



TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

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# Office of Inspector General

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# CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES INVESTIGATION REPORT

December 10, 2004

# Table of Contents

<b>Scope</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>AUTHORITY</i> .....	6
<i>BACKGROUND</i> .....	6
<i>GENERAL OVERVIEW</i> .....	6
<i>PRIMARY ISSUES</i> .....	7
<i>SPECIFIC FINDINGS</i> .....	8
<i>Employee Interviews Summary Findings</i> .....	8
<i>Case Reading Review Summary Findings</i> .....	9
<i>OIG RECOMMENDATIONS</i> .....	10
<b>Management Structure</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<i>ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE</i> .....	12
<i>ALLOCATION OF REGIONAL STAFF</i> .....	13
<b>Statewide Case Reviews</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<i>STATEWIDE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS</i> .....	19
<i>STATEWIDE CASE REVIEW – PRIOR CASES</i> .....	20
<i>STATEWIDE CASE REVIEW – SUBSEQUENT CASES</i> .....	20
<i>STATEWIDE QUESTIONNAIRE VALIDATION</i> .....	21
<b>Community Questionnaires</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<i>STATEWIDE RESULTS</i> .....	35
<i>PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS WITH CPS:</i> .....	35
<i>COMMUNITY OPINION REGARDING THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS:</i> .....	37
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE CPS:</i> .....	37
<i>REGIONAL COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRES</i> .....	39
<b>Employee Interviews</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<i>EMPLOYMENT:</i> .....	43
<i>EDUCATION:</i> .....	43
<i>INTAKE:</i> .....	44
<i>CASE LOAD:</i> .....	45
<i>WORK PROCESS:</i> .....	49
<i>INVESTIGATIONS:</i> .....	50
<i>TRAINING BARRIERS</i> .....	54
<i>SERVICE DELIVERY:</i> .....	60
<i>MANAGEMENT</i> .....	64
<i>CPS EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:</i> .....	82
<i>Training issues:</i> .....	82
<i>Tools and Resources needed:</i> .....	84
<i>Service delivery:</i> .....	85
<i>Community:</i> .....	86
<i>Management:</i> .....	87
<i>Workload:</i> .....	89
<i>Policies and Procedures and Laws:</i> .....	90
<i>Employees:</i> .....	92
<b>Field Investigation/Validation</b> .....	<b>94</b>
<b>CPS Policy</b> .....	<b>96</b>
<b>Internal/External CPS Reports</b> .....	<b>97</b>
<i>UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW</i> .....	97
<i>DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES - TEXAS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE REVIEW</i> .....	97
<b>Child Fatality Policy Review</b> .....	<b>100</b>

SUMMARY .....	100
CPS HANDBOOK, SECTION 2310 THROUGH 2314.....	100
<i>Notifications:</i> .....	100
<i>Investigation:</i> .....	100
<i>Regional Responsibility:</i> .....	101
<i>Regional Review Process:</i> .....	101
FATALITY REVIEW COMMITTEES AND TEAMS .....	101
<i>Regional Death Review Committee (RDRC)</i> .....	101
<i>Citizen Review Team (CRT)</i> .....	102
<i>Child Safety Review Committee (CSRC)</i> .....	102
<i>Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT)</i> .....	102
<i>Child Fatality Quick Response Team (QRT)</i> .....	103
<b>Wilderness Camp Inspections.....</b>	<b>104</b>
SUMMARY .....	104
PEGASUS/ CAMP COMANCHE .....	105
POSITIVE .....	106
NEGATIVE.....	106
PATHWAYS 3H CAMP .....	106
POSITIVE .....	107
NEGATIVE.....	107
PATHFINDERS CAMP .....	108
POSITIVE .....	108
NEGATIVE.....	109
<b>Child Drug Study .....</b>	<b>110</b>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	110
<b>CPS Training Model.....</b>	<b>111</b>
OVERVIEW .....	111
CPS BSD CLASSROOM AND OJT – BREAKDOWN OF TOPICS/ACTIVITIES .....	111
CPS EMPLOYEE TRAINING COMMENTS.....	112
<b>Continuing Education Training .....</b>	<b>113</b>
OVERVIEW .....	113
TRAINING STANDARDS (CPSH).....	113
CPS CERTIFICATION PROCESS .....	115
PROTECTIVE SERVICES TRAINING INSTITUTE (PSTI).....	115
CERTIFICATION DEVELOPMENT (FOR SUPERVISORS) .....	115
CERTIFICATION FOR C.P.S. SPECIALISTS .....	115
CPS SPECIALIST REQUIREMENTS (FOR CERTIFICATION).....	116
<i>Education and Experience</i> .....	116
<i>Performance</i> .....	116
<i>Training</i> .....	116
CPS ADVANCED SPECIALIST REQUIREMENTS (FOR CERTIFICATION) .....	116
<i>Education and Experience</i> .....	116
<i>Performance</i> .....	116
<i>Training</i> .....	117
CPS SUPERVISOR REQUIREMENTS (FOR CERTIFICATION) .....	117
<i>Education and Experience</i> .....	117
<i>Performance</i> .....	117
<i>Training</i> .....	117
<i>Knowledge and Skills Assessment</i> .....	117
<i>Suggested Training Topics for Advanced Certification</i> .....	118
CONTINUING EDUCATION EMPLOYEE COMMENTS.....	118

<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>121</b>
APPENDIX A.....	121
Region 1 Report .....	121
Region 2 Report .....	142
Region 3 Report .....	163
Region 4 Report .....	181
Region 5 Report .....	202
Region 6 Report .....	221
Region 7 Report .....	247
Region 8 Report .....	275
Region 9 Report .....	299
Region 10 Report .....	321
Region 11 Report .....	343
APPENDIX B.....	367
Sampling Methodology Region 3.....	367
APPENDIX C .....	368
Sampling Methodology Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11.....	368
APPENDIX D .....	370
Validation Methodology and Results Region 3.....	370
APPENDIX E.....	374
Validation Methodology and Results Regions 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 and 11.....	374
APPENDIX F.....	377
CPS Handbook, Section 6121, The Decision to Remove the Child .....	377
Texas Family Code, Section 262.102.....	378
INTERSTATE COMPACT ON THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN (ICPC).....	379
APPENDIX G .....	383
TEXAS PEDIATRIC/ADOLESCENTS DRUG REVIEW .....	383

# Scope

Based on Executive Order RP35 issued on July 02, 2004, by Governor Rick Perry, an investigation of the Department of Family and Protective Services-Child Protective Services (CPS) Division was initiated by the Health and Human Services Commission-Office of Inspector General (OIG). OIG was assisted by the Director of HHSC Internal Audit, David M. Griffith, CPA, CIA, in developing the case sampling methodology. The case samples were drawn from data provided by the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) on CPS investigations completed between January 1, 2003 and May 31, 2004. The investigation was limited in scope to the following areas.

**Management Structure** – A partial review of the management structure and how it relates to the problems within CPS was conducted. The section on Management Structure also details regional staffing levels at the time of the review.

**Case Reviews and Validations** - A random sample of cases were reviewed to determine if CPS conducted investigations and provided services in compliance with CPS policy.

**Community Questionnaire** - Interviews were conducted with community members that work with or have contact with CPS to assist in identifying problems.

**CPS Personnel Interviews** - CPS personnel were interviewed to assist in identifying problem areas.

**Field Investigation** - Field investigations were conducted to verify that the information in the client file case notes accurately reflected the work performed by CPS.

**Internal/External CPS Reports** – Limited reviews of internal and external reports regarding CPS performance were conducted to assist in identifying root causes of problems.

**CPS Policy** – A limited review of policy was conducted.

**Child Fatality Review Policy** - A limited review of the CPS Child Fatality Review Policy was conducted. The review was limited to the policy and not its application to individual cases.

**Wilderness Camps** – An unannounced inspection was conducted at three (3) of the four therapeutic treatment camps identified by CPS as currently housing children in CPS custody and care. The purpose of the inspections was to determine whether the children were in a safe and healthy environment. The fourth camp was not inspected because it had been closed and its licensed revoked by CPS just prior to the inspections.

**Child Drug Study** - OIG enlisted the expertise of the ACS-Heritage staff to perform a high-level analysis of selected drug utilization among all Medicaid clients under age 18.

Following is an Executive Summary of the findings of the investigation. The investigative reports on the various areas covered immediately follow the Executive Summary.

# **Executive Summary**

## **Authority**

Based on Executive Order RP35 issued on July 2, 2004, by Governor Rick Perry and at the request of Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner, Albert Hawkins, an investigation of Child Protective Services (CPS) was initiated by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Governor Perry directed the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to investigate “the practices and procedures of Child Protective Services, citing discrepancies in casework documentation, concerns over casework management and inaction when children have been exposed to abusive situations.”

The OIG was created September 1, 2003 and was operational on January 1, 2004, as part of the reorganization of the health and human service agencies with the purpose to prevent, detect and investigate fraud, abuse and waste or insufficient quality of care in state health and human services programs.

## **Background**

The OIG investigation was systemic and focused on numerous aspects of the CPS programs. It included a review of existing laws, policies and procedures; the intake and triage of reported complaints; CPS investigations; and other services provided by the agency.

Last year CPS received 186,000 reports alleging abuse and neglect out of a population of approximately 6 million children. CPS completed more than 131,000 cases from which they confirmed that approximately 78,000 children had been subject to abuse or neglect in 2003. The state spends approximately 300 million annually on Child Protective Services intake and investigations.

This investigation used over 40 OIG staff, reviewed 2,218 cases, conducted over 115 field validations, interviewed 258 employees, 78 children in 3 wilderness camps, and completed over 100 stakeholder surveys. The investigation included site visits to 3 wilderness camps and all 11 Regional offices. OIG contracted for the initial, statewide, high-level review of over 5,709,263 million pharmacy claims comparing them to over 3,332,040 million acute care claims covering a 2 year period for all Texas children under 18 years of age.

## **General Overview**

The investigation indicates that inadequately trained and equipped Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers are being overwhelmed with the number of cases. This causes them to ignore policy and close cases inappropriately. This results in legitimate cases being dropped and children being left in documented states of abuse or neglect in 19% of applicable cases. Numerous subsequent referrals for the same children or households indicate the agency’s failure to appropriately resolve risk issues before closing the previous case.

CPS does not appear to be able to effect the changes necessary to improve the protection of Texas children. In June 2002 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) reported that CPS did not achieve substantial conformity in six of seven safety, permanency, and well being outcomes. Substantial conformity is a score of 90% or better. Most pertinent to this investigation are two outcomes CPS achieved in the areas of safety:

86% of the time “Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect;”

77.6% of the time “Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.”

These numbers appear be consistent with this investigation’s determination that 19% of the time, children were permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action. Therefore 81% of the time

children were protected from abuse and neglect. Based on the Federal review, CPS was required to develop and file a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As part of the plan, CPS completed case readings tracking many of the same measures as the Federal review. The results of the Texas Child and Family Services Review (TCFSR) show that CPS continued to experience the same problems, at close to the same levels, up through the third quarter of FY 2004. The TCFSR numbers required by the Program Improvement Plan are included in the Internal/External Reports section of this report. The TCFSR report also provides outcome data for several other areas of CPS, which were not part of the OIG investigation, but are related to the CPS activities being reviewed by various committees.

The results of this investigation indicate that the agency is in need of:

- Additional caseworkers, extensive caseworker training, and resources for caseworkers;
- Systemic change in agency culture and management;
- Long term monitoring and oversight from an outside agency is needed to confirm change and to prevent reoccurrence of the systemic problems noted in the reviews.

Further, the investigation indicates that allegations of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and criminal neglect need to be investigated by commissioned peace officers, whether the officers are located within CPS or other agencies. Specific recommendations are located in the section titled OIG Recommendations within the Executive Summary section of this report.

## **Primary Issues**

The following issues are noted. A more detailed discussion with specific findings follows the Primary Issues section.

**Senior Management** – Senior Management appears unable to effect change since many of the problems have been documented since June 2002. Senior management does not appear to hold caseworkers and supervisors accountable for their actions. Management allows caseworkers to enter findings of “Unable to Determine<sup>1</sup>” and “Ruled Out<sup>2</sup>” in the case management system when the findings of abuse or neglect are substantiated and should be recorded as “Reason to Believe.<sup>3</sup>” Eighty percent of the caseworkers interviewed acknowledged that you can use this practice when closing cases. This practice skews statistics and misleads caseworkers investigating new complaints involving the same household or child. Failure to record a finding of “Reason to Believe” on a prior case increases the tendency to not review prior case history. The case reading clearly showed that caseworkers often failed to consider prior case history, which left children at risk.

**Policy** – Simple compliance with CPS policy would generally eliminate many if not most of the failures of CPS to protect children. There appear to be two primary reasons why CPS personnel fail to follow policy. First, the workload makes it difficult to comply with the time frames for processing cases and other requirements in policy. Second, management does not appear to require compliance with policy. Written policy is disjointed requiring personnel to go to many different policy sections to obtain a clear understanding of processes and procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> **Unable to Determine:** - (UTD) Staff conclude that: there is not a preponderance of the evidence that abuse or neglect occurred; it is not reasonable to conclude that abuse or neglect has not occurred; and the family did not move and become unable to locate before the worker could draw a conclusion about the allegation.

<sup>2</sup> **Ruled Out:**- (R/O) Staff determine, based on available information, that it is reasonable to conclude that the abuse or neglect has not occurred.

<sup>3</sup> **Reason to Believe** - (RTB) Based on a preponderance of evidence, staff conclude that abuse or neglect has occurred.

**Conflicting goals** – CPS policy<sup>4</sup> requires that “*The decision to remove a child only occurs when there is no reasonable way to protect the child from abuse or neglect in the immediate or short term future without removal.*” This policy is strongly embedded in CPS culture, but the culture has migrated beyond requirements of the law<sup>5</sup> and policy to overemphasize keeping the family together over keeping the child safe. Until this culture is realigned the agency will continue to leave children at risk.

**Staffing levels** – There is an inadequate number of caseworkers. Fifty-nine percent of regional staff are caseworkers. This percentage does not include State Office or Statewide Intake personnel.

**Investigations** – Many of the investigations conducted by CPS do not meet minimum standards for either criminal or civil investigations. As a result, civil cases to remove a child from danger may fail and prosecution of a perpetrator in criminal cases may prove impossible.

**Accountability** – In many cases the documentation in the computer case file is inadequate to support the actions of the caseworker yet a case may be approved for closure by the supervisor. The computer system does not date stamp entries and lock information once it is entered. It only does so once the case is closed. This allows workers to change information at a later date and facilitates the caseworker’s ability to not timely enter necessary case information. Neither the supervisor nor caseworker are held accountable for their failure to appropriately document the case.

**Intake** - Inexperienced intake personnel hinder the timeliness and quality of investigations. Failure of intake personnel to obtain the necessary information may result in a valid complaint being closed without an investigation being initiated.

**Child Fatality Review Policy** – The patchwork of statutes and policy that direct child death investigations creates a convoluted process with minimal accountability that effectively leaves CPS policing itself in child fatality cases. The policies and processes between the various committees and teams<sup>6</sup> responsible for death reviews are disjointed and do not form a cohesive framework for child fatality investigations.

**Drug Analysis** – The statements by Wilderness Camp Executive staff regarding psychotropic drug use by residents, and the findings in the Child Drug Study appear to be compatible.

## **Specific Findings**

### **Employee Interviews Summary Findings**

The following findings are based on issues that were consistently identified by employees during the interview process. Please review the statewide and regional employee summaries for additional in-depth details.

- There is a lack of supervisory oversight and accountability.
- Agency culture allows caseworkers to issue a finding of “Ruled Out” or “Unable to Determine” when they have verified that there is a “Reason to Believe.” This policy skews reporting statistics and misleads others about the facts of the case.
- Elimination of the Statewide Risk Director position has jeopardized regional Risk Directors’ ability to have consistency in achieving their mission for reading multiple referrals and staffing high risk cases.

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<sup>4</sup> CPS Policy Handbook , Section 6121 is included in Appendix F.

<sup>5</sup> Texas Family Code, Section 262.102 is included in Appendix F.

<sup>6</sup> Regional Death Review Committee (RDRC), Citizen Review Team (CRT), Child Safety Review Committee (CSRC), Child Fatality Review Teams (CFRT)



- Injuries or an incident may be ruled out because the assigned caseworker did not personally observe them, even if they were observed and reported by law enforcement, professionals, or other credible sources.
- Investigations are prematurely closed or “stage progressed” to services or conservatorship to meet documentation deadlines and the required 30 or 60 day timeframes.
- Caseworkers over utilize the finding of Unable to Determine (UTD) to close cases when a Reason to Believe or Ruled Out should be used.
- Cases are not properly merged, which results in previous or related incidents or history being unattached or not reviewed in the current investigation.
- Caseworkers fail to verify that the alleged perpetrator is no longer in the home in confirmed sexual abuse cases, and fail to provide additional services.
- Workers consistently fail to use “moved protocol” procedures to locate moved families, instead closing the case as “unable to locate.”
- Statements are not obtained from collateral witnesses.
- Medical reports related to the child’s injuries are not obtained.
- Caseworkers fail to regularly check on children per policy while an investigation is open.
- Not all of the children in the home that is the subject of the investigation are interviewed.
- Not all the adults in the home that is the subject of the investigation are interviewed.
- Caseworkers rely on and use only the alleged perpetrator’s statement and not the statements of the spouse or other adults.
- Caseworkers accept the word of the parents regarding family drug use, when there is a family history of drug use, instead of requiring drug testing.

### **Case Reading Review Summary Findings**

The following findings are based on the OIG case reading review. Please review the Statewide Case Review and the regional case reading summaries in Appendix A for additional in-depth details.

- CPS policy specifies certain time frames for initiating face-to-face contact with a child and family in an investigation. 35 percent of the time this contact was not accomplished within the required time frame.
- Subsequent referrals continue to present issues that were not effectively resolved in prior cases. In 43 percent of all investigations, there were allegations similar to those made in a previously closed case.
- In 55 percent of the investigations reviewed, CPS caseworkers did not “staff the case” with their supervisors. This practice is not required but is of concern given the low tenure and high caseload of CPS caseworkers.
- In 33 percent of the applicable cases appropriate actions were not taken to protect the child from further abuse and neglect.
- 65 percent of the time, in applicable cases, the worker did not initiate a safety plan or place the child in substitute care as required by policy.
- Service plans are developed in cases where further services or actions are needed to reduce the risk of harm to the child. Of the cases for which a service plan was required, 48 percent of the time they did not have a service plan or the service plan did not comply with policy. In about 23 percent of the plans that were developed, the service plan did not address the issues of abuse or neglect that were identified during the investigation.
- Where it was documented that services were needed, 51 percent of the time they were not provided by the caseworker.
- Where cases were referred to Family Based Safety Services, CPS failed 60 percent of the time to initiate or maintain contact with the family in accordance with CPS policy.
- Where a child was placed in foster care, CPS failed 45 percent of the time to maintain contact with the child in accordance with CPS policy.

- Higher-level CPS administrators will staff an investigation when a supervisor is not available or when an investigation is exceptionally difficult or complex. Only 6 percent of investigations reviewed were staffed with administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director), although it appeared to reviewers that about 19 percent of the cases should have been so staffed. The relatively low tenure of caseworkers and higher caseloads clearly indicate a need for more frequent higher-level involvement.
- The reviewers found that 6.86% of the time, or in 152 of the investigations reviewed, there was at least one child left in a life-threatening situation.
- At least one child remained in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action by the caseworker 19.16% of the time or in 425 of the investigations reviewed.

## **OIG Recommendations**

- Long term monitoring and oversight from an independent outside agency is needed to confirm change and to prevent reoccurrence of the systemic problems noted in this investigation.
- Agency culture needs to be made consistent with state law and policy to emphasize the safety of the child over maintaining the child with the family.
- Written policy must be followed consistently across the state with little or no regional variations in complying with policy requirements.
- Caseworkers need additional training, particularly in policy compliance and the legal aspects of their job.
- Additional caseworkers are required to adequately address the volume of cases being received.
- Caseworkers need to be held accountable for following written policy in working and properly documenting their cases.
- Implement a field-training program where new caseworkers are required to work with experienced caseworkers on a daily basis for a period of 6 to 12 months. This should provide better-equipped personnel and make it more likely they will stay with the agency.
- Enact or amend existing legislation to mandate law enforcement investigate all allegations, including those received directly from CPS, of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and criminal neglect against children, with CPS required to coordinate and assist, as needed, in the criminal investigation. All allegations of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and criminal neglect need to be investigated by a commissioned peace officer. The peace officer can be in an internal unit or another agency<sup>7</sup>.
- Utilized personnel with field experience in the intake process.
- CPS needs to work to provide additional resources to place children.

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<sup>7</sup> Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 2.27(a), and Texas Family Code, Sections 261.301(d) and 264.514

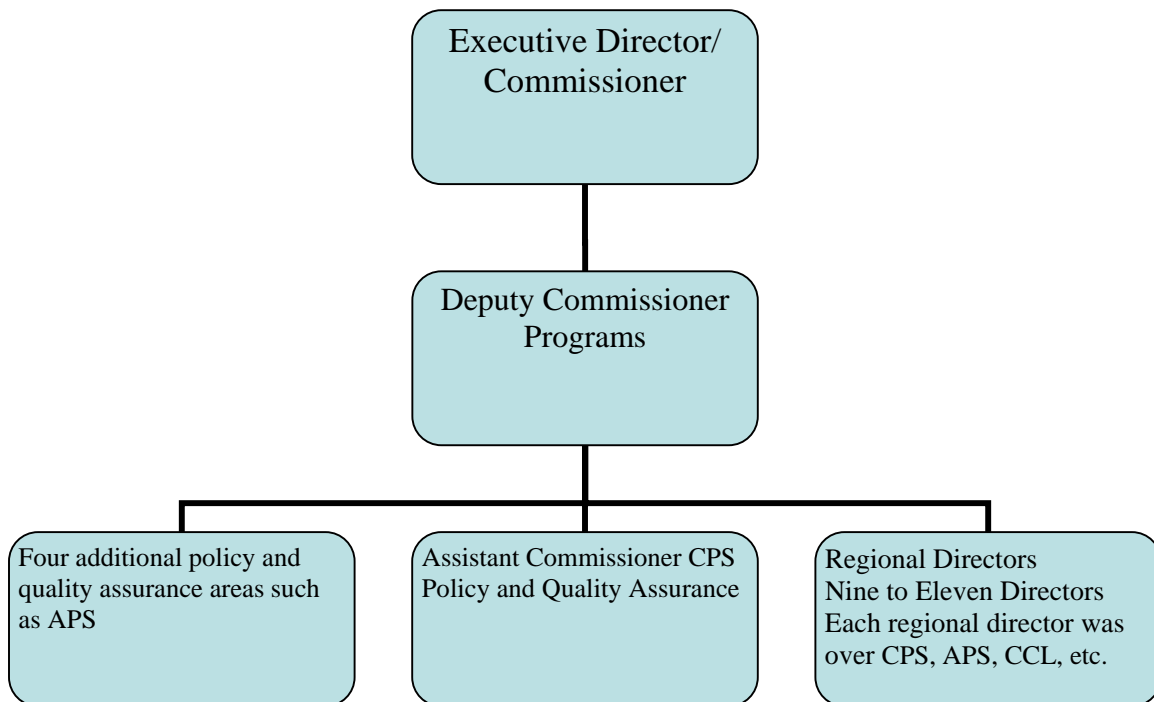
- Procedures and policy need to be developed to hold both caseworkers and management accountable for following and enforcing policy. Caseworkers and managers both need to comply with policy. Failure to follow policy needs to have consequences.
- The outcome based measures and methodology from the CPS internal reports on Safety, Permanency, and Well Being outcomes need to be measures that are required to be reported to the Legislative Budget Board and other oversight committees.
- When abuse or neglect is substantiated the case needs to be appropriately documented as “Reason to Believe” in compliance with policy. Require sufficient documentation in the file to support the findings of “Reason to Believe,” “Ruled Out,” and “Unable to Determine.”
- When a prior case or complaint is again investigated as a new case and there is a “Reason to Believe” finding in the new case, there needs to be a quality assurance process that reviews the prior findings to determine if they were appropriate.
- The computer system needs to date stamp the entry and record the identity of the person entering case information. Once the information is recorded and submitted it should lock the information so it cannot be altered. Documentation needs to be entered in a timely manner.
- Institute a standardized comprehensive child fatality investigation policy. The investigation needs to look at all factors that contributed to the death of the child. Failures on the part of CPS personnel to fulfill their responsibilities in compliance with policy need to be addressed.
- The required timeframes for completing an investigation should provide flexibility to extend the investigation for the safety of the child.
- Wilderness camps should all be held to the basic minimum standards.
- Clarify policy to mend the dysfunctional nature of current policies and procedures for child fatality investigations. Amend policies and procedures to establish clear roles and responsibilities for CPS staff. Reduce the total number of Committees to enhance accountability and oversight. Replace the internal CPS death review committees with an independent third party.

