identifies potential allegations of child abuse and/or neglect during the case review process that have not been previously reported, the reviewer will immediately report those concerns to the branch manager, and will report all allegations to centralized intake via web or phone. Reviewers will request notification regarding the intake determination. The branch manager will notify the Division of Service Regions (DSR) that a report has been made to centralized intake. Reviewers who identify risk factors that do not rise to the level of an abuse and/or neglect referral will share those concerns in writing with the branch manager. The branch manager will notify DSR of the concerns, via email, for distribution to the appropriate regional management. DSR requests a report out from regional management on the actions taken to remedy the situation.

Conflict of Interest

All reviewers will be subject to the conflict of interest guidelines. While reviewing cases, the following shall apply: Reviewers will not review a case in which they have professional or personal knowledge of the family or case; Reviewers will not review a case in which a relative or friend is involved; New reviewers will not be involved in the review of any case that are from the office/team in which they were previously employed for at least one year; Upon assignment of cases, if a reviewer has a conflict or is concerned that there could be a conflict, the reviewer will contact the section supervisor and branch manager immediately for reassignment, and; If a reviewer discovers a conflict once the review has begun they will stop the review and contact the section supervisor and branch manager immediately.

If it is determined that a conflict of interest exists prior to the beginning of the case review, the case will be exchanged for a case from another reviewer. If it is determined that a conflict of interest exists after the review process has begun, the case will be substituted with a case from the over-sample.

Consistency and Inter-Rater Reliability

KY CFSR case reviewers will sustain consistent and reliable ratings through the following methods: initial and ongoing trainings, utilization of the standardized KY CFSR manual, application of the OSRI, case reviews followed by group study sessions, comparison of full case review findings with the QA reviewer, and communication with the branch manager. Reviewers will utilize and adhere to the KY CFSR manual, as well as all OSRI guidelines, in order to ensure understanding of the rating process. Group study sessions will occur once per month prior to the monthly staff meeting. Study sessions will allow reviewers to discuss issues that arise during reviews to ensure that reviewers are maintaining objectivity and consistency. Any concerns that arise during the study session that cannot be resolved will be discussed with the branch manager at the staff meeting (held within the same day). Additionally, QA will occur on every case review. The QA staff will engage in discussions around discrepancies with the reviewer. If the QA observes a pattern of continuous discrepancies with a reviewer, this will be reported to and addressed by the branch manager and additional training or clarification may be provided.

Conducting Interviews

Key case participants requiring an interview will be those who can provide case specific information in an effort to provide a better view of the family's experience with the agency. Participants will be determined on a case by case basis; however, should include parents/caregivers, workers/supervisors, service providers/community partners, relatives, foster parents, and youth, as well as any other pertinent case participants. Case reviewers will contact the current/most recent case manager to obtain contact information for all case participants requiring an interview if the information is not available in the case file or TWIST. Interviews will be completed via telephone or virtual platforms to ensure timely and efficient completion of case reviews. In the event that a key case participant fails to keep their scheduled interview, case review staff will make all reasonable efforts to locate the participant, including but not limited to additional telephone contact, attempted face-to-face contact, etc. prior to eliminating the case. Case sampling areas have been created geographically so that in the event that case participants cannot be interviewed via phone, other arrangements can be made that are the most efficient for case review/local staff, as well as key case participants. Case reviewers will work with participants who are unable to participate by phone to determine a more appropriate avenue for interview, considering the best interest of the case participant, including but not limited to the reviewer traveling to the review site and conducting the interview in person, the reviewer traveling to the physical location of the key case participant and conducting the interview in person, and partnering with review staff who are close in proximity to the identified key case participant to make a phone available.

At times, information obtained during an interview may conflict with the documentation contained within the case record or obtained from another interview. When this occurs, reviewers have the responsibility to pursue the issue across multiple key case participant interviews until they can determine the most accurate response to the relevant item questions.

Exceptions to conducting key case participant interviews include:

- Child is not age appropriate or developmentally capable of participation.
- The parents cannot be located despite multiple attempts by the reviewer. Multiple attempts include, but are not limited to:
    - Telephone call.
    - Letter to last known address.
    - Contacting other key case participants to obtain additional contact information.
    - Contacting the most recent worker/supervisor for assistance in engaging.
    - Attempting at least two face-to-face contacts at the last known address.
- There is a safety concern in regards to contacting the key case participant for an interview.
- A key case participant is unable to consent to an interview due to physical or mental health incapacity.
- A key case participant refuses to participate in an interview despite the agency's attempts to engage them in the process.
- A key case participant is advised by an attorney not to participate due to a pending criminal or civil matter.
- The target child is AWOL and/or unable to be located for an interview.

