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Case File Summary Report
State: South Dakota

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The purpose of the case file review is to ensure that information submitted to AFCARS accurately reflects what is in the hard copy case records and is the most current information for the report period under review. This process generally does not identify new problems, but usually confirms the findings of the test case scenarios and the review of the State's AFCARS system documentation.

This summary report provides information on the number of cases selected in the sample, the number of cases reviewed, the number of cases in the final analysis, and any relevant general information regarding the analysis of the results. The matrices that follow provide information on the number of records that had matching information and the number of records that had information that did not match what was submitted to AFCARS.

Foster Care

Number of Cases in Sample	80
Number of Cases Reviewed	78
Number of Cases in Analysis	78

Adoption

Number of Cases in Sample	30
Number of Cases Reviewed	29
Number of Cases in Analysis	29

Most of the errors were in the foster care files and they supported findings from the analysis of the technical documentation. In the area of removal episode information, the elements pertaining to the first date of removal, the total number of removals, the date of discharge from a previous episode, and the date of latest removal, there were several errors. The date of first removal from home had only a few errors, however, the errors indicated that the date reported in AFCARS was later than the one found in the case files. Most of the errors related to the number of removals from home and the date of latest removal from home. In many of the cases, the reviewers noted that the child had only one removal instead of two or more as reported to AFCARS. It is important that these elements be accurate as the Children's Bureau uses these elements in many of our reports and for purposes of measuring the length of time in care and re-entry rates.

#18: Not found = 2
Of the error cases, two were incorrect because the date reported to AFCARS as the date of first removal the agency did not have care and placement of the child. This resulted in errors in elements #19 and #20. The number of removals should have been one not two, and the date of discharge should have been blank.

In four error cases, the reviewer found an additional removal, which was prior to the one reported for this element. The number of removals was also incorrect there should have been one additional removal.

In one error case, the reviewer indicates the date reported was incorrect and the actual date of first removal was later than what was submitted.

#21: 4 (5%)

There were also a high proportion of cases that had errors in the number of placement moves experienced by a child during a removal episode. While some of these errors were due to the State over counting the types of placement moves, the greater issue raised by the reviewers was the under-counting of placement for those children placed with contracted child placement agencies.

Overall, there was an underreporting of the circumstances associated with a child's removal. While there were nine records that had a date of latest removal prior to October 1, 1994, there was an underreporting for more recent removals.

There were issues identified with the most recent case plan goal. It appears that the goal reported and entered into the system does not reflect the child's most recent goal as noted in the paper files. This is an important element in regard to the Child and Family Services Data Profile. As noted in the enclosed findings, there were a significant number of records (seven of thirteen) that were reported to AFCARS as not having a goal established. Many of these children had been in care for a year.

There were errors for the element "has the child been previously adopted?"   This is an important element in assessing the number of disrupted or dissolved adoptions.   In the majority of the error cases, the response reported to AFCARS was "unable to determine." Instead, the reviewers found that in seven cases the response should have been "no." There were two error cases where the response in AFCARS was "no", but the child had actually been adopted prior to the current removal episode.

Other issues related to a lack of data entry. Examples include the dates of birth for the caretakers from whom the child was removed and the dates of termination of parental rights. Often this data was missing, but the reviewers were able to find the information in the case file.

Lastly, as noted in the technical analysis, the State is not properly recording and extracting the information on relative foster parents. These individuals should be reported as "relatives" regardless if the home is licensed or not.

#54: There are four records that the living arrangement was a foster family home and the family structure was either married or unmarried couple, but there was no race information reported for this element in AFCARS.

There was one record that the living arrangement was a foster family home and the family structure was reported as missing, but the reviewer found the foster parents were a married couple and this information was also reported as blank.
54 a - f: Nine records were not included in the analysis because the living arrangement found by the reviewer was "trial home visit."

#55: Nine records were not included in the analysis because the living arrangement found by the reviewer was "trial home visit."

There are four records that the living arrangement was a foster family home and the family structure was either married or unmarried couple, but there was no information regarding Hispanic/Latino origin reported in AFCARS.

There was one record that the living arrangement was a foster family home and the family structure was reported as missing, but the reviewer found the foster parents were a married couple and this information was also reported as blank.