# Management Structure

## Organizational Structure

A detailed review of CPS' management structure was not conducted due to a prior review of essentially the same management structure in the Adult Protective Services Investigation Report, dated October 7, 2004. Governor Rick Perry ordered this review in Executive Order RP-33, dated April 14, 2004. The Management structure within the Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS)-Child Protective Services (CPS) is the same as in Adult Protective Services (APS). Moreover, the issues identified and published in the Adult Protective Services Investigation Report, dated October 7, 2004 are consistent with the management issues found in the CPS investigative review.

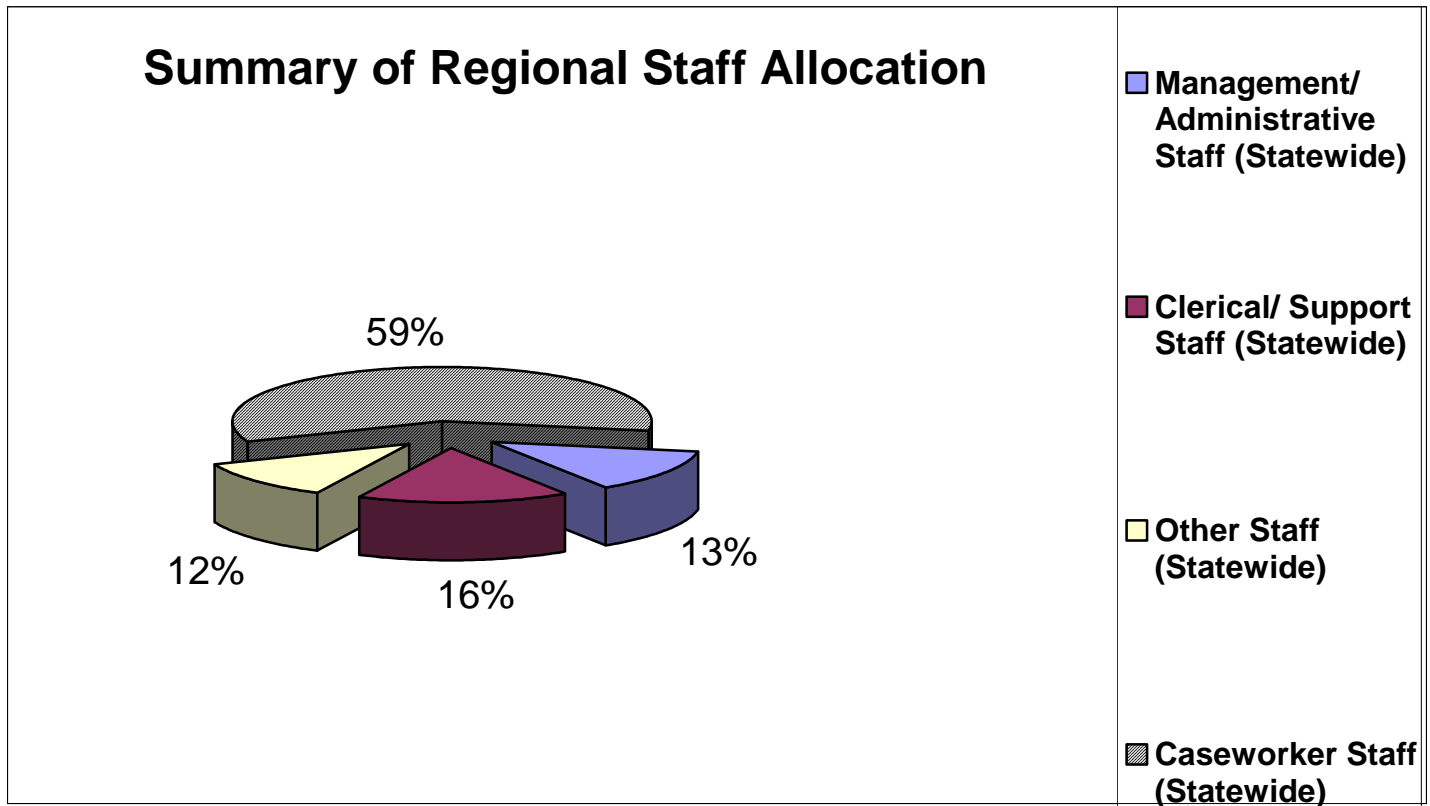
The illustration below details the pre-September 2003 organizational structure of CPS. Under this structure each Regional Director operated their region as they deemed appropriate with minimal accountability to State Office. This structure contributed to inconsistent application of CPS policy. In September 2003 CPS was restructured/reorganized to a structure that should produce better policy compliance. However, it appears to continue to suffer from the prior organizational structure.



## Allocation of Regional Staff

This report includes a statewide regional breakdown of CPS staff in Texas. OIG requested that DFPS executive management provide a comprehensive list of CPS staff assigned to all eleven (11) regions within the state. The purpose of this request was to schedule staff interviews. The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) provided CPS regional staff lists to OIG in July and August of 2004. The data received does not reflect positions (FTEs) for agency staff in State Office (S.O.) or Statewide Intake (SWI). In addition, the data may not reflect vacant or recently filled positions (FTEs) within the regions. The list was subsequently used to develop the following breakdown of staff by region and type of position. The region specific breakdown included in Appendix A, with other regional specific facts, breaks staff allocation down further into specific jobs.

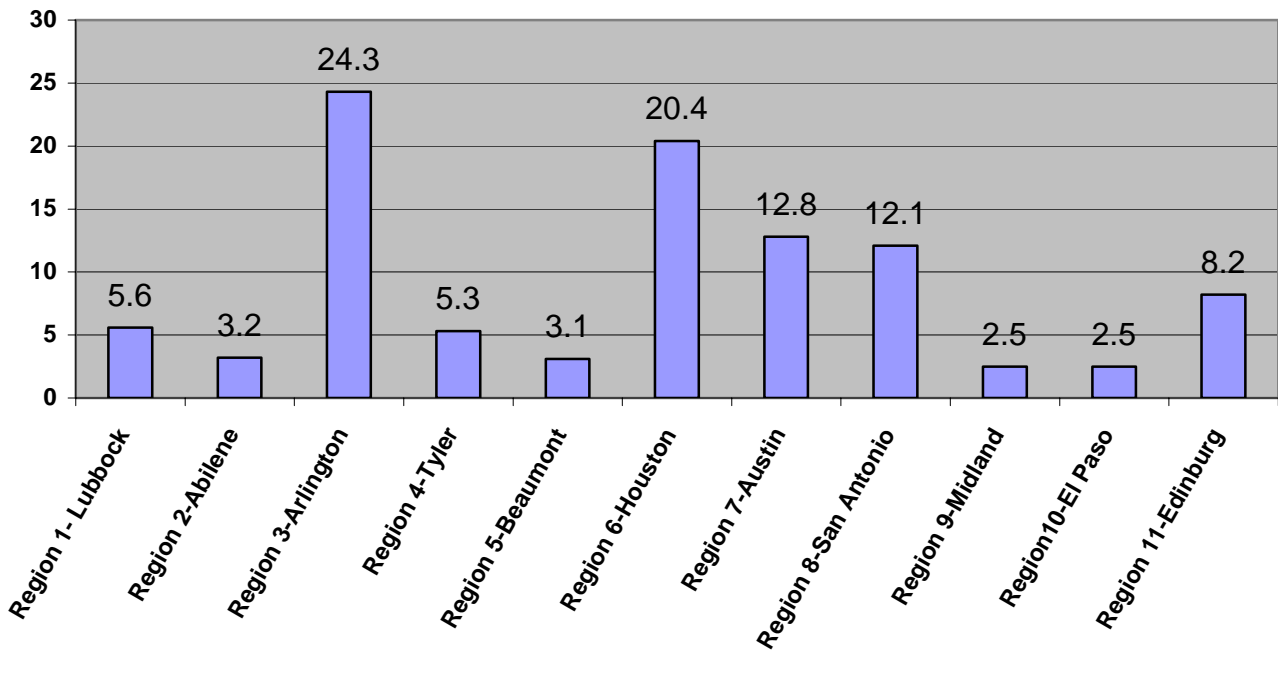
<b>Summary of Regional Staff Allocation</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Management/Administrative Staff (Statewide)	609	13%
Caseworker Staff (Statewide)	2770	59%
Clerical/Support Staff (Statewide)	772	16%
Other Staff (Statewide)	552	12%
<b>Total Regional Staff</b>	<b>4703</b>	<b>100%</b>



***CPS TOTAL REGIONAL STAFF (STATEWIDE)***

Region 1 (Lubbock)	265	5.6%
Region 2 (Abilene)	150	3.2%
Region 3 (Arlington)	1143	24.3%
Region 4 (Tyler)	247	5.3%
Region 5 (Beaumont)	147	3.1%
Region 6 (Houston)	961	20.4%
Region 7 (Austin)	600	12.8%
Region 8 (San Antonio)	568	12.1%
Region 9 (Midland)	119	2.5%
Region 10 (El Paso)	119	2.5%
Region 11 (Edinburg)	384	8.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4703</b>	<b>100</b>

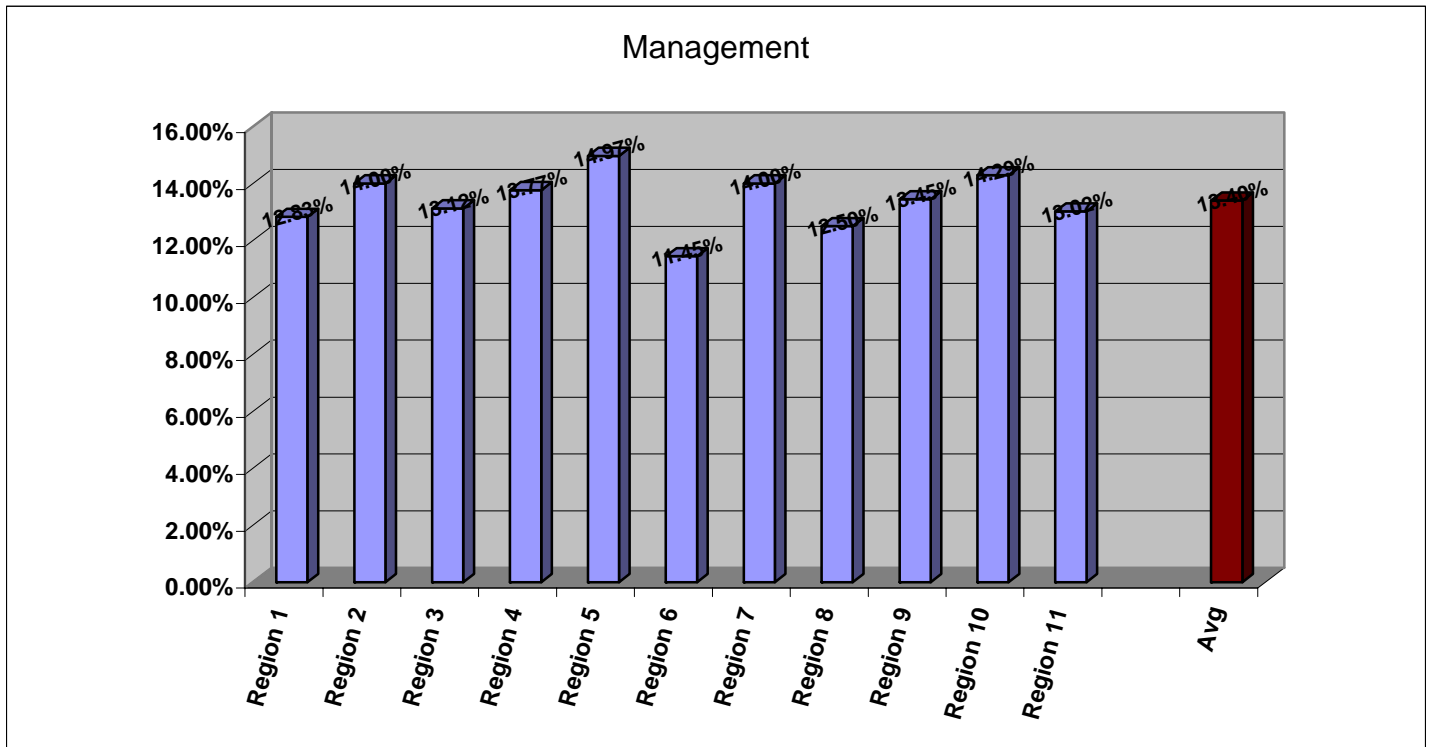
**CPS TOTAL REGIONAL STAFF (STATEWIDE %)**



**MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATIVE (STATEWIDE)**

Region 1 (Lubbock)	34
Region 2 (Abilene)	21
Region 3 (Arlington)	150
Region 4 (Tyler)	34
Region 5 (Beaumont)	22
Region 6 (Houston)	110
Region 7 (Austin)	84
Region 8 (San Antonio)	71
Region 9 (Midland)	16
Region 10 (El Paso)	17
Region 11 (Edinburg)	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>609</b>

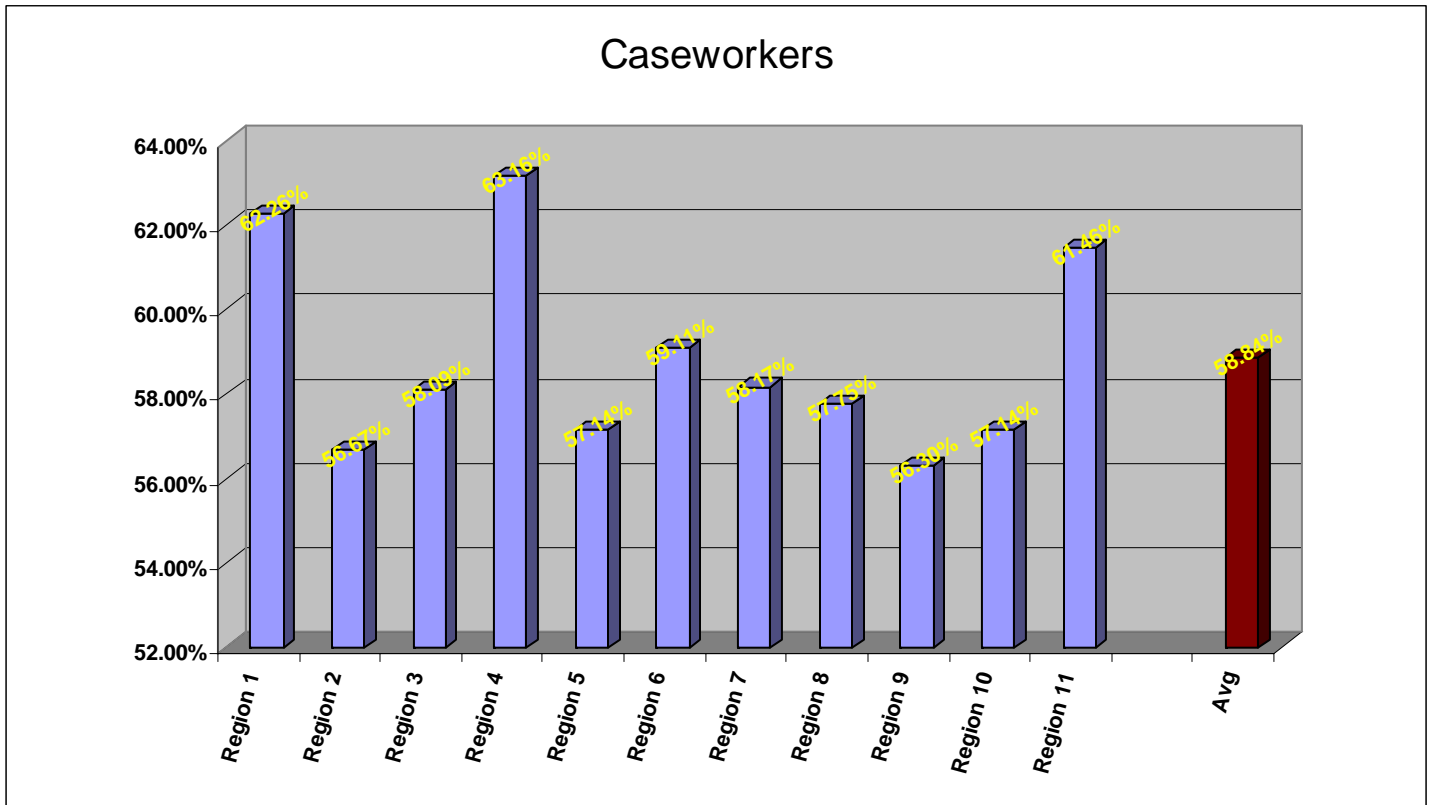
The percentages expressed in the chart are based on the total number of people assigned to the individual region based on the information provided to OIG by DFPS.



**CASEWORKERS (STATEWIDE)**

Region 1 (Lubbock)	165
Region 2 (Abilene)	85
<b>Region 3 (Arlington)</b>	<b>664</b>
Region 4 (Tyler)	156
Region 5 (Beaumont)	84
Region 6 (Houston)	568
Region 7 (Austin)	349
Region 8 (San Antonio)	328
Region 9 (Midland)	67
Region 10 (El Paso)	68
<u>Region 11 (Edinburg)</u>	<u>236</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2770</b>

The percentages expressed in the chart are based on the total number of people assigned to the individual region based on the information provided to OIG by DFPS.

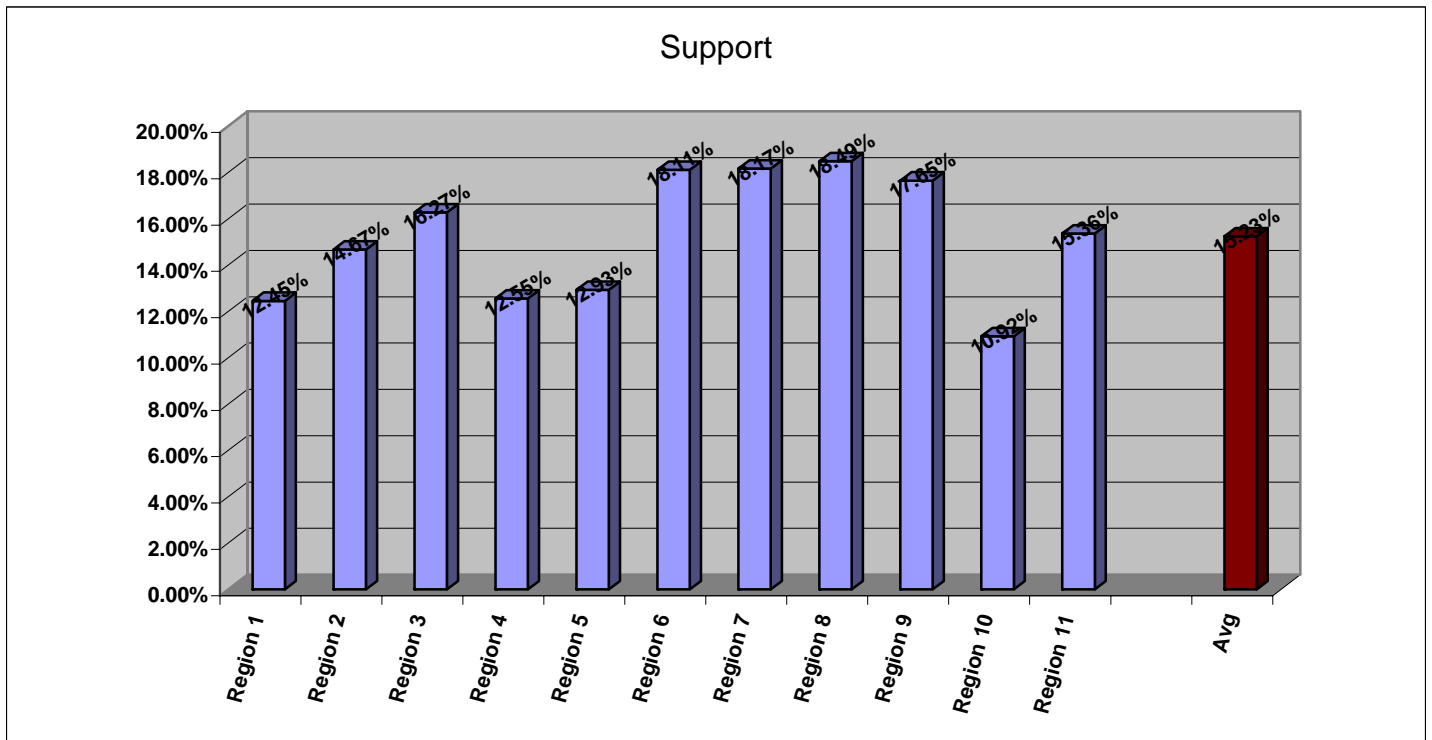




*CLERICAL/SUPPORT (STATEWIDE)*

Region 1 (Lubbock)	33
Region 2 (Abilene)	22
Region 3 (Arlington)	186
Region 4 (Tyler)	31
Region 5 (Beaumont)	19
Region 6 (Houston)	174
Region 7 (Austin)	109
Region 8 (San Antonio)	105
Region 9 (Midland)	21
Region 10 (El Paso)	13
Region 11 (Edinburg)	59
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>772</b>

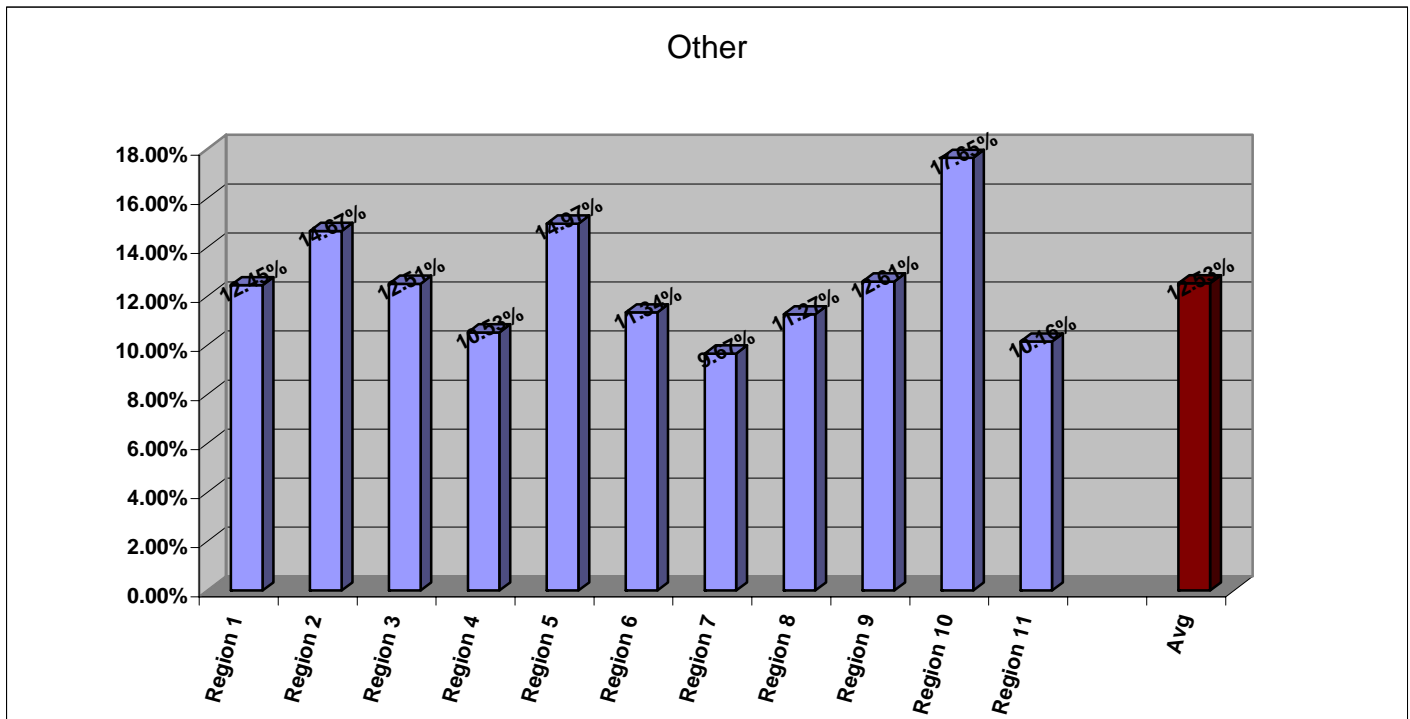
The percentages expressed in the chart are based on the total number of people assigned to the individual region based on the information provided to OIG by DFPS.