Unacceptable exceptions to conducting an interview:

- A key case participant refuses to participate in an interview and the agency did not attempt to engage them beyond a letter or telephone call.
- A key case participant has a pending court proceeding related/unrelated to the agency's case.
- The agency has not made attempts to locate a party for an interview.
- A key case participant requires an interpreter.

Quality assurance process

The QA structure ensures consistent ratings by providing training for all staff conducting the KY CFSR, providing a written process for consistency of ratings, providing a written policy, and having staff to participate in monthly case review practices as a team. The QA staff are designated by the branch manager and will not participate in the direct review of cases. In an effort to build capacity, QA staff and reviewers are cross-trained and will alternate every six months. This will ensure that the case review team are well trained and inter-changeable to ensure proper coverage during times of turnover, expected and unexpected leave, or if staff are asked to complete special assignments.

First level

First level QA will occur continuously during the case review as modeled during the 2016 CFSR. The QA staff conducting first level QA will communicate via face-to-face meetings, phone, virtual meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams, etc. with each reviewer after the reviewer's initial review of the file to receive an overview of the case. Additionally, review staff will enter a case overview into OMS in the *Case QA Notes* section. The QA staff will maintain notes on each case to refer back to during ongoing discussions. Additionally, QA staff completing first level QA will track interview status and alert the branch manager about any case elimination concerns. Ongoing discussions to provide updates regarding pertinent issues of the cases will occur through OMS QA notes, face-to-face meetings, phone, virtual meetings, etc. The conversations during the first level QA process allow the team to discuss the nuances of item ratings, known case details, potential key case participant interview questions, as well as provide immediate feedback on initial item assessment. If the QA staff and reviewer cannot come to a consensus regarding a requested edit, the branch manager will be consulted and will make a final determination. Upon completion of the review and first level QA (to be completed within two and a half days, when possible), the case will be submitted in OMS for second level QA.

Second level

Second level QA is conducted as a second look at a case review to ensure that no rating errors exist. Second level QA will be conducted by a different QA staff than who completed the first level QA. Second level QA will be conducted as staff complete their monthly case reviews and have made all requested edits from first level QA. Discussions and requested edits will be communicated by the QA staff to the reviewer via OMS QA notes, face-to-face meetings, phone, virtual meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams, etc. Second level QA staff will also look at how the documentation is written and if the narrative conforms to the instructions, OSRI QA Guide, FAQs guidelines, and reflects input from key case participant interviews. If the QA staff and reviewer cannot come to a consensus regarding a requested edit, the branch manager will be consulted and will make a final determination. Second level QA must be completed by the end of the third review day, when possible. Case reviewers will make any needed corrections as determined through the second level QA process by midday of the fourth review day, when possible. Second level QA staff will confirm that corrections were made and approve for finalization by the end of the fourth review day. A case must go through second level QA in order to be finalized.

Feedback loop

Purpose of feedback

The purpose of case review feedback is to provide staff with case review findings, in order to improve practice outcomes for the children and families served by the agency. The focus is to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes of all children served by the agency. The case review feedback will serve as data to assist in improving outcomes at both the local and systemic levels.

Case Review Feedback Form

Utilizing the completed OSRI, the case reviewer will complete the case review feedback form within 10 days of the finalization of the OSRI. The form will include the rating outcomes for each of the seven outcomes and information related to strengths and areas needing improvement. The areas rated as areas needing improvement will be identified to the specific item from the OSRI, and documented on the feedback form.

Regional and Local Level Feedback

Reviewers will provide the case review feedback form via email within 10 days of completing the review to the branch manager. At the end of every month, the branch manager will then forward the forms to the SRA of the region in which the case review was conducted, as well as the DSR assistant director. The SRA will distribute the form to the appropriate regional staff (including the CQI specialist), FSOS, and worker. The full OSRI will be available upon request. Regional and local staff can also request a phone conference by email with the case reviewer within 10 days of receipt of the feedback form. This process will be utilized to discuss the areas needing improvement and to assist regional and local staff in better understanding the reasoning for a particular rating. This will serve as a means to assist in improving outcomes. These discussions cannot be used to inform rating changes, as cases will be finalized prior to sharing feedback.

Regional and local staff will utilize data from case review feedback to discuss in regional and local CQI meetings. Regional and local staff may seek feedback and input from stakeholders within the community. The feedback will be used to develop strategies to improve practice within areas identified as needing improvement.

Central Office Level Feedback

Reviewers, along with the Information and Quality Improvement (IQI) unit, will meet twice per year to analyze OMS reports, identify trends, and compile into a draft trend report. The draft trend report will be shared with the branch manager prior to developing a final report. The final trend report will be provided to the Commissioner, DPP leadership, DSR leadership, branch managers, and regional CQI specialists.

Review data will be incorporated into existing CQI activities to ensure that findings and trends are reviewed at the local, regional, and state level and used to inform action planning.