**OTHER STAFF (STATEWIDE)**

Region 1 (Lubbock)	33
Region 2 (Abilene)	22
Region 3 (Arlington)	143
Region 4 (Tyler)	26
Region 5 (Beaumont)	22
Region 6 (Houston)	109
Region 7 (Austin)	58
Region 8 (San Antonio)	64
Region 9 (Midland)	15
Region 10 (El Paso)	21
Region 11 (Edinburg)	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>552</b>

The percentages expressed in the chart are based on the total number of people assigned to the individual region based on the information provided to OIG by DFPS.



# Statewide Case Reviews

A review of previously closed cases was conducted to determine if CPS policy and statute were consistently followed. The case readers were drawn from experienced seasoned CPS personnel. The questionnaire below details the case reader's responses for the statewide review of closed CPS cases. The number of cases reviewed is based on a statistically valid sample size determined by the HHSC Internal Audit Director. The sample size is based on a confidence level of 95 percent with a 2.92% margin of error. Please review sampling methodology in Appendices B and C for further information.

OIG Auditors validated the case reader's responses. The OIG Auditors verified that the case reader's responses to selected questions were substantiated by documentation in the file. The case reader's responses were almost universally substantiated. The actual results of the validation are on page 26.

Following the validation results are sections that address the number of subsequent and prior cases for the cases in the selected sample. Additionally, there is a section that provides a graphical comparison by region of the responses to the questionnaire. The results by region are contained in Appendix A.

## Statewide Questionnaire Results

The number listed under **Total** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a "Yes" or "No."

Question	%Yes	%No	Total
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>82.46%</b>	<b>17.54%</b>	<b>2218</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>64.74%</b>	<b>35.26%</b>	<b>2218</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>73.01%</b>	<b>26.99%</b>	<b>1319</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>52.21%</b>	<b>47.79%</b>	<b>747</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>44.97%</b>	<b>55.03%</b>	<b>2217</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated (risk findings)?</b>	<b>32.06%</b>	<b>67.94%</b>	<b>2218</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>34.16%</b>	<b>65.84%</b>	<b>1379</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>66.48%</b>	<b>33.52%</b>	<b>1277</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>22.01%</b>	<b>77.99%</b>	<b>2217</b>

<b>*10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>24.72%</b>	<b>75.28%</b>	<b>627</b>
<b>*11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>73.67%</b>	<b>26.33%</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>45.54%</b>	<b>54.46%</b>	<b>2218</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>6.05%</b>	<b>93.95%</b>	<b>1786</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>6.31%</b>	<b>93.69%</b>	<b>2218</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>2064</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>88.5%</b>	<b>2217</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>14.47%</b>	<b>85.53%</b>	<b>1693</b>
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>52.21%</b>	<b>47.79%</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>76.38%</b>	<b>23.62%</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>51.29%</b>	<b>48.71%</b>	<b>583</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>7.43%</b>	<b>92.57%</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>39.77%</b>	<b>60.23%</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>54.84%</b>	<b>45.16%</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>19.16%</b>	<b>80.84%</b>	<b>2218</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>6.86%</b>	<b>93.14%</b>	<b>2217</b>

\* The responses in questions 10 and 11 are subsets of question 9 and have a statistical conflict and are not to be relied upon.

## **Statewide Case Review – Prior Cases**

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 73.01% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.17 with 25% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 10% of the time.

## **Statewide Case Review – Subsequent Cases**

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 52.21% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.25 cases with 4% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 35% of the time.

## **Statewide Questionnaire Validation**

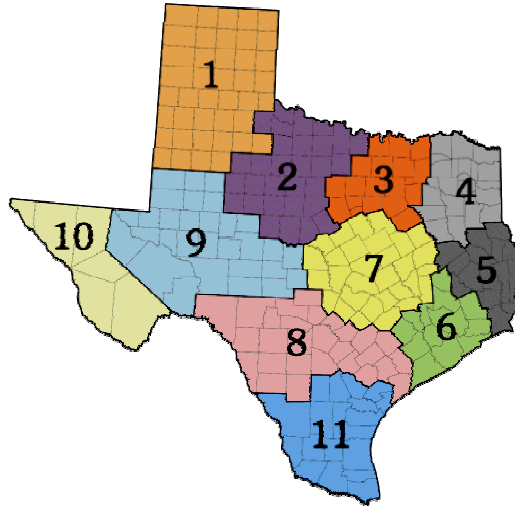
A sample of the case reader's responses to the questionnaire were selected to verify that documentation would sustain the responses given in the questionnaire. OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation, within the case file, to support the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's response. Please see Appendix D and E for validation methodology.

### **Validation Rate**

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>99% Validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>99% Validation rate</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>98% Validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>99% Validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% Validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>99% Validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% Validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>99% Validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>99% Validation rate</b>

## Statewide Case Reviews – Regional Comparison

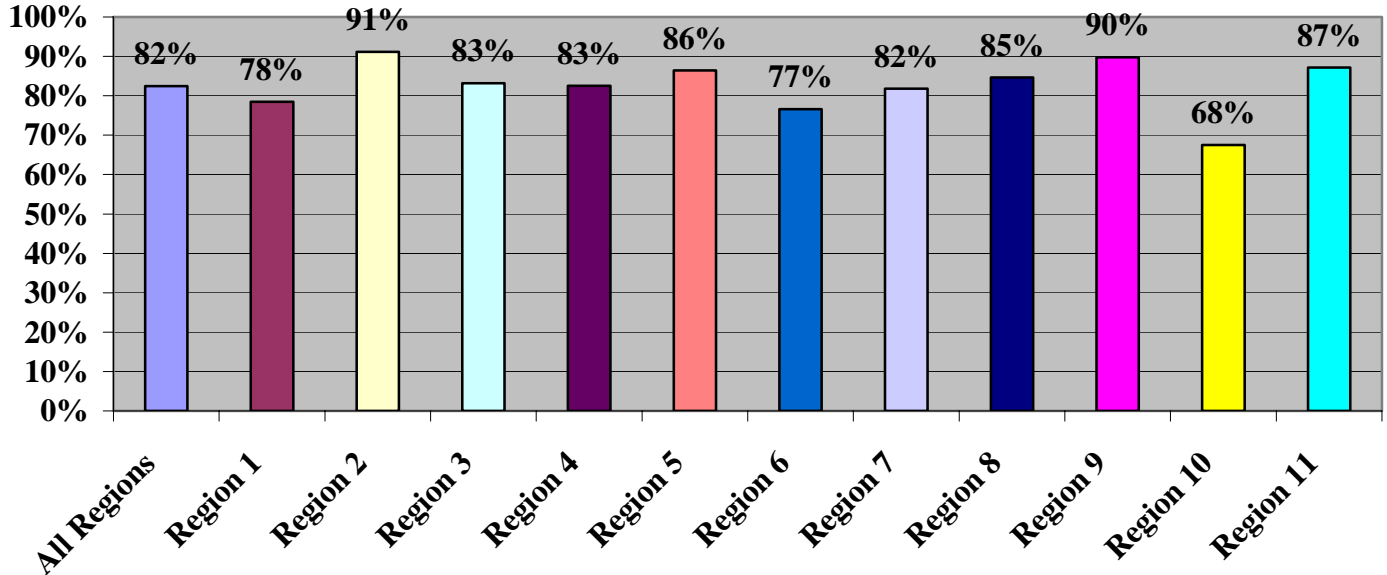
The charts below provide a visual comparison of the various regions for each of the questions in the case reading. The All Regions percentages are slightly skewed toward the results for Region 3, because the sample size for Region 3 was selected independently causing a disproportionately larger sample size for Region 3.



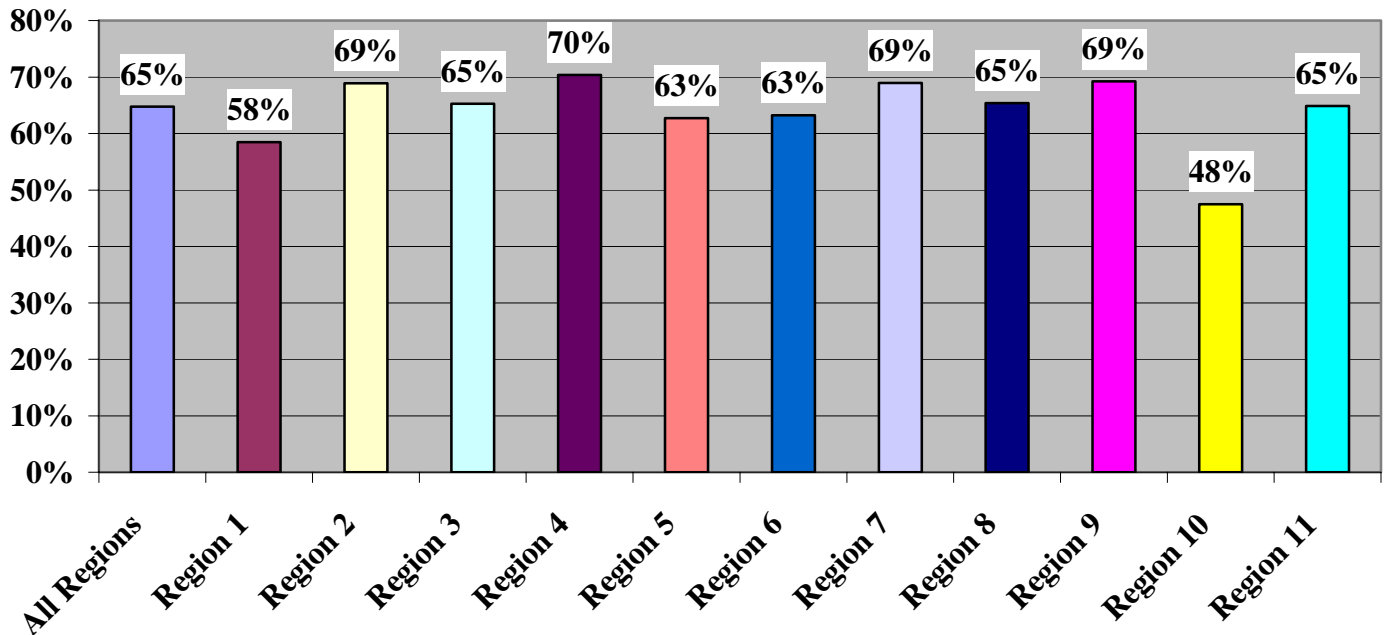
### REGIONAL ALIGNMENT

- Region 1 (Lubbock)**
- Region 2 (Abilene)**
- Region 3 (Arlington/Dallas)**
- Region 4 (Tyler)**
- Region 5 (Beaumont)**
- Region 6 (Houston)**
- Region 7 (Austin)**
- Region 8 (San Antonio)**
- Region 9 (Midland)**
- Region 10 (El Paso)**
- Region 11 (Edinburg)**

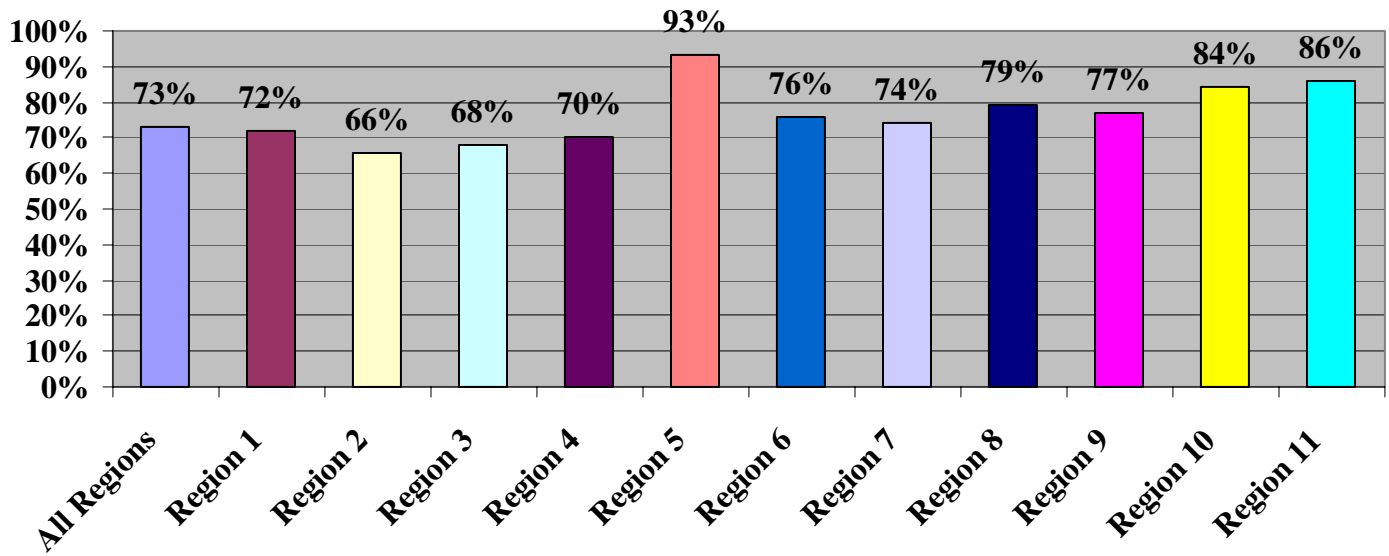
**Question # 1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



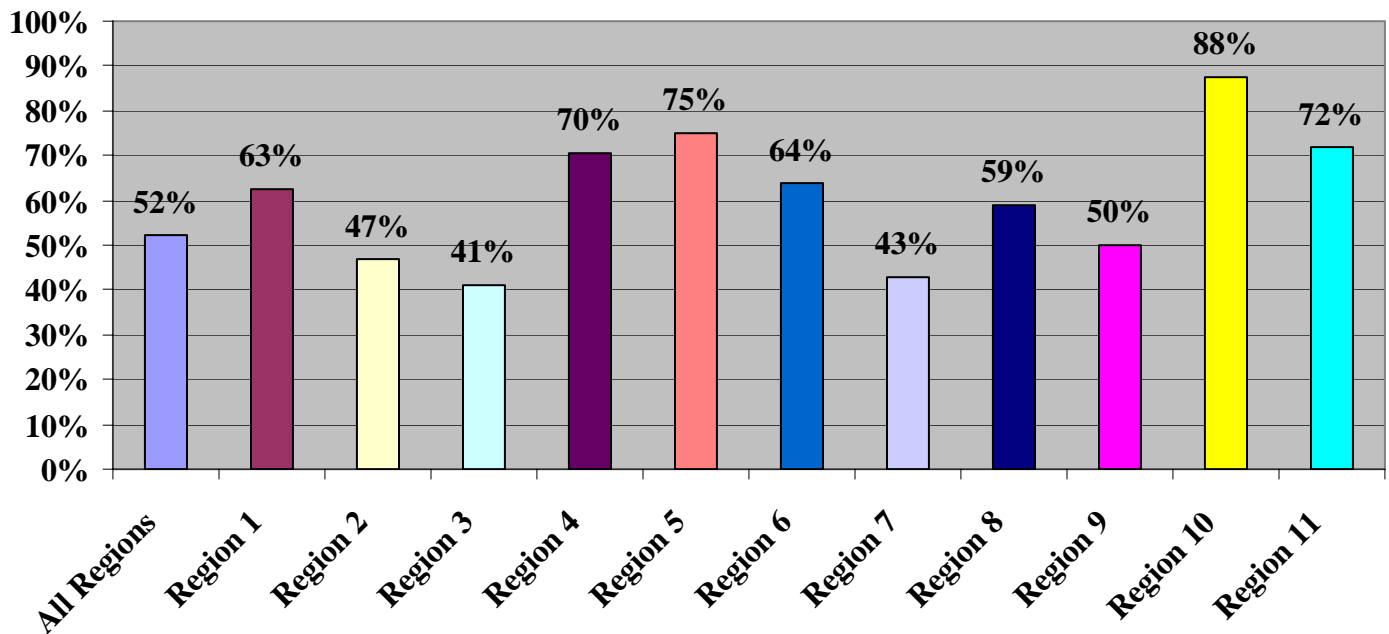
**Question 2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



**Question 3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**

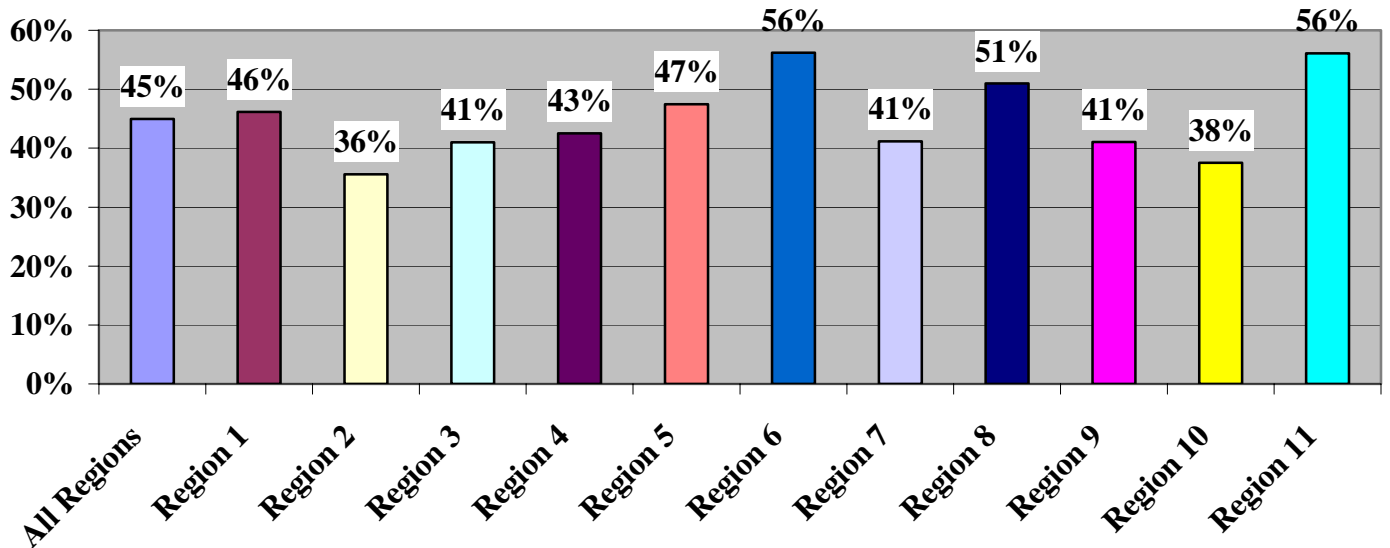


**Question 4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**

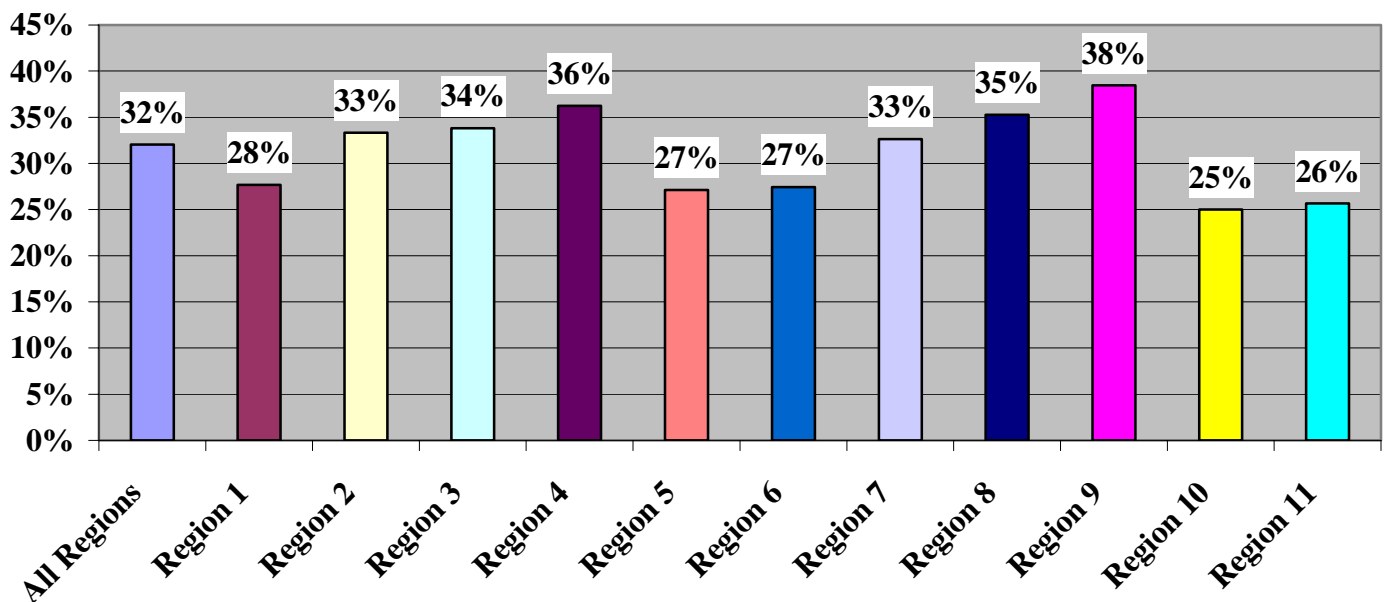




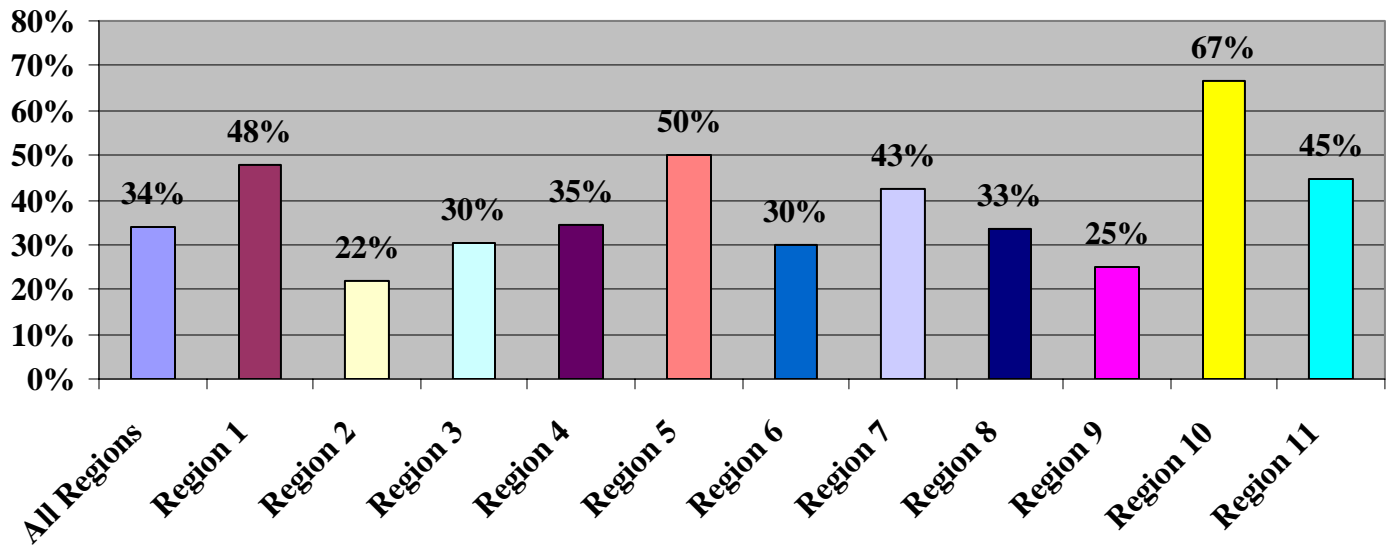
**Question 5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



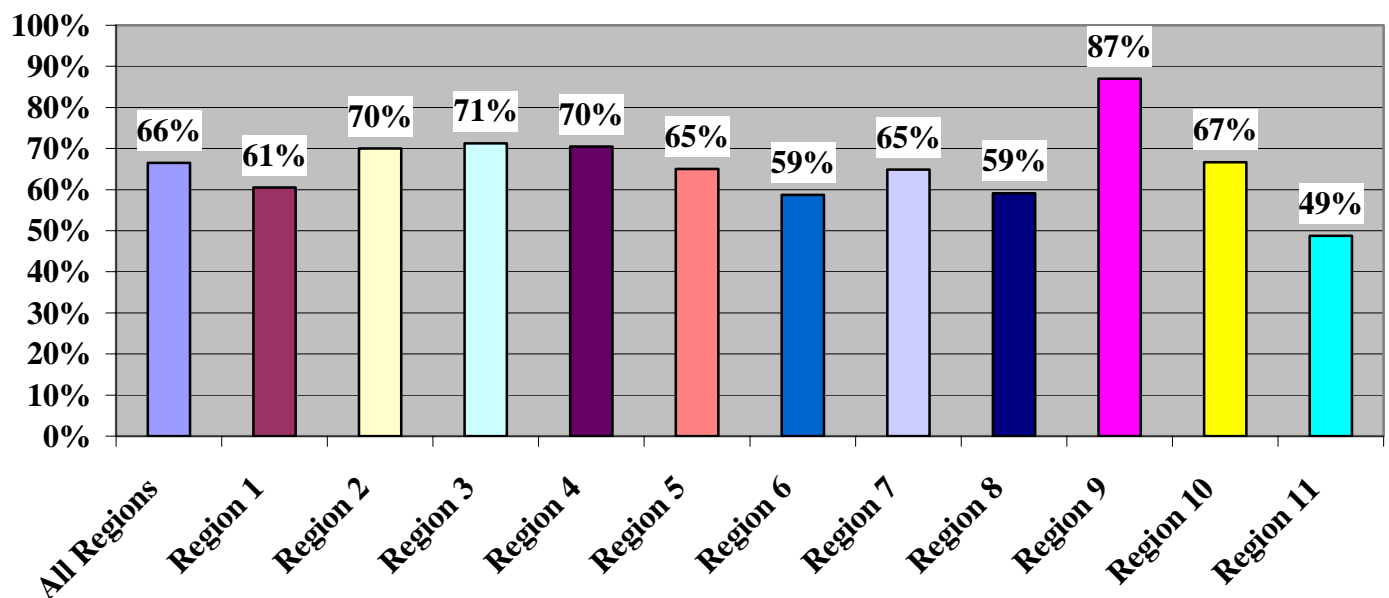
**Question 6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated (risk findings)? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



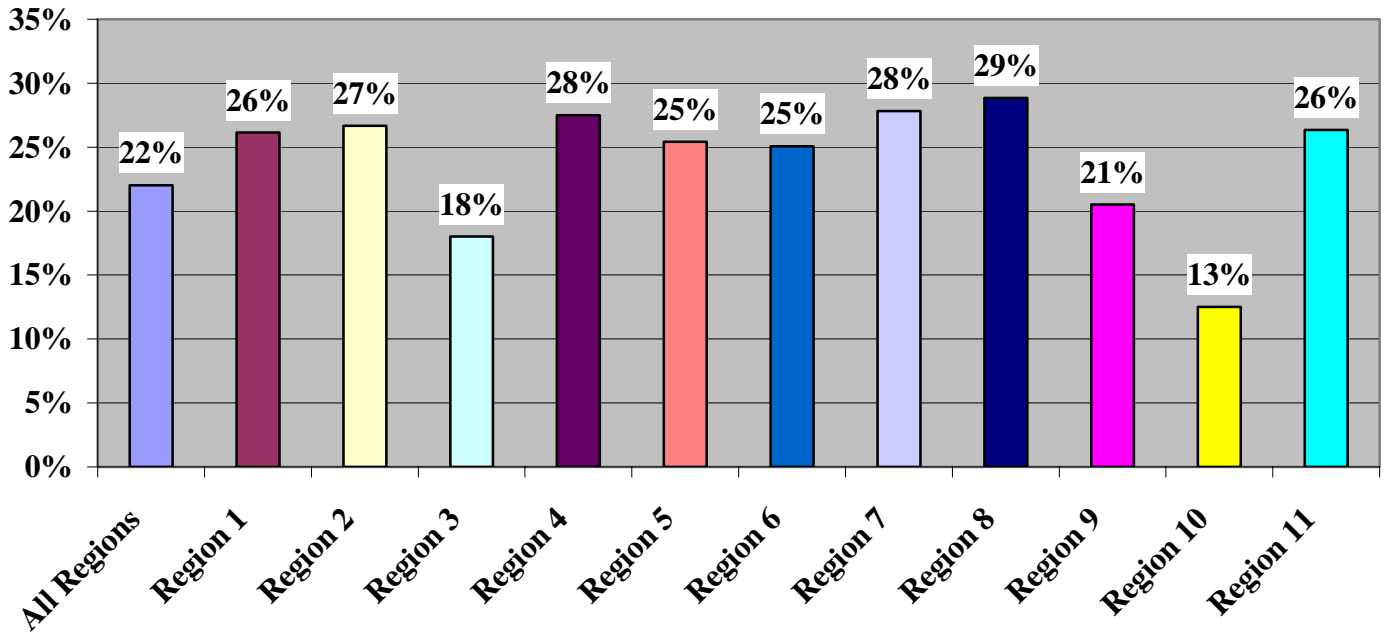
**Question 7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



**Question 8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**

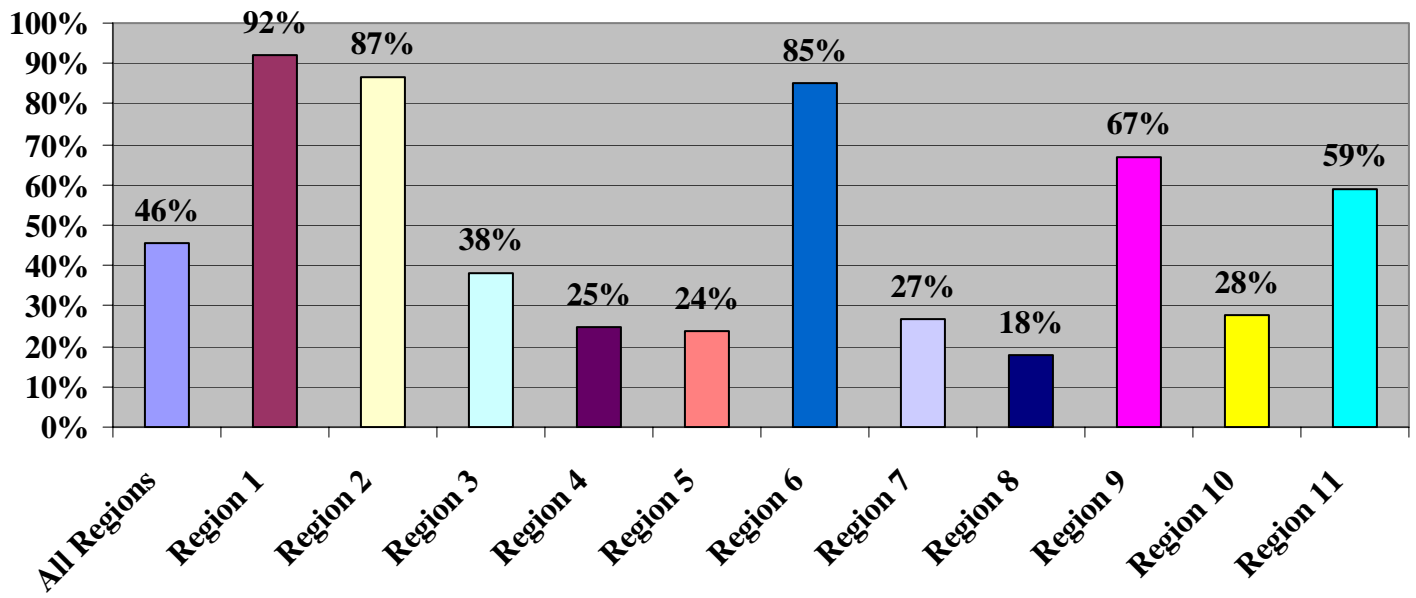


**Question 9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home? ("Yes Percentages" Responses displayed.)**

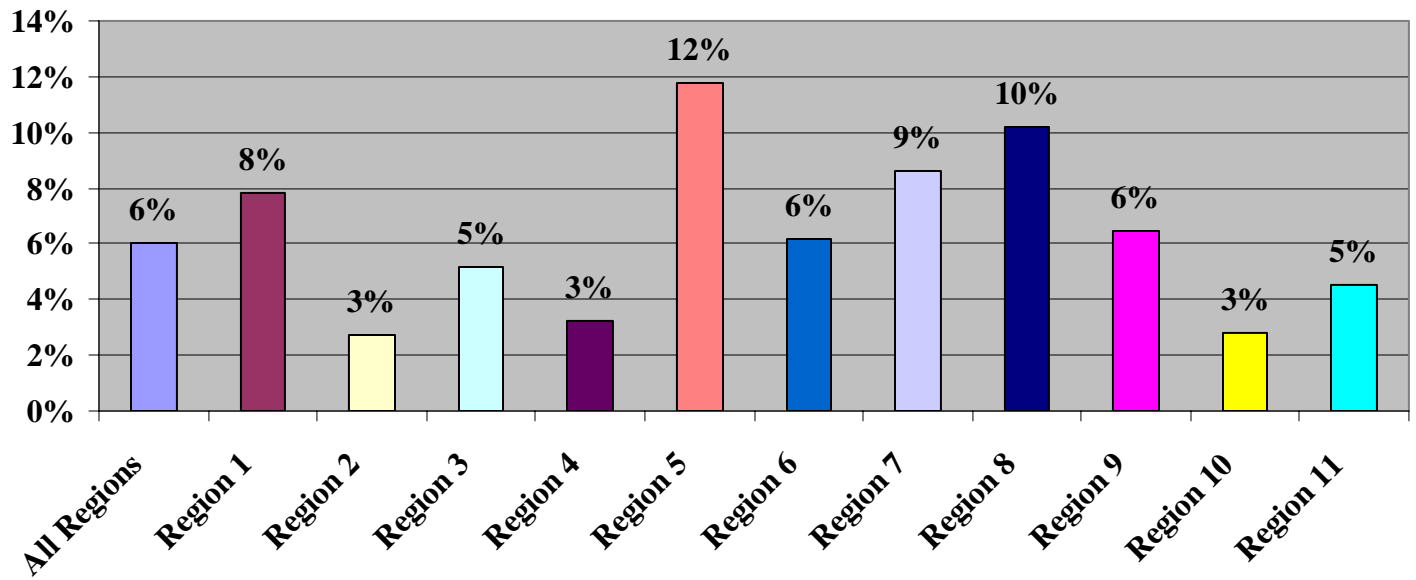


Questions 10 & 11: The responses in questions 10 and 11 are subsets of question 9 and have a statistical conflict and are not to be relied upon.

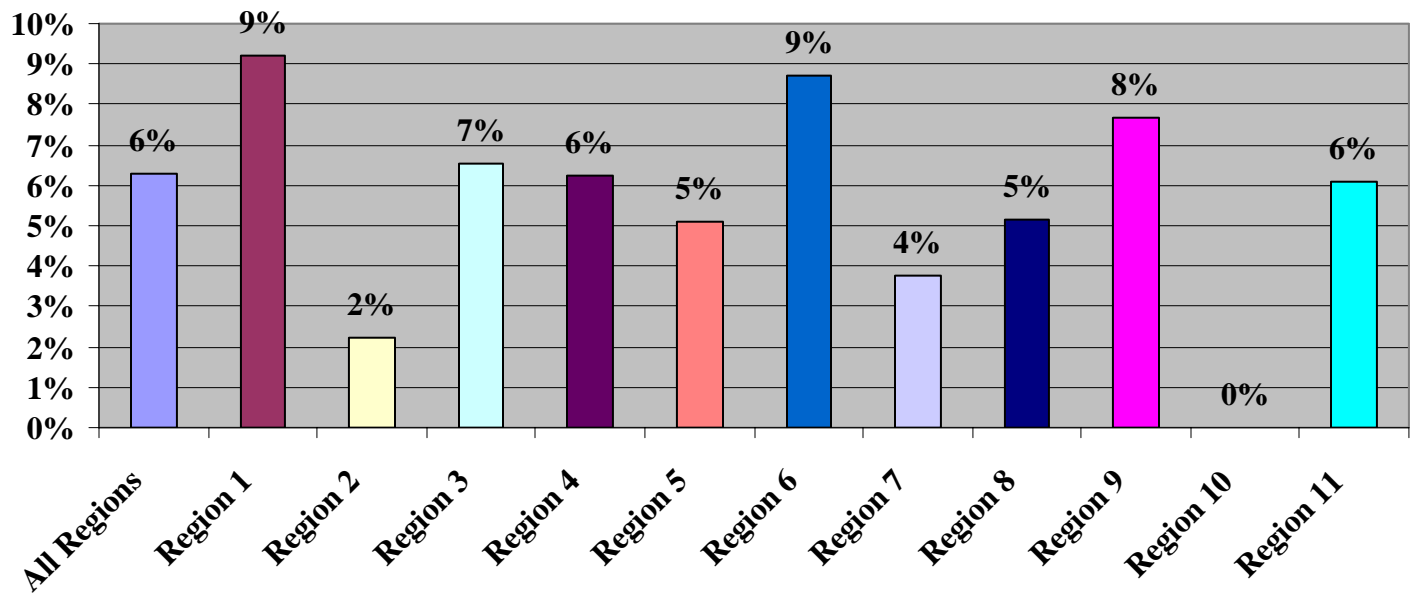
**Question 12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



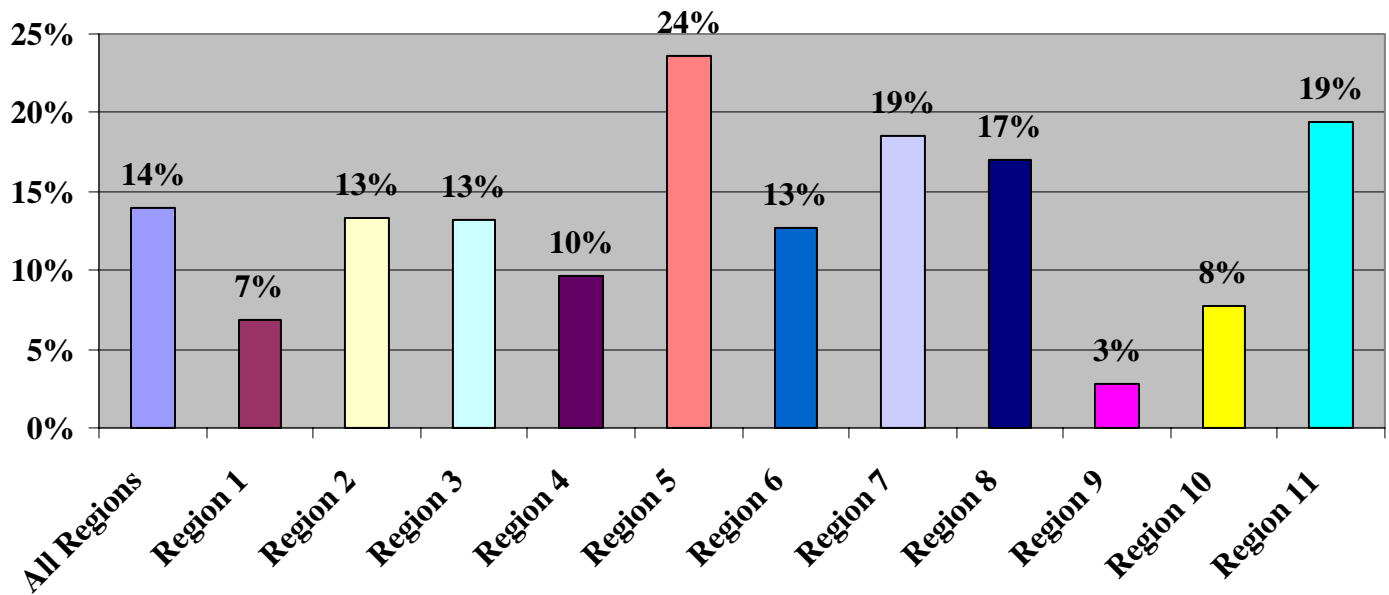
**Question 13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been ? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



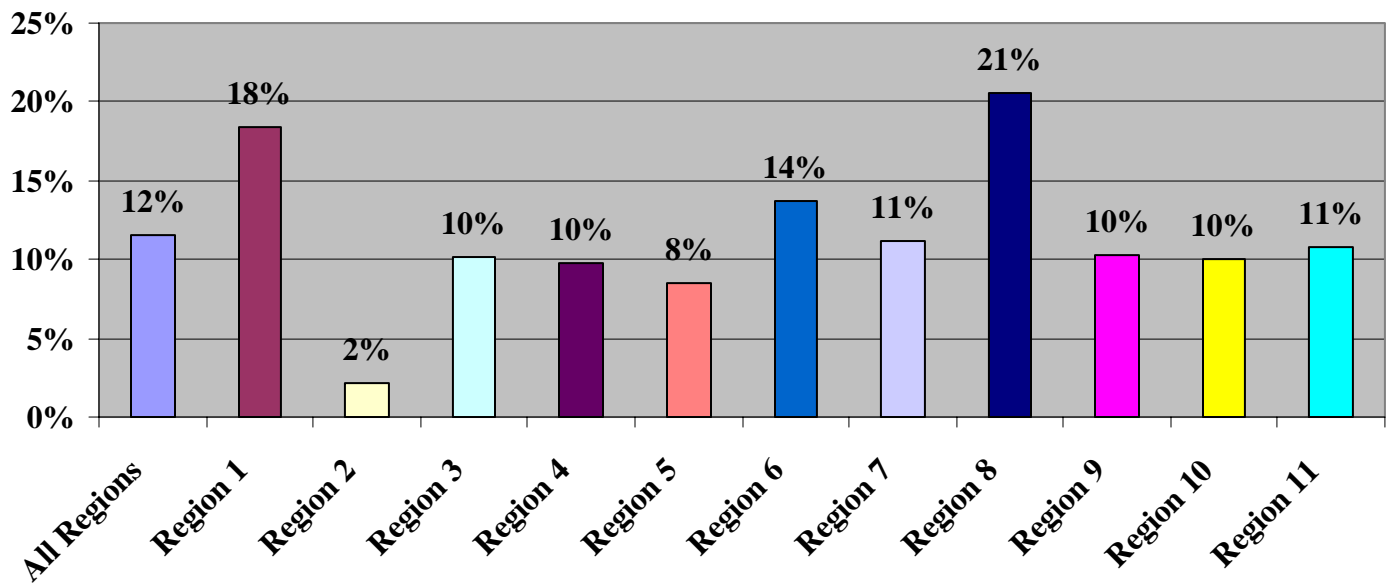
**Question 15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director) ? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



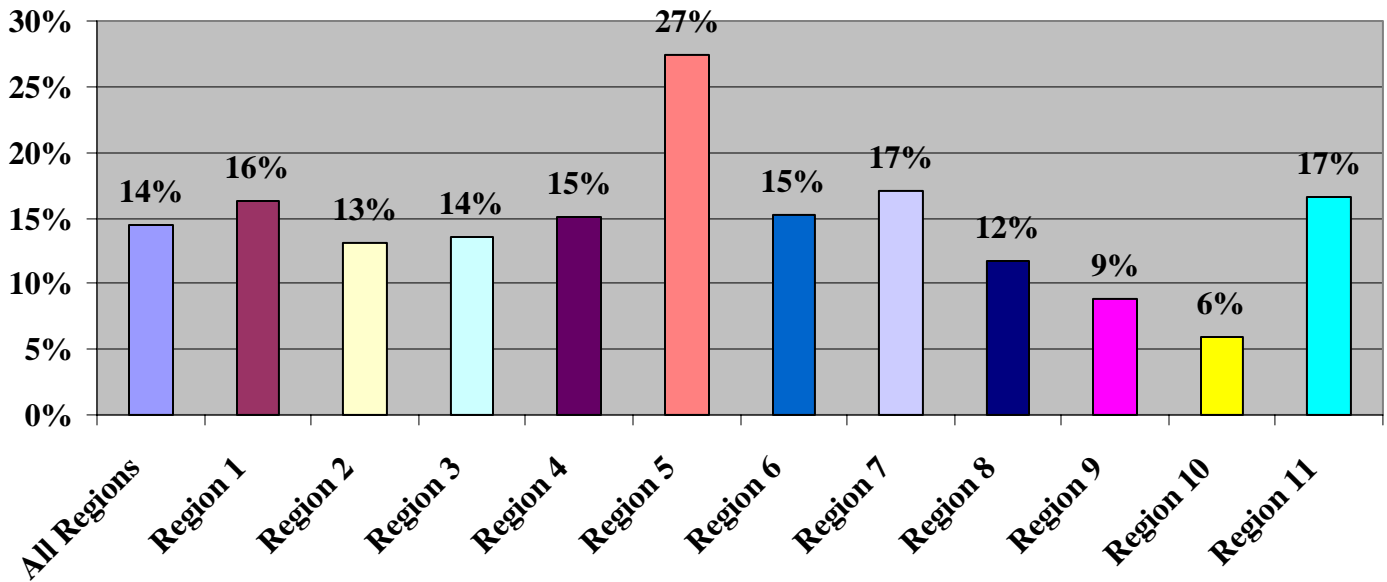
**Question 15(a). If no, should this have occurred ? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



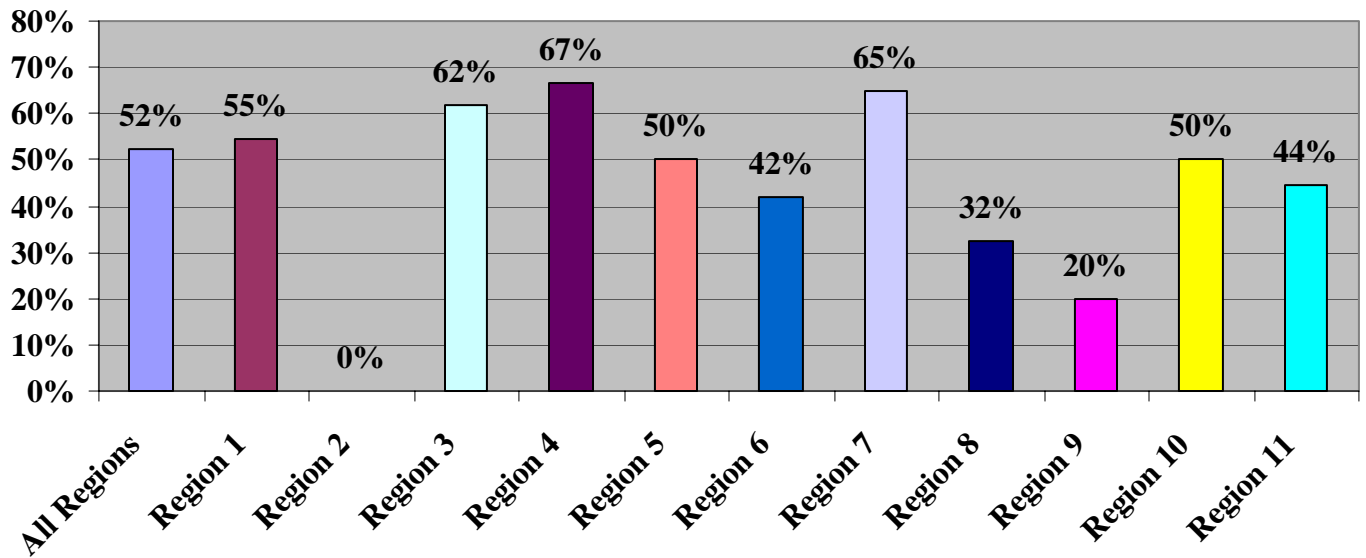
**Question 17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS) ? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



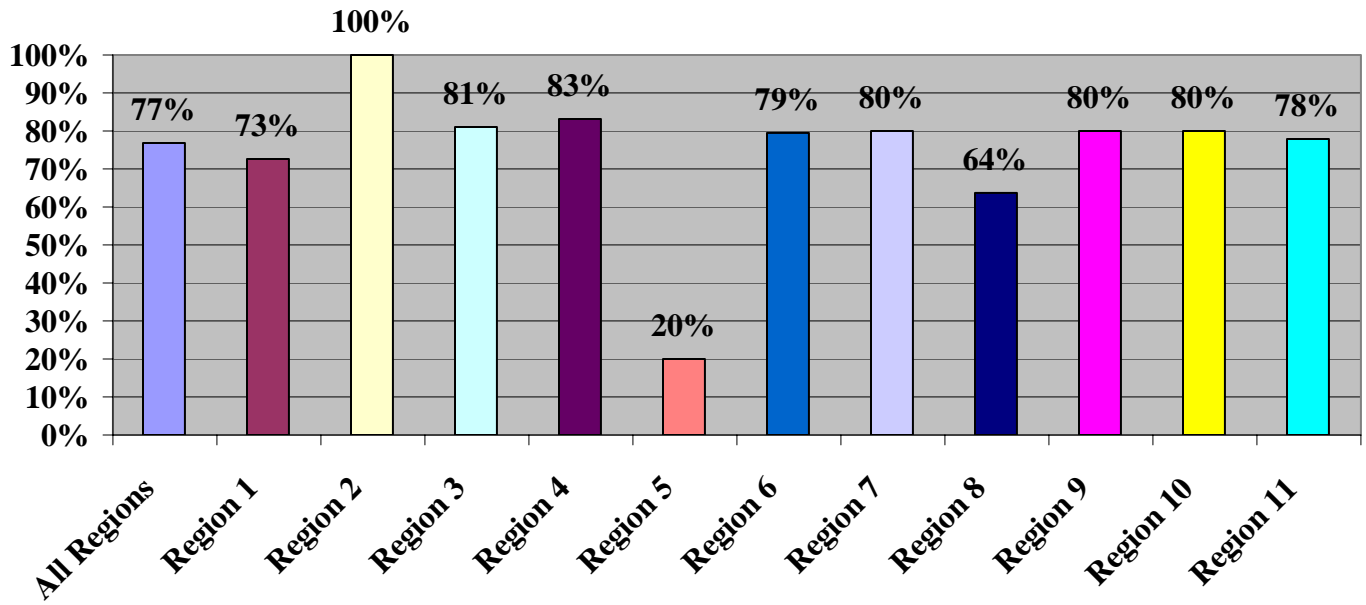
**Question 18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



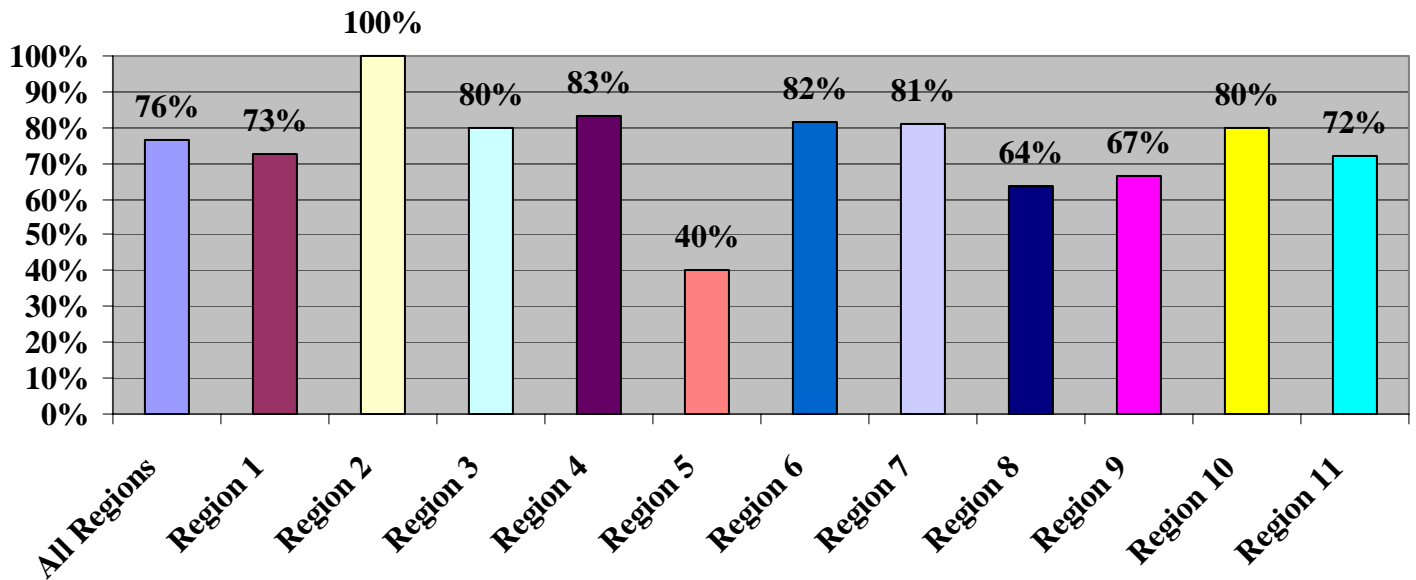
**Question 19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



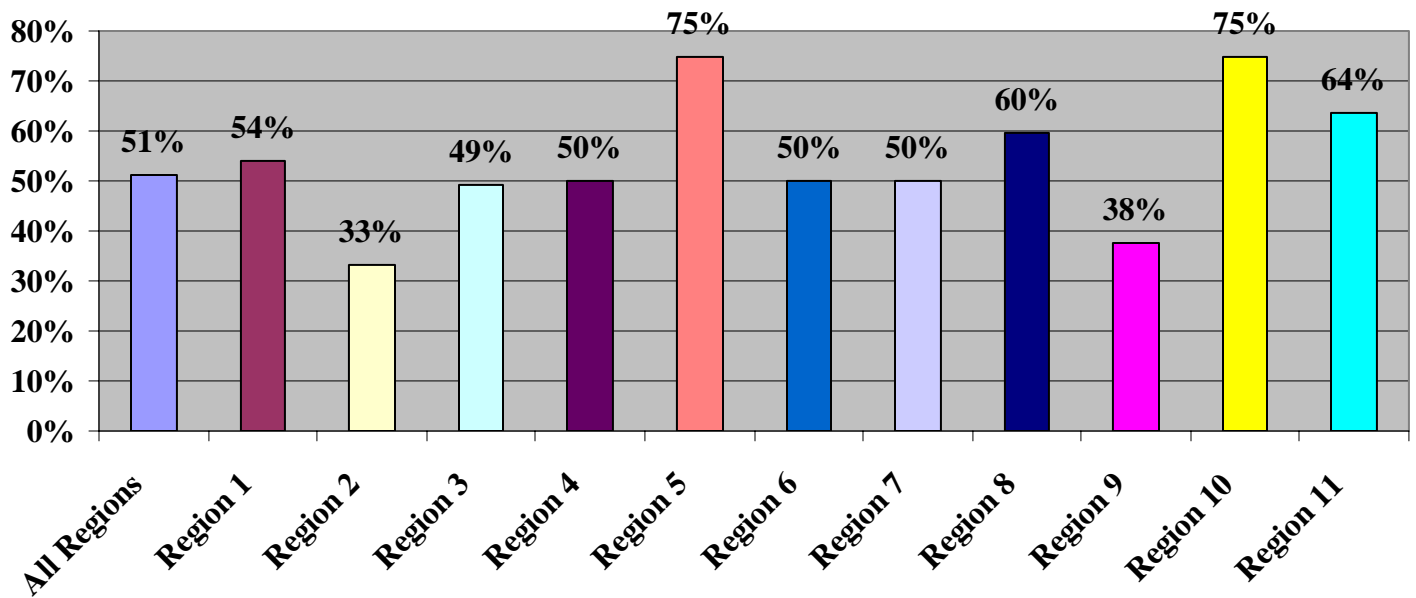
**Question 20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation ? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



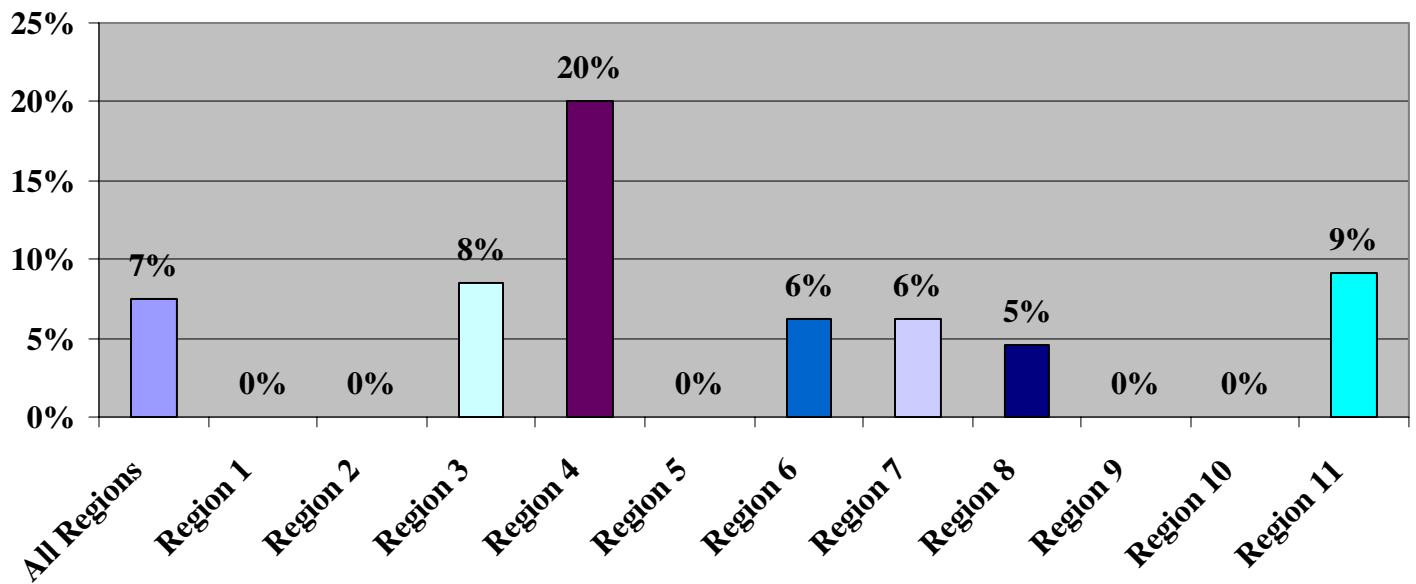
**Question 22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation ? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



**Question 25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?  
("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**

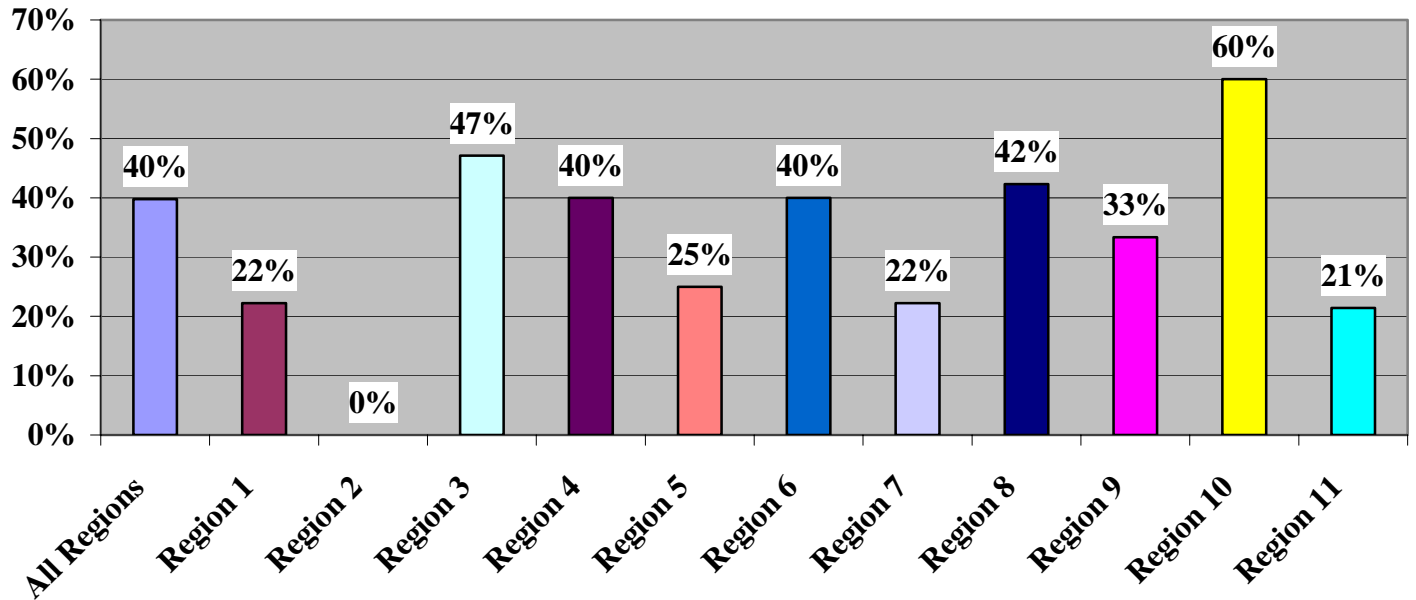


**Question 26. Were other services needed but not available? ("Yes Responses"  
Percentages displayed.)**

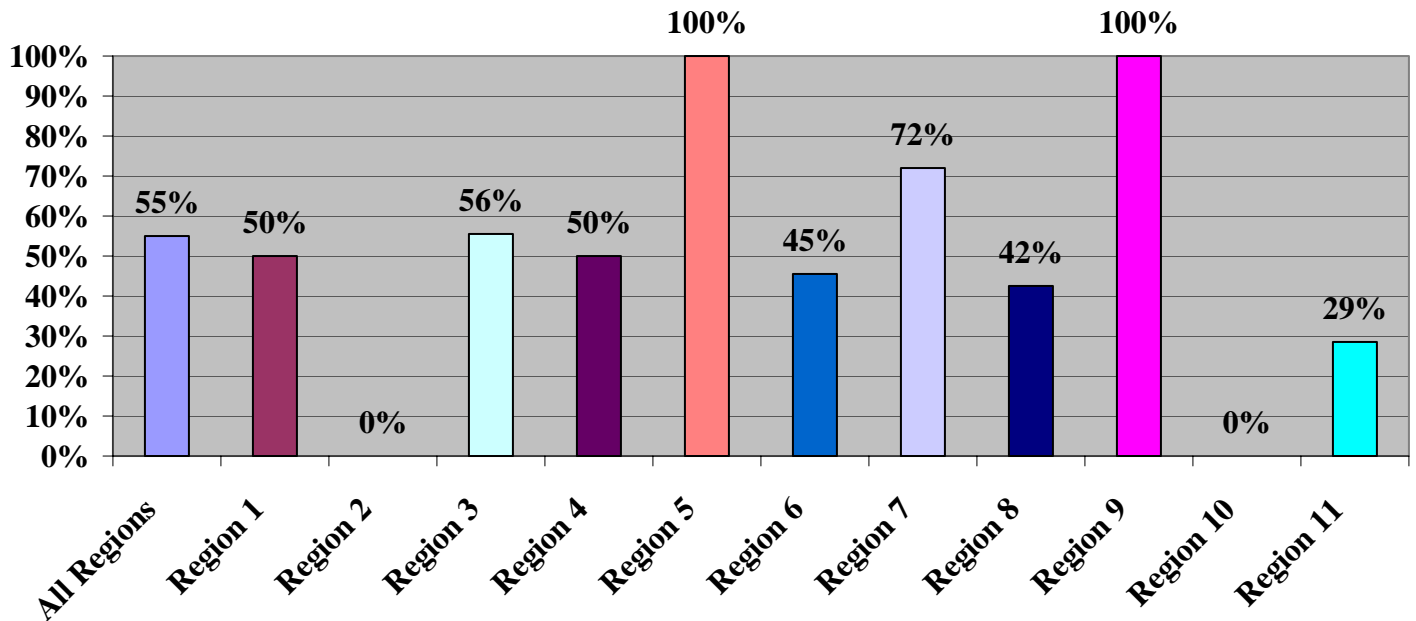




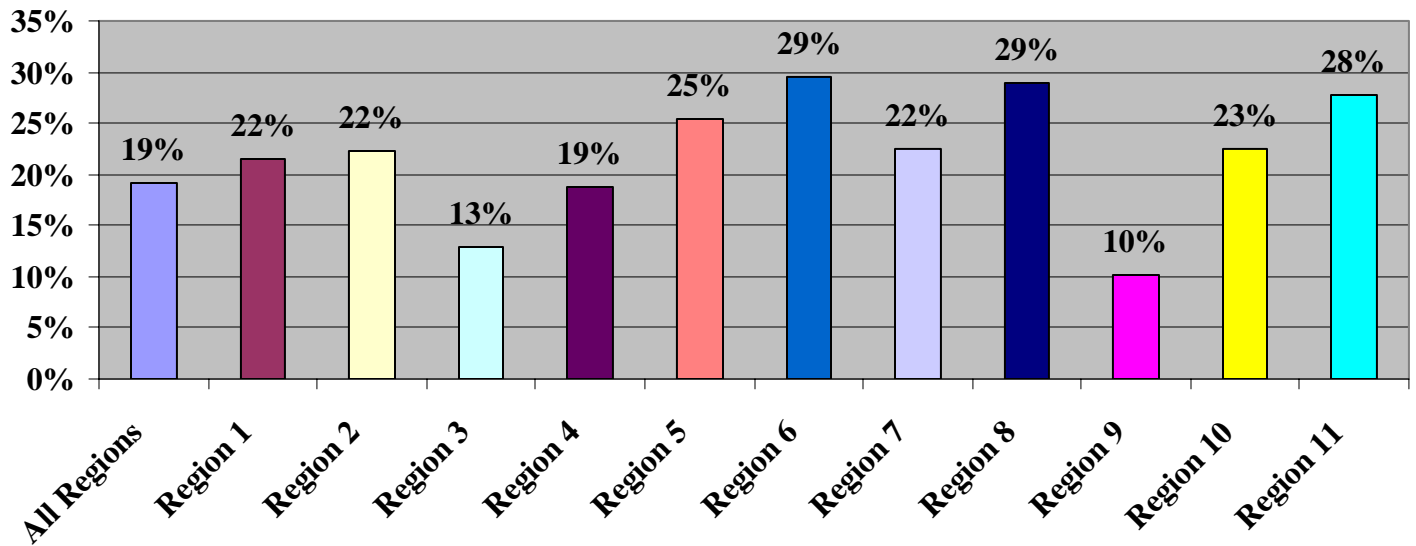
**Question 27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with CPS policy? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



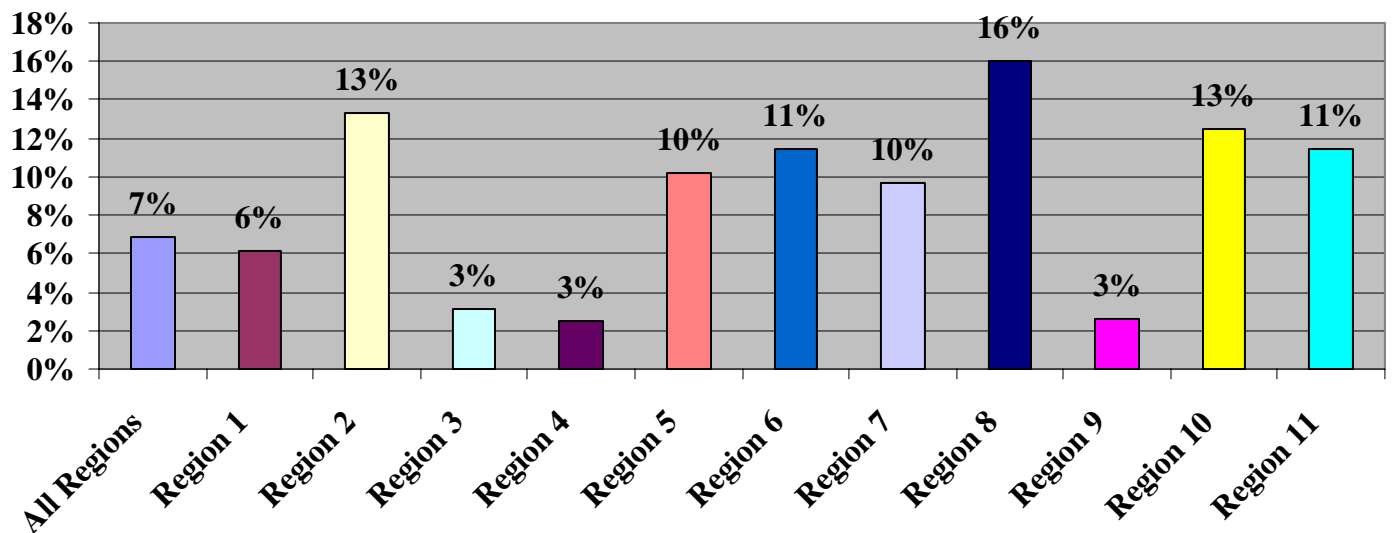
**Question 28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



**Question 29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was the child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



**Question 30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation? ("Yes Responses" Percentages displayed.)**



# Community Questionnaires

Stakeholders were interviewed at random from outside agencies that interact with CPS utilizing a Community Questionnaire. Following are the statewide results of the Community Questionnaires. The results are divided into the following areas.

Statewide results

Regional Comparison of Regional Questionnaire Responses  
 Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS  
 Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:  
 Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS

The detailed results for each region are contained in Appendix A.

## Statewide Results

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was **6.93**. A summary of the statewide results of respondents' answers to questions is indicated in the table below.

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential? Note: This question was not used in region 3.	30	46%	35	54%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (800 number)	114	84%	22	16%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	125	92%	11	8%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	120	88%	16	12%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	13	9%	125	91%

## Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:

**Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS that were consistent across the state are reflected below:**

- Rigid administrative policies and excessively defensive and secretive management.
- Foster families have too many children to adequately address all the needs of the children.
- CPS policy guidelines for removal are too stringent, making it too difficult to remove at risk children.
- A special hotline number is needed for doctors to report child abuse.
- Sometimes CPS tries to put sexually abused children back in the family with the abuser.
- There is no consistency in what CPS wants. Sometimes they want to prosecute persons unjustifiably and sometimes they don't want to prosecute persons where prosecution is warranted.
- CPS often takes several days to get back to a caller. Calls should be returned within a day.

- Higher levels of CPS management are more open to the CASA role, while local supervisors are more territorial, and tend to discount the role of CASA.
- There is a problem with the quality of psychiatric/psychological care for the children. Huge numbers of children are on psychotropic medications.
- CPS employees often are placed in dangerous situations.
- Home studies take too long. Movement from foster home to the homes of relatives should be done quickly.
- CPS attorneys are not very aggressive. They are inexperienced and poorly motivated.
- Caseworker's assessments to remove children from the home are overridden by some judges.
- There should be respite pay for foster care parents.
- Some program directors that retire and return to CPS appear to be apathetic and set the tone for new caseworkers.
- In cases involving medical facilities, caseworker staff question the facility's reason for the patient's discharge and feel that it is a financial reason and not a medical reason.
- There is a tendency for caseworker staff to not monitor adoption and independent living cases when the final order has been initiated, but not finalized.
- Foster care parents are not provided with sufficient background for the children.
- Caseworkers conducting investigations need training on law enforcement perspective and procedures relating to criminal investigations.
- Attorneys working with CPS cases cite difficulty in getting copies of records and sometimes receive incomplete records, which is not known until a court hearing.
- There is a breakdown in communication between legal and placement caseworkers.
- Due to budget shortfall, another home caseworker was assigned that is now housed at a greater distance. This causes a strain on the relationship with the home caseworker.
- Slow response time between initial call to 1-800 number and then having to contact a local CPS office. Staff is not familiar with law enforcement terminology and tends to generalize the information as opposed to the detailed information provided and needed.
- "800 number" for state reporting system, person calling in the complaint is speaking with someone who will not address the issue. By the time the caseworker receives the information; the complaint issue has changed.
- Problem with management caseload size and caseworker contact with children.
- Work environment is not positive, low moral.
- Inexperienced caseworkers are a result of high staff turnover, which leads to uncertainty in how to handle cases in court and in general.
- Caseworkers lack an understanding of the importance of the investigation.
- Difficulty in contacting caseworkers about cases.
- Poor compensation (salary) of CPS employees.
- Texas is 48<sup>th</sup> in the United States in agency funding.
- Time limit imposed on caseworkers to close cases.
- Caseworkers' personality and philosophy are a problem.
- Caseworkers have provided incorrect information to children.
- Overall backlog of services for families and children.
- Inadequate response time on medical needs of children.
- CPS is not responsive to the needs of older children. Relatively more responsive to the needs of younger children.
- Time/Implementation of monitoring of contractual mandates for placement (i.e. therapy).
- Placement of a child in a different region. In a few cases, CPS workers were neglectful and angry towards clients.

- Lack of therapists and drivers.
- Foster parents possess too many rights.
- CPS doesn't adhere to the Child Welfare League of America's standards.
- Upper management's lack of understanding of the local situations.
- Inadequate number of middle management employees.
- Duplicating services that can be provided by the private sector.
- CPS does not welcome input or suggestions from other parties (contractors) involved with the cases. As a result, the quality of investigations are affected in a negative way.
- Inadequate travel budget for workers for investigative work
- Sometimes caseworkers do not move rapidly for adoption if a child is in a safe foster home because of the high workload.
- DFPS Internet web page for adoption is not updated; children will be placed, but are still shown on the system.

## **Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Having a dual goal of protecting children and reuniting families are often at odds with each other.
- Lack of resources, which includes employees.
- Highest Caseload in the country.
- Caseworkers who do not understand the difference between a CPS action and a Felony prosecution.
- Problem staff are moved to other areas instead of the problem being addressed.
- Lack of Foster parents.
- Lack of specialized care.
- Lack of community involvement (not enough volunteers with state or local agencies).
- In the past, CPS management did not share information relating to cases to the other parties involved with the cases.
- Agency philosophy does not delegate authority and responsibility to local CPS.
- CPS management is not setting the proper tone and providing the correct leadership.
- Inadequate counseling for misbehaving parents.
- It is difficult to get older children adopted.
- Sometimes privacy considerations prevent caseworkers from knowing all of the facts.
- Teachers often feel that referring students to CPS is unproductive.
- Parents with mental limitations do not receive the appropriate services because the caseworkers do not find remedial services to meet their mental capacity needs or language skills.
- Children are placed out of the area; children need to be placed close to the other siblings and their families.
- In some instances transportation aides are not getting reimbursed for travel.
- CPS is not able to protect the children from abuse/neglect because of decisions made by judges, such as sending children to grandparents or relatives who barely pass the social study.
- Having a dual goal of protecting children and reuniting families are often at odds with each other.

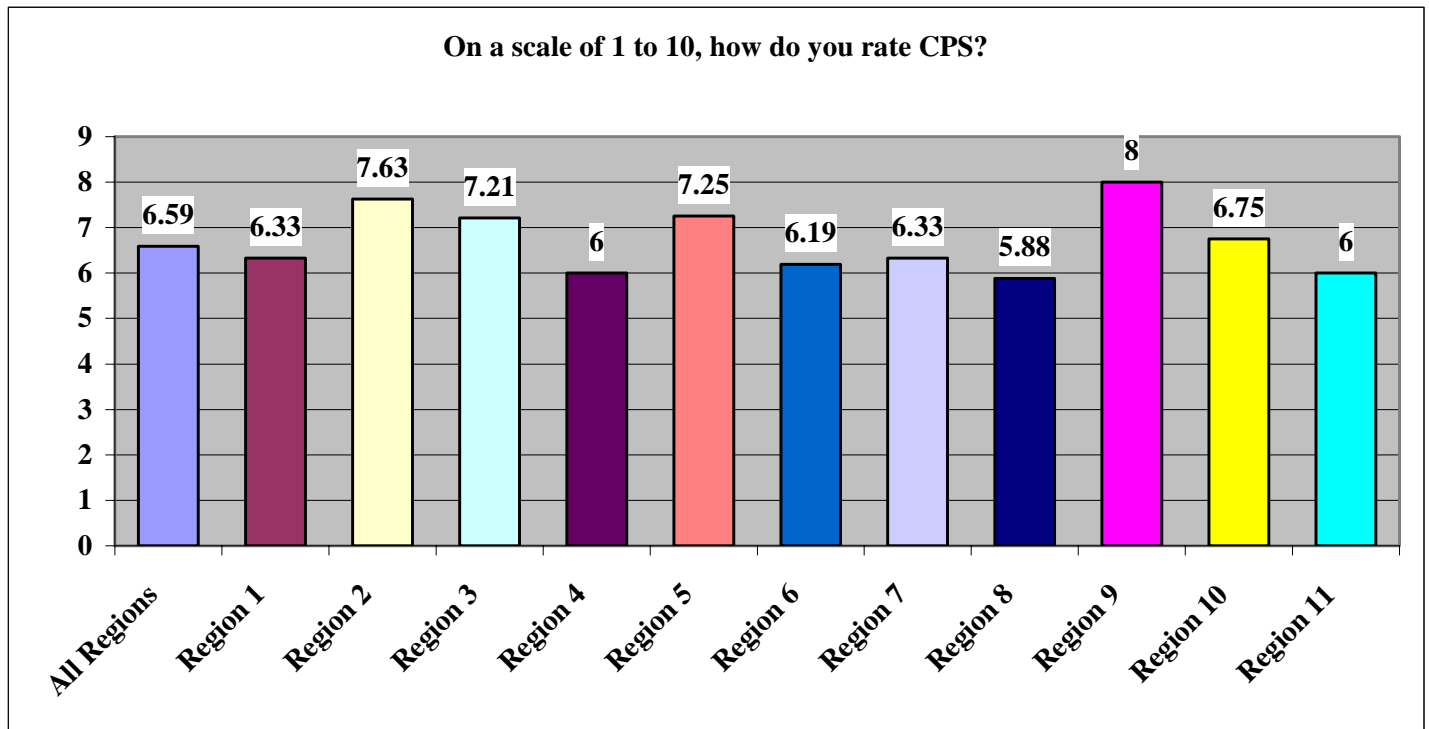
## **Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Introduce monetary incentives to attract and retain good employees.
- Increase the number of caseworkers to decrease the number of cases/children per caseworker.

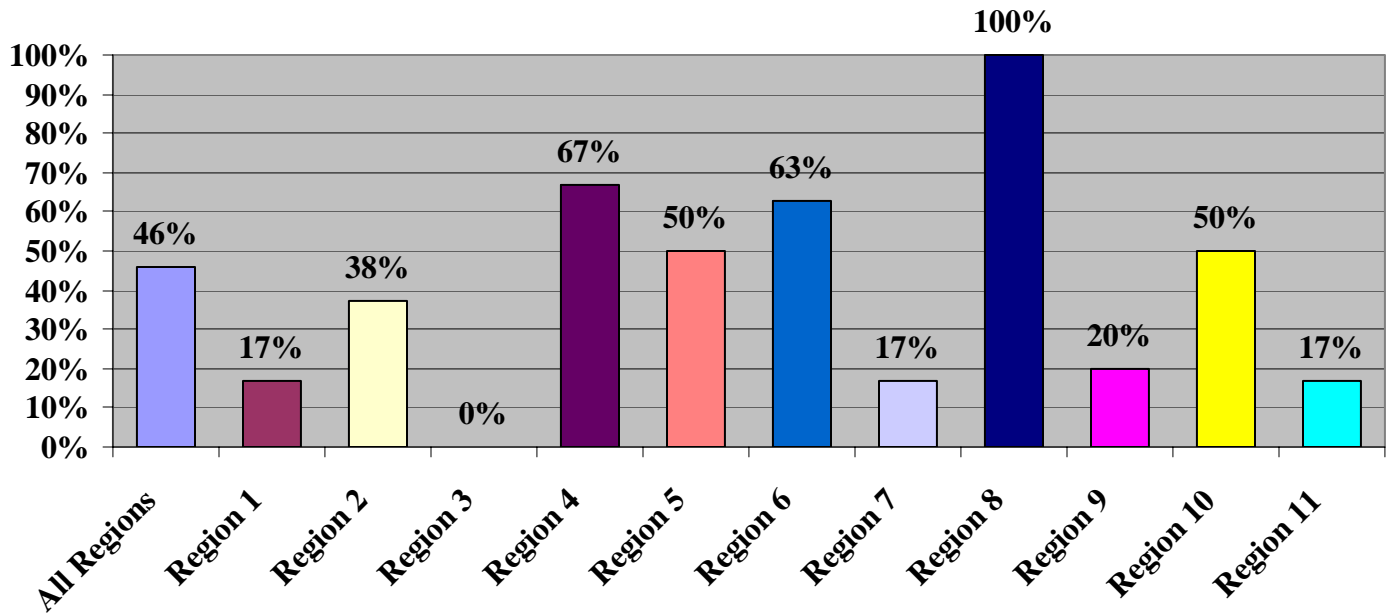
- Allow more flexibility in closing a case. Closing a case in 30 days is not always in the child's best interest.
- Reduce the number of reassignments of caseworkers. Keep caseworkers in areas long enough to get the needed skills and experience.
- Increase the length of training and introduce a multi-disciplinary approach for the training of caseworkers.
- Provide law enforcement training from a certified local police officer.
- Do not prejudge a case until all the facts have been received.
- Decentralization of management, allowing district directors to foster business relationships (control and decision making in terms of daily administration).
- Introduce accountability and provide directions for CPS programs.
- Hire a regional director in El Paso. Currently the regional director is located in Midland.
- Provide support for foster care families.
- Increase services for older children.
- Increase (contract) the number of foster homes.
- Carefully evaluate the need to reunite children with their families. Due to agency philosophy, CPS is too eager to put the children back with their families.
- Provide additional funding for the home study program of the children.
- Re-evaluate the licensing standard and the level of care for children.
- Provide adequate counseling for misbehaving parents.
- Increase the travel budget for investigative work.
- Improve the method of statewide reporting.
- Establish effective communication and good working relationship with the agencies that are taking care of the children (law enforcement, judiciary and CPS).
- Look to the private sector for providing services required by law (i.e. licensing, investigation and monitoring).
- Do not have to privatize to be efficient.
- CPS workers are too quick to accept the explanation of the parents. They should investigate more, talk to more neighbors.
- Speed up the child removal process. Kids are kept in turmoil too long under present process.
- Parents of the child should not be allowed an additional six months to "clean up their act." A year is sufficient time for the original parents to become responsible.
- Would like to see a system in which the local police dispatchers have a list of the local CPS person on call to contact. Contacting the local person without having to go through the Austin hotline would speed up response time.
- Would like to change some of the regulations to reflect that a failure to teach your children personal hygiene is child neglect, as tooth decay, for example, can affect not only a child's immediate health, but can cause lifetime problems.
- Better funding would alleviate most of the problems.
- The need is to fix the systemic problem and not respond to tragic death incidents with a rash of new paperwork or the creation of new jobs.
- Supervisors need to be directly involved with new caseworkers since the caseworker training does not prepare them for real life situations. Caseworkers are basically thrown into ongoing investigations.
- Direct access to CPS' database by attorneys assigned CPS cases, i.e. read and print only. This would reduce caseworkers from having to make copies of case records and would also reduce caseworkers administrative activities.
- Training in the legal processes and legal responsibilities.
- Greater emphasis on preparing older children for independent living.

- In the foster care program, reduce the mandatory training, such as behavior training and HIV. It appears to be more of an administrative requirement to be met. (One interviewee is an instructor of CPR, but still was required to take annual CPR training.)
- Better accommodations, some staff offices and rooms are cramped.
- Home caseworkers in the foster program should be required to receive the same training required of the foster parents.
- Change in policy regarding CPS' goal to reunite the children with a family member.
- More awareness by the caseworkers and judges when assigning visitations, other children not involved with the visitations will need to accompany the foster parents.

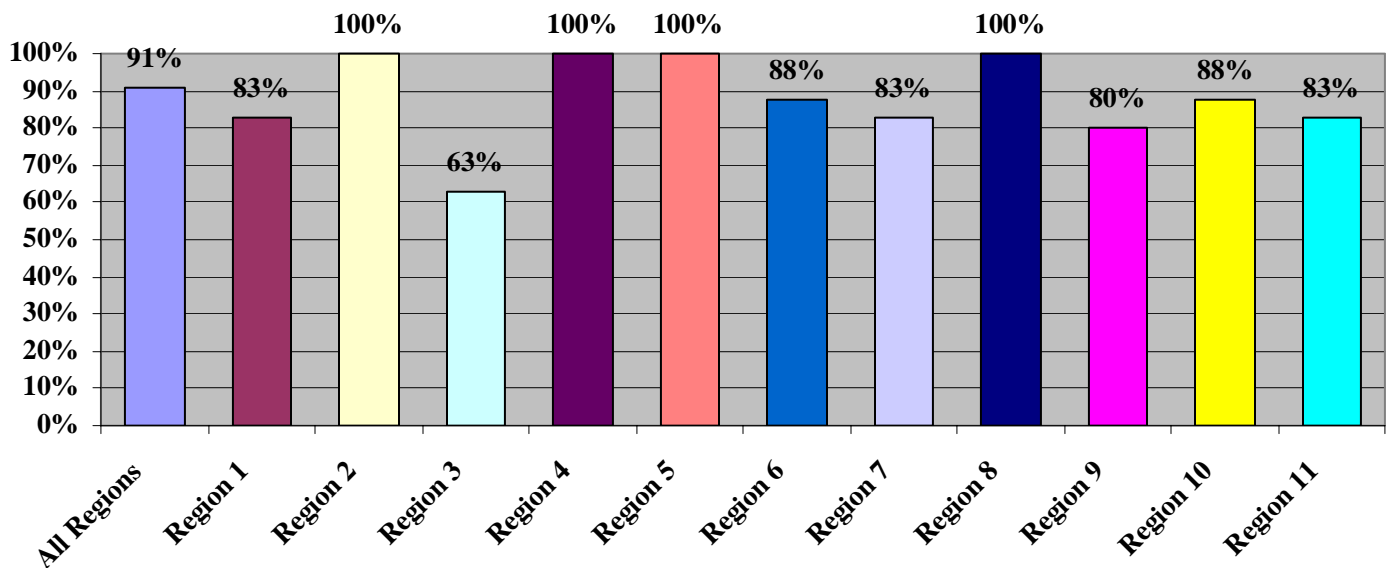
## **Regional Comparison of Community Questionnaires**



**Q1. Does your organization wish to remain confidential? ("Yes percentages" displayed.)**

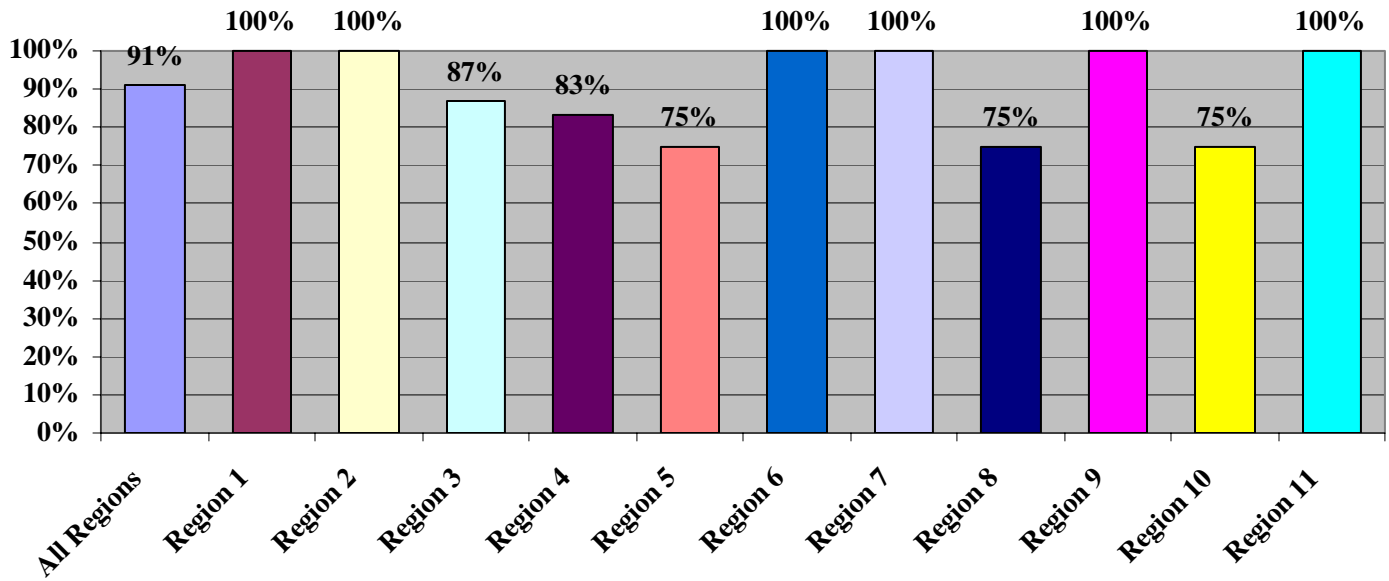


**Q2. Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (1-800 number) ("Yes percentages" displayed.)**

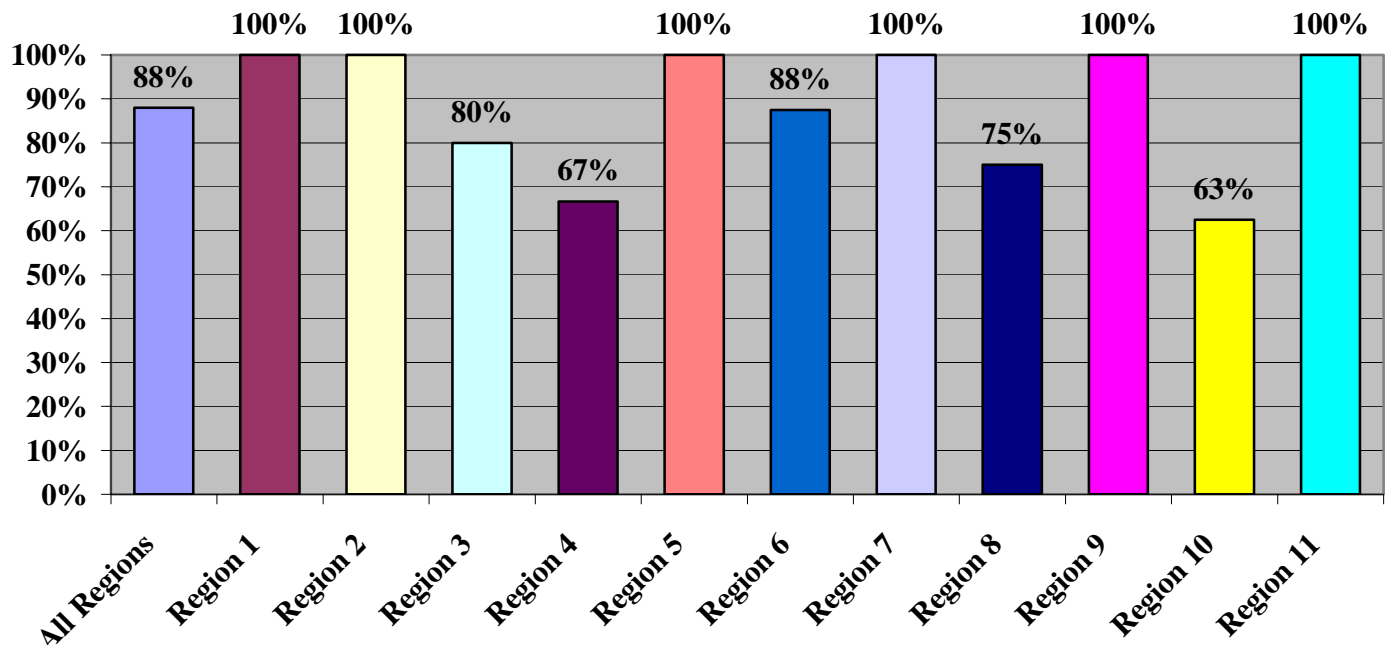




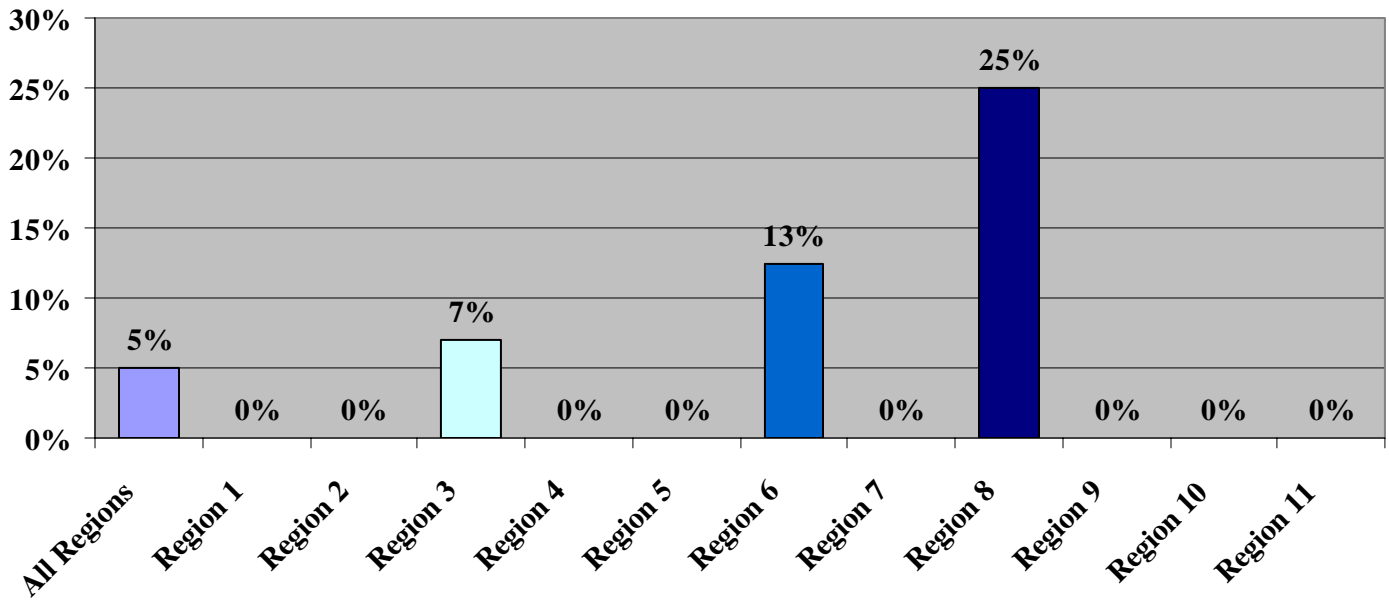
**Q3. Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance? ("Yes percentages" displayed.)**



**Q4. Is CPS responsive to your needs? ("Yes percentages" displayed.)**



**Q5. Have you or your organization ever been threatened with any type of retaliation if you complain about CPS? ("Yes percentages" displayed.)**



# Employee Interviews

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)-Child Protective Services (CPS) has eleven (11) regional offices located throughout the State, with staff located in each region.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) interviewed a total of 258 CPS employees statewide. One hundred twenty-eight (128) were conducted in the initial interviews in Region 3 and one hundred thirty were conducted in the remaining regions (1, 2, and 4 through 11). The statewide staff interviews were placed into two separate groups, the investigators and the specialized services. There are several specialized sections contained within CPS regional offices, however we divided the interviews into two specific groups during the interview process: the investigators and FBSS/Sub-care. There were seventy-three (73) investigators interviewed and fifty-seven (57) family-based safety services FBSS/Sub-care (SUB) workers interviewed. Some questions did not pertain to all employees; therefore each question will not have the same number of responses.

*Note: The questions were revised after the interviews in region 3 in order to capture additional information. For this reason, Region 3 was not used in the statewide comparison. OIG began its review of CPS in Region 3 (Dallas/Fort Worth and surrounding rural counties), because of the diverse rural and urban population it serves. The employee interviews for region 3 are contained in Exhibit A under the appropriate regional section. The asterisks in the charts depicts that Region 3 information that was not used in the statewide comparison.*

## EMPLOYMENT:

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	12	9%
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	17	13%
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	62	48%
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	19	15%
Employed: 10 + Years	20	15%

Number of first line supervisors since your first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees	Percentages/Supervisors
1	42	32%
2	26	20%
3	26	20%
4	11	9%
5 +	25	19%

## EDUCATION:

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total	%
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	1	1	1%
Master's	9	0	0	0	5	14	11%
Bachelor's	38	16	14	20	27	115	88%

# INTAKE:

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

17	56
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for interviewed investigator caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	3	43%	4	57%
Region 2	0	0	5	100%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
Region 5	1	17%	5	83%
Region 6	0	0	9	100%
Region 7	5	50%	5	50%
Region 8	2	25%	6	75%
Region 9	2	40%	3	60%
Region 10	2	33%	4	67%
Region 11	1	11%	8	89%
Statewide	17	23%	56	77%

1A. What information is typically missing:

- Addresses are incorrect or not included in the report.
- Telephone numbers are incorrect or not included in the report.
- Information pertaining to the school the child attends is not included.
- Directions to the home are incorrect or not included, especially in rural areas.
- Names of children and other family members are being omitted.
- The reports do not accurately reflect the information provided by the reporter.
- The classification of Priority 1 and Priority 2 complaints are often incorrect.
- The case is often routed to the incorrect town or region, delaying the time it is received in the correct office.
- Statewide intake personnel do not obtain sufficient information to determine that a complaint is not a CPS issue, resulting in wasted time for the caseworker.
- Many times, the narratives are so unclear that caseworkers cannot determine what violation has been reported.
- Statewide intake personnel do not conduct a thorough research for prior CPS history.

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

66	7
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for interviewed investigator caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	100%	0	0

Region 2	5	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	8	100%	0	0
Region 5	6	100%	0	0
Region 6	8	89%	1	11%
Region 7	7	70%	3	30%
Region 8	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Region 9	4	80%	1	20%
Region 10	5	83%	1	17%
Region 11	9	100%	0	0
Statewide	66	90%	7	10%

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

- Forty-eight employees said time is wasted trying to locate the child and family, requiring additional work for the caseworker. Incorrect information causes delay in locating a child immediately, which leaves the child at risk.
- Ten employees said, frequently, workers must re-interview the reporter of the complaint in order to determine the accuracy of the report before they can proceed with their investigation. If the information captured by SWI (State Wide Intake) personnel is reported incorrectly, the case may be prioritized incorrectly. New investigators may be misled in their investigations because they do not have the experience to detect missing or incorrect information in the initial complaint.
- Five employees said, sometimes, there is a delay in receiving the initial report because intake routes the complaint to the incorrect town or region, which leaves less time for caseworkers to make contact within the required time frame.
- One employee said, sometimes, the narrative is unclear in describing what violation has been committed.
- Two employees said, if the information captured in the initial report is incorrect, the family might be very upset and uncooperative, placing the caseworker at risk

## **CASE LOAD:**

It is important to note that “caseloads” within CPS will vary significantly depending on the caseworker’s area of responsibility. For example, investigative caseworkers are typically assigned a higher volume of “new cases” each month than Family-Based (FBSS) or Substitute Care (SUB) caseworkers. This is due in part because the volume of new investigations received each month is much higher than new cases that progress to FBSS or SUB stages each month. In addition, agency involvement during an investigation is typically 30-90 days, whereas involvement in a Family-Based (FBSS) or Substitute Care (SUB) case may last as long as six months, or longer. For these reasons, employee responses to questions regarding “caseload” and “average caseload” will vary significantly depending on the caseworker’s area of responsibility.

1-4. Below are responses for interviewed FBSS/Sub-care employees on caseloads:

CPS Region	How many cases are assigned to you each week?	What would be a reasonable amount per week?	What is your average caseload per month?	What would be a reasonable amount per month?
Region 1- Lubbock	1	1	26	24
Region 2-Abilene	3	2	23	11
Region 3-Arlington *	*	*	*	*

Region 4-Tyler	2	1	32	9
Region 5-Beaumont	3	1	18	9
Region 6-Houston	1	1	16	25
Region 7-Austin	1	1	20	14
Region 8-San Antonio	2	2	26	15
Region 9-Midland	2	2	3	14
Region 10-El Paso	1	2	6	8
Region 11-Edinburg	1	1	16	15

1-4 Below are responses for interviewed investigator caseworkers on caseloads:

CPS Region	How many cases are assigned to you each week?	What would be a reasonable amount per week?	What is your average caseload per month?	What would be a reasonable amount per month?
Region 1- Lubbock	5	4	38	16
Region 2-Abilene	6	3	25	15
Region 3-Arlington *	*	*	*	*
Region 4-Tyler	6	3	36	16
Region 5-Beaumont	5	3	44	20
Region 6-Houston	6	5	35	17
Region 7-Austin	7	4	53	18
Region 8-San Antonio	6	5	45	19
Region 9-Midland	6	4	35	17
Region 10-El Paso	5	3	31	17
Region 11-Edinburg	7	3	50	15

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

- One hundred and seven employees said a caseworker attempts to get caught up on cases before taking vacation and, then, their cases sit idle, although other caseworkers handle any emergency issues. Employees said additional cases are assigned to many caseworkers while they are on vacation.
- Eight employees said the cases are reassigned to another caseworker.
- Thirteen employees said their cases sit idle and their supervisors call them if any emergency arises.
- Two employees said they are required to be current on all cases before taking a vacation. As a result of this policy, some caseworkers have been unable to take a vacation for two years or more.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

38	35
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for interviewed investigator caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	5	71%	2	29%
Region 2	1	20%	4	80%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	5	62.5%	3	37.5%

Region 5	4	67%	2	33%
Region 6	7	78%	2	22%
Region 7	3	43%	4	57%
Region 8	4	36%	7	64%
Region 9	4	80%	1	20%
Region 10	2	33%	4	67%
Region 11	3	33%	6	67%
Statewide	35	48%	38	52%

6A. If no, why?

- Twenty-Five employees said the volume of cases and lack of information obtained by intake causes delays in locating the family. In addition, if the family is not home, additional trips are necessary before the caseworker is able to make contact.
- One employee said, if law enforcement is conducting a criminal investigation, they might request the caseworker to delay their contact with the perpetrator.
- Eight employees said, sometimes, case assignments are delayed, providing less time for the caseworker to make contact within the required time frame. They said the delay might originate with the supervisor, the secretary or the router.
- One employee said additional time might be required to investigate a case involving severe abuse.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

52	21
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for interviewed investigator caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	5	71%	2	29%
Region 2	4	80%	1	20%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	4	50%	4	50%
Region 5	4	67%	2	33%
Region 6	5	56%	4	44%
Region 7	8	80%	2	20%
Region 8	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Region 9	3	60%	2	40%
Region 10	5	83%	1	17%
Region 11	9	100%	0	0
Statewide	52	71%	21	29%

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

- Twenty-nine employees said they have experienced regular delays in receiving cases, making it difficult or impossible to meet the face-to-face priority time frame requirements. They said this could, sometimes, be a result of intake routing cases to the incorrect town or region.
- Twenty employees said the delays could, at times, be an oversight because supervisors, secretaries and routers also have a heavy workload.

- One employee said time spent investigating a complaint that is found not to be a CPS issue, might cause caseworkers to miss deadlines on other assigned cases.
- One employee said school personnel are failing to report abuse in a timely manner.
- One employee said, sometimes, law enforcement is slow to contact CPS when they receive complaints from the public.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

21	109
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	2	17%	10	83%
Region 2	2	29%	5	71%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	2	18%	9	82%
Region 5	1	11%	8	89%
Region 6	3	12.5%	21	87.5%
Region 7	3	16%	16	84%
Region 8	4	29%	10	71%
Region 9	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
Region 10	2	20%	8	80%
Region 11	1	6%	15	94%
Statewide	21	16%	109	84%

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

116	14
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for investigator caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	10	83%	2	17%
Region 2	7	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	10	91%	1	9%
Region 5	9	100%	0	0
Region 6	23	96%	1	4%
Region 7	16	84%	3	16%
Region 8	11	79%	3	21%
Region 9	6	75%	2	25%
Region 10	9	90%	1	10%
Region 11	15	94%	1	6%
Statewide	116	89%	14	11%



- 9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?
- Ninety-seven employees said CPS receives federal funding for all cases closed within the sixty-day time frame, which leads them to believe it to be a numbers game and all about the money. The employees believe the agency is more interested in time goals than the safety of the children.
  - Six employees said the emphasis to close cases within a specific time frame is to protect the children, removing them quickly from dangerous situations. Seven employees believe the emphasis is a management tool to prevent workers from falling behind in their casework.
  - Two employees said they believe the emphasis for closing cases within a specific time frame is dictated by state statutes.
  - Four employees said they did not know the reason for the emphasis on closing cases within a specific time frame.

## **WORK PROCESS:**

Investigator caseworkers agreed that they prioritize cases and work several cases in the same general area. On those cases, criminal history information must be obtained and employees will usually conduct a face-to-face interview with children at their school or take children to the CPS office and conduct interviews. Family and collaterals need to be interviewed. Sometimes it takes a couple of hours or more to drive to some of the locations. The employees said it is difficult to be able to document all cases because there are so many cases. Some FBSS workers explained that it is necessary to multi-task constantly, because there are so many cases. FBSS must check on the welfare of the children and there is a lot of paperwork involved on long-term cases. FBSS has to work with parents in an attempt to keep parents happy regarding the where their children are located. Sometimes parents want children moved to a different foster care location that would be more convenient for the parents. FBSS workers said if a child is removed from a home, as an FBSS worker, it is rewarding to follow the child all the way through the adoption phase if the case goes that far. Some FBSS workers said after being assigned a family, the worker has five days to meet face to face with the family. Next, the worker has one month to develop a plan for services. The worker monitors the family for approximately six months, with home visits to assure the family is following the plan. The amount of time a case is kept open depends on how well parents are doing; sometimes services are extended, if the case warrants. The worker staffs the case with a supervisor, program director and risk director and makes a recommendation to close the case, continue with contract services, to place child with the family or to remove the child. Intensive Family Unification Workers (CVS) agreed that after being assigned a case, it is staffed with a supervisor, a CVS worker and a supervisor. The worker assesses the family and makes a decision on whether the family will benefit from the intensive work; ultimately, family makes the decision whether to work together. Worker staffs with the same group again. The family works with the worker on their plan of services; the worker provides all counseling, parenting, etc. except independent therapy and drug therapy, relapse prevention. The worker's goal is to work with families 4-6 weeks before the children are returned to the home and to close within four months. The worker staffs with supervisor and Risk Director before closing the case. Intensive Family Unification Workers (CVS) agreed that after being assigned a case, it is necessary to review the intake report and investigation report; then enter information from the case and staff with investigators and supervisors. The worker meets face to face at least once a month with the child, also monitors visitation. The worker meets face to face once a month with the family. The worker staffs with supervisor before closing case. Some program director said he/she deals with complaints against CPS workers from clients and the public in general. A lot of time is spent meeting with service providers and fielding concerns regarding the lack of follow-up contacts by caseworkers. A lot of time is spent with human resources issues, hiring, etc. and lots of meetings regarding permanency planning for children.

# INVESTIGATIONS:

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

69	4
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for interviewed investigator caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	100%	0	0
Region 2	5	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Region 5	6	100%	0	0
Region 6	9	100%	0	0
Region 7	7	70%	3	30%
Region 8	8	100%	0	0
Region 9	5	100%	0	0
Region 10	6	100%	0	0
Region 11	9	100%	0	0
Statewide	69	95%	4	5%

1A. If so, when?

- Twenty-seven employees said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on Priority 1 cases involving sexual and physical abuse.
- Twenty-four employees said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on sexual assault allegations, serious physical abuse or child death and/or when a caseworker’s safety is in jeopardy.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist with physical abuse and sexual abuse cases or if you have reason to believe violent circumstances exist.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist with physical abuse and sexual abuse cases or if a sexual offender is in the home.
- Four employees said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on any severe physical abuse or sexual abuse allegation, any allegation of abuse involving a child under the age of five, or if there is a possible criminal case.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on any serious injury, sexual assault, abandonment or endangerment to a child.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on any Priority 2 cases where bruising is visible.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on any case where there is concern for a child, if the perpetrator is dangerous or if the child is injured.
- Two employees said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist CPS on every case.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on imminent danger situations.
- Two employees said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist when dealing with violent parents, parents with a history of violence and/or when drugs are involved.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on joint investigations with law enforcement.

- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist if allegations include family violence, if the complaint is after dark and there is a risk of danger or if the call is on a weekend and safety is an issue.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on all sexual abuse cases.
- One employee said they are required to contact law enforcement to assist on all physical abuse cases.

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

59	14
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for interviewed investigator caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	100%	0	0
Region 2	5	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Region 5	6	100%	0	0
Region 6	9	100%	0	0
Region 7	7	70%	3	30%
Region 8	8	100%	0	0
Region 9	5	100%	0	0
Region 10	6	100%	0	0
Region 11	9	100%	0	0
Statewide	69	95%	4	5%

2A. If so, when?

- Thirty employees said law enforcement is required to assist on all Priority 1 cases involving sexual and physical abuse.
- Seventeen employees said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual abuse and serious physical abuse cases.
- Five employees said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual assaults, serious physical abuse or child deaths and when the caseworker’s safety is in jeopardy.
- Two employees said law enforcement is required to assist on Priority 1 cases or on joint investigations.
- One employee said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual assaults, when there is suspected illegal activities and child death cases.
- Two employees said law enforcement is required to assist when there are injuries to a child.
- One employee said law enforcement is required to assist when the worker feels threatened or is in danger.
- One employee said he/she was aware that law enforcement is required to assist CPS, but did not know when.

3. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with the community?

YES NO

94	36
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	11	92%	1	8%
Region 2	6	86%	1	14%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	10	91%	1	9%
Region 5	8	89%	1	11%
Region 6	17	71%	7	29%
Region 7	15	79%	4	21%
Region 8	7	50%	7	50%
Region 9	4	50%	4	50%
Region 10	7	70%	3	30%
Region 11	9	56%	7	44%
Statewide	94	72%	36	28%

3A. Explain:

- Nineteen employees said adverse media attention has diminished caseworkers’ credibility in the community. Employees believe CPS has, directly or indirectly, affected everyone in their community, at one time or another, and they believe many people think the only goal of CPS is to remove children from their homes.
- Four employees said many school personnel have a negative perception of CPS, stemming simply from the nature of their work. They said some schools have adopted a policy requiring teachers to obtain permission from their principal before contacting CPS.
- One employee said some people in the community believe CPS caseworkers have a quota of children they must remove within specific time frames.
- Eight employees said the public needs a better understanding of the goals of CPS. Employees said families have a negative perception of CPS and view them as intrusive. They said communicating with the professionals in the community is sometimes difficult and school officials require a personal visit by the caseworker before releasing information.
- One employee said building good working relationships with people in the community takes time, which is made more difficult with the constant turnover of caseworkers.
- One employee said he/she does not know the reason for the unfavorable relationship CPS has with the community.
- One employee said the people in their community are in denial that there is a need for CPS.
- One employee said the people in their community find CPS intrusive and, if a call must be made to CPS, they would prefer to call the local office, instead of statewide intake.

4. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

95	35
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	11	92%	1	8%
Region 2	5	71%	2	29%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	7	64%	4	36%
Region 5	7	78%	2	22%

Region 6	15	62.5%	9	37.5%
Region 7	14	74%	5	26%
Region 8	8	57%	6	43%
Region 9	8	100%	0	0
Region 10	8	80%	2	20%
Region 11	12	75%	4	25%
Statewide	95	73%	35	27%

4A. If not, why?

- Six employees said it appears that law enforcement does not understand their role in working with CPS and could benefit from additional training on CPS related issues. Employees said, due to the high turnover rate of CPS workers, relations with law enforcement are strained because workers are not around long enough to build a good working relationship.
- Twenty-one employees said law enforcement does not support CPS. They said, many times, officers tell caseworkers they are too busy to provide assistance but they might respond after CPS makes an assessment of the situation at the home. Employees said some law enforcement agencies will not provide criminal histories, which caseworkers need when working priority cases.
- Four employees said some law enforcement agencies are more cooperative than others, varying from each county, and their level of cooperation is greatly influenced by the prosecutors in each county.
- Two employees said they believe more communication is needed with the law enforcement agencies, but, they added, they understand that law enforcement is just as busy as CPS and they do not have the manpower to respond every time a caseworker calls for assistance.
- One employee said he/she has never seen law enforcement personnel involved in any CPS cases.
- One employee said, in some areas, there are problems when law enforcement personnel are not available to videotape a child's interview.

5. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

96	34
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	11	92%	1	8%
Region 2	4	57%	3	43%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	8	73%	3	27%
Region 5	7	78%	2	22%
Region 6	13	54%	11	46%
Region 7	16	84%	3	16%
Region 8	12	86%	2	14%
Region 9	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Region 10	8	80%	2	20%
Region 11	10	62.5%	6	37.5%
Statewide	96	74%	34	26%

5A. If not, why?

- Three employees said the level of cooperation varies between counties but it is evident that some attorneys do not like to prosecute sexual abuse or physical abuse cases.

- One employee said some judges are obvious in their partiality to particular attorneys and, if the parents hire one of those attorneys, the judge will rule in favor of the parents, regardless of recommendations made by CPS.
- Five employees said some prosecutors will provide only the minimal amount of effort on cases and do not appear to have a clear understanding of the issues caseworkers are dealing with which, at times, creates an adversarial working relationship.
- Six employees said a particular judge in their area directs rude remarks to CPS caseworkers in the courtroom and shows a general lack of respect towards them. Employees said the judge also allows the defense attorneys to verbally abuse the caseworkers in the courtroom.
- Six employees said some judges are inconsistent with their decisions. They said, in one county, there is a cluster court system comprised of visiting judges who are also very inconsistent with their decisions.
- Six employees said judges do not understand that CPS workers' caseloads prevent them from, sometimes, being prepared to answer all their questions. Employees also said some of the newer judges are ineffective because they are unfamiliar with CPS cases.
- Two employees said judges are unclear in what they want from CPS caseworkers and do not seem to understand the need for cooperation.
- One employee said, sometimes, the courts do not enforce the orders they issued that instruct parents to attend counseling and complete services.
- Two employees said some judges become irritated with CPS because they think the caseworkers do not dress appropriately for court.
- One employee said a judge in their area does not agree with the laws, as they relate to placement of children in foster care.
- One employee said some judges are so focused on reunification they ignore the facts of the case.

## **TRAINING BARRIERS**

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

58	72
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Below are percentages for "Yes" and "No" responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	58%	5	42%
Region 2	0	0	7	100%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	6	55%	5	45%
Region 5	4	44%	5	56%
Region 6	10	42%	14	58%
Region 7	9	47%	10	53%
Region 8	6	43%	8	57%
Region 9	4	50%	4	50%
Region 10	7	70%	3	30%
Region 11	5	31%	11	69%
Statewide	58	45%	72	55%

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

27	103
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	2	17%	10	83%
Region 2	0	0	7	100%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	1	9%	10	91%
Region 5	2	22%	7	78%
Region 6	5	21%	19	79%
Region 7	6	32%	13	68%
Region 8	2	14%	12	86%
Region 9	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
Region 10	2	20%	8	80%
Region 11	4	25%	12	75%
Statewide	27	21%	103	79%

2A. If no, why?

- Sixty-two employees said they believe it is impossible to totally prepare anyone for this type of work, but on-the-job training with experienced workers would greatly help.
- Seven employees said the information provided in the academy does not relate well to the actual issues caseworkers face in the field.
- One employee said he/she was led to believe they would be working normal business hours and spending more time with their families.
- Seven employees said too much information is provided with a short time period in which to absorb it and little training is offered in the actual application of the information.
- Nine employees said the majority of the academy focuses on investigations and does not adequately prepare workers for FBSS/Sub-care work.
- One employee said the academy is a waste of time and resources and does not prepare caseworkers for work in outlying counties.
- Five employees said the academy should include more application of all the information received in theories and legal issues.
- Two employees said the academy adequately prepared workers, only if, their supervisors have time to teach the new workers how to apply what they learned in the academy.
- Two employees said they received no training in how to deal with the stress and emotional aspect of the job.
- Two employees said additional training is needed relating to the long-term effects of children in the system.
- Two employees said information provided in the academy was repetitive of what they received in their social sciences class in college.
- Two employees said the academy did not provide adequate training in how to conduct an investigation.
- One employee said the academy needs updating to include training in identifying drug paraphernalia.

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

48	82
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	58%	5	42%
Region 2	3	43%	4	57%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	4	36%	7	64%
Region 5	3	33%	6	67%
Region 6	11	46%	13	54%
Region 7	6	32%	13	68%
Region 8	2	14%	12	86%
Region 9	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Region 10	1	10%	9	90%
Region 11	6	37.5%	10	62.5%
Statewide	48	37%	82	63%

3A. If no, why?

- Thirty-nine employees said the academy covered legal and protocol issues in one day, which barely touched the surface and did not include actual application training with experienced workers.
- Six employees said the training was not applicable to the actual issues caseworkers face in the field.
- Twelve employees said the training on these issues was inadequate and the employees suggested CPS attorneys teach workers what to expect in actual courtroom proceedings, etc.
- Thirteen employees said the training did not make sense until caseworkers were faced with the issues in the field.
- Two employees suggested caseworkers be walked through each legal process, such as, removing a child, before going to the field.
- Nine employees said the academy provided no training for the legal proceedings conducted by FBSS/Sub-care workers.
- One employee said the trainer at the academy gave the impression that the supervisor would be handling the legal work, which is not the case.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

91	39
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	8	67%	4	33%
Region 2	3	43%	4	57%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	10	91%	1	9%
Region 5	5	56%	4	44%
Region 6	19	79%	5	21%
Region 7	16	84%	3	16%
Region 8	10	71%	4	29%



Region 9	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Region 10	3	30%	7	70%
Region 11	12	75%	4	25%
Statewide	91	70%	39	30%

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for C.P.S. Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

94	36
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	8	67%	4	33%
Region 2	3	43%	4	57%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	10	91%	1	9%
Region 5	7	78%	2	22%
Region 6	17	71%	7	29%
Region 7	17	89%	2	11%
Region 8	13	93%	1	7%
Region 9	4	50%	4	50%
Region 10	2	20%	8	80%
Region 11	13	81%	3	19%
Statewide	94	72%	36	28%

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

99	31
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	58%	5	42%
Region 2	7	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	8	73%	3	27%
Region 5	7	78%	2	22%
Region 6	16	67%	8	33%
Region 7	12	63%	7	37%
Region 8	13	93%	1	7%
Region 9	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Region 10	7	70%	3	30%
Region 11	15	94%	1	6%
Statewide	99	76%	31	24%

6A. If so, what training?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

37	93
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	4	33%	8	67%
Region 2	0	0	7	100%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	3	27%	8	73%
Region 5	2	22%	7	78%
Region 6	10	42%	14	58%
Region 7	12	63%	7	37%
Region 8	3	21%	11	79%
Region 9	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
Region 10	0	0	10	100%
Region 11	2	12.5%	14	87.5%
Statewide	37	28%	93	72%

7A. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

111	19
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	10	83%	2	17%
Region 2	7	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	10	91%	1	9%
Region 5	8	89%	1	11%
Region 6	20	83%	4	17%
Region 7	17	89%	2	11%
Region 8	13	93%	1	7%
Region 9	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Region 10	9	90%	1	10%
Region 11	12	75%	4	25%
Statewide	111	85%	19	15%

8A. If so, what are they?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

9. Are C.P.S. policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

84	46
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	5	42%	7	58%
Region 2	3	43%	4	57%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	5	45%	6	55%
Region 5	9	100%	0	0
Region 6	16	67%	8	33%
Region 7	14	74%	5	26%
Region 8	9	64%	5	36%
Region 9	4	50%	4	50%
Region 10	8	80%	2	20%
Region 11	11	69%	5	31%
Statewide	84	65%	46	35%

9A. If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

79	51
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	58%	5	42%
Region 2	1	14%	6	86%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	5	45%	6	55%
Region 5	7	78%	2	22%
Region 6	18	75%	6	25%
Region 7	11	58%	8	42%
Region 8	10	71%	4	29%
Region 9	4	50%	4	50%
Region 10	7	70%	3	30%
Region 11	9	56%	7	44%
Statewide	79	61%	51	39%

10A. If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

## **SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES NO

56	1
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Investigators were not asked these questions:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for FBSS/Sub-care Caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	5	100%	0	0
Region 2	2	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	3	100%	0	0
Region 5	3	100%	0	0
Region 6	15	100%	0	0
Region 7	8	89%	1	11%
Region 8	6	100%	0	0
Region 9	3	100%	0	0
Region 10	4	100%	0	0
Region 11	7	100%	0	0
Statewide	56	98%	1	2%

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES NO

26	31
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Investigators were not asked these questions:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for FBSS/Sub-care Caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	1	20%	4	80%
Region 2	1	50%	1	50%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	1	33%	2	67%
Region 5	1	33%	2	67%
Region 6	8	53%	7	47%
Region 7	2	22%	7	78%
Region 8	4	67%	2	33%
Region 9	1	33%	2	67%
Region 10	3	75%	1	25%
Region 11	4	57%	3	43%
Statewide	26	46%	31	54%

2A. If so, what?

- Three employees said the time frame has a positive effect because it is a tool used to measure the success families are having with the services that have been provided and it is a guideline to assist workers in determining if, and when, further action needs to be taken with the family.
- Three employees said the time frame is necessary to encourage families to stay focused on their program and the time frame allows workers sufficient time to observe the family and determine whether the parents are committed to reuniting the family by staying off drugs and alcohol and maintaining employment.
- Two employees said the time frame has a positive effect by providing the children an opportunity to achieve permanency within a reasonable period of time.
- Three employees said the time frame is not sufficient because services are limited and families are put on waiting list, which slows the progress of the case.
- Two employees said the time frame is not a sufficient amount of time to fix a dysfunctional family's lifetime of problems, especially, if they are uncooperative because they are in denial of the fact that they need help.
- Two employees said the time frame is not sufficient if a family member needs serious therapy or has a mental illness.
- Three employees said the time frame is not sufficient for cases involving drug or alcohol abuse and rushing treatment only results in a high incidence of relapse.
- Two employees said there are too many cases to complete within twelve months because it takes a caseworker several months to get all services scheduled, which does not give the family the full 18-month time frame to work the services.
- One employee said the time frame is not sufficient because housing assistance has a two-year waiting list, which prevents CPS from reuniting a family who cannot get a home within that 18-month time frame.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES NO

38	19
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Investigators were not asked these questions:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for FBSS/Sub-care Caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	5	100%	0	0
Region 2	1	50%	1	50%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	3	100%	0	0
Region 5	2	67%	1	33%
Region 6	8	53%	7	47%
Region 7	7	78%	2	22%
Region 8	5	83%	1	17%
Region 9	2	67%	1	33%
Region 10	2	50%	2	50%
Region 11	3	43%	4	57%
Statewide	38	67%	19	33%

3A. Explain:

- Twenty-one employees said the time frame is reasonable because it provides the children an opportunity to achieve permanency within a reasonable period of time.
- Nine employees said the time frame is reasonable because it establishes a guideline for parents to follow to achieve success with their service plans.
- Eight employees said it is a reasonable amount of time to allow caseworkers to make a determination of reunification of the family or termination of their parental rights.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

16	41
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Investigators were not asked these questions:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for FBSS/Sub-care Caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	3	60%	2	40%
Region 2	0	0	2	100%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	1	33%	2	67%
Region 5	1	33%	2	67%
Region 6	6	40%	9	60%
Region 7	1	11%	8	89%
Region 8	0	0	6	100%
Region 9	1	33%	2	67%
Region 10	0	0	4	100%
Region 11	3	43%	4	57%
Statewide	16	28%	41	72%

4A. Explain:

- Thirteen workers said CPS is unable to provide adequate services because there is a lack of resources, such as, parenting classes, counseling and mental health providers and there are waiting lists for the resources that are available.
- Twelve workers said CPS is unable to provide adequate services because there is a lack of funding to pay for services and inadequate funding also diminishes the quality of the contracted services CPS is able to provide the families.
- Six employees said CPS is unable to provide adequate services in rural areas because of the limited services available in those areas and the lack of transport aides to assist the families in attending classes.
- One employee said CPS would be better equipped to provide services if there were administrative technicians to assist caseworkers in scheduling appointments and visits for clients.
- One employee said they would be able to provide better services for their clients if there were daycare facilities available that were equipped to handle special needs children.
- One employee said the agency is too understaffed to provide adequate services to clients because so much emphasis is placed on repetitive paperwork and does not allow enough time with the families.
- One employee said CPS is unable to provide adequate services because many FBSS/Sub-care workers do not have the proper training for the job.

- One employee said he/she believes service providers are falsely billing and overcharging for services, which is a disservice to the clients and reduces the limited funds CPS has available to pay legitimate providers.
- One employee said CPS would be able to adequately provide services if they were fully staffed.
- Two employees said CPS is unable to provide adequate services because there is a lack of bilingual services in the community and a lack of bilingual CPS employees.
- One employee said CPS is unable to provide adequate services to many families who have deep-rooted issues and need more than the quick fix that CPS can offer with their limited involvement.
- One employee said CPS is unable to provide adequate services because many of the classes are not provided on days and times that enable people to attend without missing work, which places an additional burden to families with very limited funds.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

9	48
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Investigators were not asked these questions:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for FBSS/Sub-care Caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	2	40%	3	60%
Region 2	0	0	2	100%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	0	0	3	100%
Region 5	0	0	3	100%
Region 6	3	20%	12	80%
Region 7	2	22%	7	78%
Region 8	0	0	6	100%
Region 9	0	0	3	100%
Region 10	0	0	4	100%
Region 11	2	29%	5	71%
Statewide	9	16%	48	84%

5A. Explain:

- Six workers said there is a lack of funding to pay for quality providers, which diminishes the service CPS is able to provide for the families.
- One employee said it is difficult and time consuming for workers to find all the services and resources available in the community.
- Three employees said there is a need for bilingual service providers who speak Spanish and Vietnamese and are culturally aware of their needs.
- One employee said there is a need for better quality counseling for children who are victims of sexual abuse.
- Four employees said there is a lack of foster homes and shelters for children, which results in children being placed 200-300 miles from their area.
- One employee said there is a lack of protective child-care available to CPS.
- Three employees said there is a lack of parenting and counseling classes for the families.
- One employee said there is a lack of providers for anger management classes.

- Two employees said there is a lack of mental health providers and medication, which many of their clients need.
- One employee said there is a lack of legal assistance for grandparents filing for custody.
- Eight employees said there is a lack of drug assessment and treatment facilities and in-patient rehabilitation facilities, which over fifty percent of their clients need.
- One employee said drug screening and treatment is difficult to access from rural areas because many families have a transportation problem.
- Two employees said there is a lack of housing for families.
- Five employees said there is a lack of transportation for the families to attend the classes.
- Two employees said there are very few service providers in rural areas and they do not exist, at all, in very poor communities.
- Five employees said there is a lack of service providers in all areas and there are long waiting lists for services that are available, which prevents progress with their cases.
- One employee said that few therapists accept Medicaid clients.
- One employee said there is a need for effective counseling for youth perpetrators.

## **MANAGEMENT**

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

103	27
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	58%	5	42%
Region 2	6	86%	1	14%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	10	91%	1	9%
Region 5	9	100%	0	0
Region 6	19	79%	5	21%
Region 7	16	84%	3	16%
Region 8	12	86%	2	14%
Region 9	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Region 10	5	50%	5	50%
Region 11	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
Statewide	103	79%	27	21%

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

- Ten employees said they did not remember the date of their last evaluation.
- Four employees had not been employed with the agency for a full year, so their evaluations were not due yet.
- Three employees said their last evaluations were approximately two years ago.
- Three employees said it was the early part of 2003 when they received their last evaluation.
- Two employees said their last evaluations were in July 2003.
- One employee said his/her last evaluation was more than a year ago.
- One employee said his/her last evaluation was approximately 3 or 4 years ago.



- One employee said his/her last evaluation was more than three years ago.
- One employee said his/her last evaluation was approximately 16 months.
- One employee did not believe he/she had ever had an evaluation.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

- Twenty-three employees answered 7
- Eighteen employees answered 6.
- Seventeen employees answered 8.
- Twelve employees answered 6-7.
- Ten employees answered 5-6.
- Seven employees answered 9.
- Seven employees answered 5-7.
- Six employees answered 5-6.
- Six employees answered 6-8.
- Four employees answered 5.
- Three employees answered 10.
- Three employees answered 7-10.
- One employee answered 7-9.
- One employee answered 3.
- One employee answered 4.
- One employee answered 4-6.
- One employee answered 6-9.
- One employee answered 7-8.
- One employee answered 8-9.
- One employee answered 8-10.
- One employee answered 9-15.
- One employee answered 11.
- One employee answered 12.
- One employee answered 13.
- One employee answered 14.
- One employee answered 15.
- Employees interviewed said the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 7 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

124	6
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	10	83%	2	17%
Region 2	7	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	11	100%	0	0
Region 5	8	89%	1	11%
Region 6	24	100%	0	0

Region 7	19	100%	0	0
Region 8	14	100%	0	0
Region 9	8	100%	0	0
Region 10	7	70%	3	30%
Region 11	16	100%	0	0
Statewide	124	95%	6	5%

3A. If so, what are they?

- Forty-five employees said they are able to staff cases with their supervisor, Program Director, and with the Risk Director if necessary. Communication with CPS legal was also mentioned.
- Forty employees said they staff their cases with a supervisor and if necessary, the supervisor will staff with the program director.
- Twenty-two employees said they call their supervisor and if needed, the supervisor will call the program director and if necessary, the program director will call the program administrator.
- Five employees said the supervisor should be called every time a caseworker goes out on a case.
- Four employees said the case should be staffed with the supervisor or program director.
- Two employees said, on priority cases, the caseworker should call the supervisor.
- One employee said, after staffing the case with their supervisor, a judge makes the final decision.
- One employee said that staffing is done with a supervisor, therapist and psychologist.
- One employee said a new pilot medical program is being tested that requires staffing with a supervisors and the program director.
- One employee said a new contact is in effect that goes through law enforcement to work joint investigations.
- One employee said a process is in place, but he/she cannot reach the supervisor, because the supervisor is never available. They said their supervisor discourages employees from making contact outside their peer group.
- One employee said managers are accessible, which is necessary.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

99	31
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	9	75%	3	25%
Region 2	3	43%	4	57%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	7	64%	4	36%
Region 5	7	78%	2	22%
Region 6	22	92%	2	8%
Region 7	18	95%	1	5%
Region 8	10	71%	4	29%
Region 9	6	75%	2	25%
Region 10	7	70%	3	30%
Region 11	10	62.5%	6	37.5%
Statewide	99	76%	31	24%

4A. Explain:

- Nine employees said supervisors are not always accessible.
- Two employees said, due to the volume of cases being handled by caseworkers, supervisors are unable to remember the facts of the case.
- Two employees said, although there is a process in place, supervisors are never available because they keep their doors closed and are believed to be involved with personal telephone calls.
- Two employees said caseworkers are not allowed to contact other supervisors when their supervisors are unavailable, which creates a problem when children are at risk. Employees suggested they, at least, be allowed to contact the district attorney in such cases.
- One employee said there is not a list available showing the next in-line person to call if the supervisor is unavailable.
- One employee said sometimes the supervisor is busy and too much time is wasted waiting for a response.
- One employee said there really is no process in place, only a lot of talk about putting a process in place.
- One employee said supervisors should be able to make decisions in the removal of a child because they know the case better than anyone in their chain of command. The employee said calling additional management people in the middle of the night should not be necessary.
- One employee does not believe the process works because there are so many loopholes in the system that it doesn't matter what is decided.
- One employee said the process does not work because he/she has a new supervisor "in training" who is difficult to reach.
- One employee said when their supervisor is unavailable they are required to staff the case with another supervisor who is unfamiliar with the case, which makes final decision-making more difficult.
- One employee said there is no uniformity among supervisors on removals.
- Two employees said a different system is needed because, due to the voluminous workload, supervisors are not always available.
- One employee said the current system is waste of a lot of time because the worker must first staff the case with the investigative unit and, then, the FBSS unit, who makes the final decision.
- One employee said they believe the rights of children are overlooked due to restrictive laws. The example given was, when a caseworker wants to enter a home to check on the welfare of a child and the parents are uncooperative, the caseworker must, then, obtain a court order to enter the home.
- One employee said caseworkers should be allowed to contact the program director directly when they are waiting in the field for a directive.
- One employee said additional risk directors are needed to assist in making critical decisions.
- One employee believes a supervisor or tenured worker should accompany a new worker to the home of the child to assist in making a decision on a removal.
- One employee said there are too many cases too handle, which also keep the supervisors very busy and difficult to reach.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES	NO
104	26

Below are percentages for "Yes" and "No" responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	7	58%	5	42%
Region 2	5	71%	2	29%

Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	10	91%	1	9%
Region 5	8	89%	1	11%
Region 6	22	92%	2	8%
Region 7	14	74%	5	26%
Region 8	12	86%	2	14%
Region 9	8	100%	0	0
Region 10	5	50%	5	50%
Region 11	13	81%	3	19%
Statewide	104	80%	26	20%

5A. If no, why?

- Five employees said their supervisors are never available.
- Two employees said their supervisors have to work cases too, so they don't have time to assist caseworkers.
- Three employees said their supervisors are incompetent and should not be supervisors.
- One employee said his/her supervisor will never make a decision and there has been a 100% turnover in their unit because of the supervisor's management style.
- One employee said the supervisor does not seem to trust the decisions of workers and requires staffing for all actions, which hinders efficient case management.
- One employee said the supervisor is not receiving support and the supervisor does not give support. It starts at the top.
- One employee said his/her supervisor is constantly conferencing with workers, writing them up and threatening them with their jobs. The employee said the supervisor provides no guidance, is unavailable and consistently shows favoritism.
- One employee said the supervisor's door is always closed or he/she is gone and unable to be contacted.
- One employee described their unit in this way: one worker resigned after being in the hospital from ulcers and vomiting because of nerves, two workers were instructed by their doctors to take time off, but could not because of their workload and other workers in the unit are on anxiety medication. Their supervisor works from 8-5, takes a one-hour lunch and two smoke breaks. If the workers are in a bind, the supervisor does not help out, especially if it cuts into his/her normal schedule. One example given was an incident in which the worker had to travel a long distance from one county to another to take children to court and return them to their home. An emergency arose and, rather than the supervisor offering to assist, the caseworker was required to return to the office from the other county to handle the matter, and arrive home very late at night.
- One employee said it does no good to complain of the workload because there is nothing the supervisor can do.
- One employee said supervisors should be selected by leadership abilities and business sense, instead of the present method of favoritism.
- One employee said there is an emphasis placed on getting old cases current, but no real support or praise for the sheer number of cases employees carry.
- One employee said workers in the unit approached the supervisor with suggestions on how to balance the work responsibilities within the unit but the supervisor was not supportive of the idea. The employee said the supervisor is never open to new ideas and does not provide feedback on issues the caseworkers address.
- One employee said workers are not allowed to disagree with their supervisor without fear of retaliation. The employee said the supervisor cannot be trusted to keep conversations with workers confidential, which creates major problems within the unit.

- One employee said, when available, their supervisor is supportive, but he/she is seldom available. The employee said several of the supervisors are enrolled in graduate school and they both disappear from work for most of the day. The employee also believes management places too much emphasis on closing cases instead of conducting quality investigations.
- One employee said the supervisor is new and unsure of his/her decision-making ability.
- One employee said, as a result of the high turnover rate, many supervisors have been promoted to their positions without adequate experience and preparation.
- One employee said their supervisor does not appear to care about the clients they serve, is unconcerned about what is happening on cases and expects tenured workers to not bother him/her with questions on cases.
- One employee said their supervisor has missed work most of the past four months, which has resulted in cases not being reviewed and closed in a timely manner. The employee said no arrangements have been made for other supervisors to assist with the workload.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

110	20
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	8	67%	4	33%
Region 2	5	%	2	%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	11	100%	0	0
Region 5	7	78%	2	22%
Region 6	21	87.5%	3	12.5%
Region 7	17	89%	2	11%
Region 8	12	86%	2	14%
Region 9	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Region 10	7	70%	3	30%
Region 11	15	94%	1	6%
Statewide	110	85%	20	15%

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

- Thirty-Four employees said their manager meets with them monthly.
- Twenty-two employees said their manager meets with them weekly.
- Twenty employees said their manager meets with them daily.
- Fifteen employees said their manager meets with the employee once a month for conferencing on all cases and anytime on critical issues and immediately on “Priority 1” cases.
- Eleven employees said their manager meets with them as often as needed.
- Six employees said their manager meets with the employee every two months.
- Three employees said it has been a long time and they could not remember when they last met management.
- Two employees said their manager meets with the employee inconsistently.
- Two employees said their manager meets with them every two or three weeks.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee twice a month.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee quarterly.

- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee only on legal staff meetings and removal hearings.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee every other day.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee twice a day.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee every two weeks.
- One employee said he/she does not meet often with management because the worker is a sub-care worker and it is not necessary to meet often.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee two or three times a day.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee three times a week.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee once every two to three months.
- One employee said his/her manager has met with the employee once in the last nine months.
- One employee said his/her supervisor is too busy to schedule regular meetings, so they, at times, staff cases during lunch or other informal times.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee every three months.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker said his/her manager meets with the employee once a month and cases are reviewed every three months.
- One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee only when the caseworkers approach him.

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

- Forty-nine employees said their manager should meet with them as needed.
- Thirty-four employees said their manager should meet with them monthly.
- Twenty-five employees said their manager should meet with them weekly.
- Five employees said their manager should meet with them daily.
- Four employees said their manager should meet with them weekly or as needed.
- Three employees said their manager should meet with them twice a week.
- Two employees said their manager should meet with them three times a week.
- Two employees said their manager should meet with them twice a day.
- One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee once every six weeks.
- One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee on each case.
- One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee once every two to three months.
- One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee every two weeks.
- One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee once or twice a month.
- One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee three to four times a week.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

24	49
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

Below are percentages for Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	1	14%	6	86%
Region 2	3	60%	2	40%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	2	25%	6	75%
Region 5	1	17%	5	83%
Region 6	2	22%	7	78%

Region 7	3	30%	7	70%
Region 8	2	25%	6	75%
Region 9	2	40%	3	60%
Region 10	2	33%	4	67%
Region 11	6	67%	3	33%
Statewide	24	33%	49	67%

9A. If so, when?

- Four employees said policy requires employees to staff cases in person with their supervisor, but were unsure of when policy required the staffing.
- One employee believes the requirement to staff in person is immediately on Priority 1 cases and during the investigation on Priority 2 cases.
- Five employees said staffing in person is required on all removals of a child.
- Two employees said staffing in person is immediately on “Priority 1” cases and monthly on other cases.
- Two employees said staffing in person is required weekly.
- One employee said staffing in person is required on children under the age of three on “Reason to Believe” or if a caseworker cannot make a determination.
- One employee said workers are required to staff, within 24 hours, all high-profile cases involving child deaths and when critical criteria are involved.
- One employee said workers are required to staff, within 24 hours, on all Priority 1 cases and within 30 days on Priority 2 cases.
- One employee said staffing in person is required on high-risk cases and involving children with special needs.
- One employee said, after a caseworker meets face-to-face with the child and returns to the office, they are required to staff the case in person with their supervisor.
- One employee said staffing in person is required at the beginning of the case.
- One employee said staffing in person is required before closing the case.
- One employee said caseworkers are required to staff in person when there are pictures or documents to be reviewed.
- One employee said staffing in person is required in a child’s death case and/or serious injury. The employee said the Program Director or higher management will also be involved with these type of cases. The employee said, on removals, they also staff with the program director and program administrator.
- One employee said he/she believes that staffing in person is a requirement on the fifteenth day, thirtieth day, and when closing the case.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

96	34
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	8	67%	4	33%
Region 2	7	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	7	64%	4	36%
Region 5	7	78%	2	22%

Region 6	15	62.5%	9	37.5%
Region 7	11	58%	8	42%
Region 8	11	79%	3	21%
Region 9	6	75%	2	25%
Region 10	8	80%	2	20%
Region 11	16	100%	0	0
Statewide	96	74%	34	26%

10A. Explain:

- Twenty-Six employees said supervisors are inconsistent in the decisions they make.
- Five employees said some supervisors have a strong opinion about how things should be done and others are simply inconsistent.
- Four employees said some supervisors are incompetent and should not be supervisors.
- Two employees said inconsistent practices are a result of the different individual's interpretation of each case.
- One employee said some supervisors believe bruising on buttocks is abuse and others do not.
- One employee said there is a huge difference between the Program Directors.
- One employee said the inconsistencies might be due to the different expectations of caseworkers.
- One employee said some supervisors surround themselves with workers who only agree with them and, to be treated fairly, other workers must develop a "don't rock the boat" mentality.
- One employee said supervisors have been quick to remove children since the beginning of the OIG investigation.
- One employee said Priority 1 cases are more likely to be "maintained" by a new supervisor, whereas, a tenured supervisor has the experience to review the case and determine when it can be downgraded to a Priority 2.
- One employee said some supervisors seem incapable of handling stress very well, which seems to contribute to their inconsistent practices.
- One employee said some supervisors have a strong opinion about how things should be done, so they enforce their opinions.
- One employee said some supervisors are strict and some are a little more lax with the workers in their unit.
- One employee said there is not an open door policy and supervisors do their own thing.
- One employee said supervisors treat units unfairly. The employee referenced the practice of transferring cases outside of their program, which results in more work for employees in other units.
- One employee said inconsistent practices depend on which supervisors and program directors are feeling the heat because some are very reactive and others are not reactive enough.
- One employee said there is an unbelievable amount of favoritism shown by supervisors in this agency, which is detrimental to the morale of the workers.
- One employee said there is a very noticeable inconsistency in the discipline of workers. They said some workers are not disciplined for the same action that resulted in an employee being fired.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker said his/her cases are different because they are transferred from different investigation units. The decisions of the investigative units supervisors are reflected in how each case is handled, which makes the FBSS workers cases more difficult.
- One employee said they were an investigator, but assigned to an FBSS unit due to the workload. The employee said he/she is required to answer to an investigation supervisor and an FBSS supervisor, which creates constant conflict for the worker.
- One employee said supervisors are very inconsistent in their decisions relating to cases that involve the use of drugs.



- One employee said a more cautious policy has been adopted, which appears to be a result of the scrutiny that CPS is facing. The employee said less emphasis is placed on reunification, now, because management appears to be afraid not to remove children.
- One employee said supervisors change directives constantly and policy and procedures change daily, which places an additional burden on workers in determining whether they are following the correct policies and procedures.
- One employee said many supervisors are inept. The employee cited several situations in which workers have been promoted to supervisor's positions of investigation units, although they have little or no experience conducting investigations. The employee said the workers were promoted because they had master's degrees, although there were many workers with bachelor's degrees and years of investigation experience who were much more qualified for the positions.
- One employee said they believed inconsistent practices were a result of the different personalities of the supervisors.
- One employee said young supervisors are insecure in their positions and constantly make inappropriate decisions.
- One employee said they believed inconsistent practices are a result of the work ethic of each supervisor.
- One employee said some supervisors do not do a good job of reviewing cases, which results in inconsistent decision making.
- One employee said some supervisors improperly downgrade Priority 1 complaints, thereby creating more time management problems for workers.
- One employee said some supervisors are staffing more often because of the scrutiny that CPS is facing.
- Two employees said the number of removals of children has increased, possibly because of the high profile cases and, because of this, the foster homes are full and workers are forced to place children out of region.
- One employee said his/her supervisor recently established a new policy that requires FBSS workers to visit their children once a month at school, in addition to seeing the family twice a month, without evaluating whether there is a need for the additional visit. The employee said the workload does not allow time to comply with this new directive.
- One employee said inconsistencies will always exist in the way different people view things.
- One employee said that his/her new supervisor handles caseloads differently from other supervisors, but he/she does not know the reason why.
- One employee said some supervisors focus more on the number of cases closed, not quality of the investigation and some supervisors are not confident in their decision making abilities.
- Two employees said some supervisors require a thorough investigation and others appear to not care about the quality of the investigation, which results in repeat investigations on the same family. The employee said this is evident when reviewing the previous history on the family.
- One employee said a new supervisor has recently placed priorities on documenting cases and ensuring that the case is current. The employee said the supervisor has no concern for whether you have visited your children, visited families or provided services.
- One employee said a recent decision was made by one program director that all parent/child visitations be held after school to prevent the interruption the child's school schedule. The employee said this decision increases the amount of hours caseworkers are required to work in the evening, taking more time away from their own families.
- One employee said he/she believes a supervisor pushed to find justification to remove a child because the supervisor did not like the mother.
- One employee said some supervisors are more concerned about case documentation while others are more concerned with face-to-face contacts and some supervisors require more information than others, based on the caseworker's tenure.

- Three employees said some supervisor’s fear of making mistakes in judgment prevents them from making decisions at all. The example given was: a supervisor should review complaints and eliminate all that are not CPS issues, but some supervisors are requiring workers investigate every complaint received, which takes time away from legitimate cases.
- One employee said some supervisors make themselves available to their workers while others are inaccessible, offer no guidance and do nothing to lessen the workload for caseworkers. The employee said a supervisor can make or break a unit by their leadership, or lack of, and some supervisors make everything a crisis, which increases the stress for their caseworkers.
- One employee said the differences in supervisors is most evident when a worker is “on-call” and is required to work with supervisors other than their own. The employee said they constantly receive different opinions on similar type cases.
- One employee said favoritism by supervisors creates additional work for some employees. The example given was: a supervisor downgrades Priority 1 cases to Priority 2 on night cases to prevent a caseworker who is a close friend from being assigned the Priority 1 case.
- One employee said policies and procedures are interpreted differently among supervisors and that some will give answers without determining if their answers are correct. The employee said some supervisors do not appear to have a sense of direction to take on issues.
- One employee said his/her current supervisor is constantly calling a former supervisor for advice, although, the former supervisor is no longer employed by CPS.
- One employee said there are still inconsistencies among supervisors, but the last two years have been better, because policies and procedures were revamped two years ago.
- Four employees said supervisors are very inconsistent in their risk assessments.
- One employee said supervisors should assist in conflicts between investigators and FBSS workers.
- One employee said, in some instances, supervisors downgrade too many cases.
- One employee said supervisors appear to be working by different sets of policies and procedures.
- One employee said, in each region, policies and procedures are administered differently.
- One employee said there is conflict between supervisors with regard to accepting cases.
- One employee said some supervisors do not appear to be knowledgeable of the policies and procedures.
- One employee said some supervisors are micro-managers, whereas, some allow the workers to do their job.
- One employee said some supervisors have regular staff meetings and others seldom have meetings.
- One employee said their supervisor showed poor judgment by assigning a serious sexual abuse case to a new investigator who was untrained in sexual abuse investigations.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

36	60
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Below are percentages for responses for all interviewed employees that answered “Yes” to question #10:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
Region 2	0	0	7	100%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	1	14%	6	86%
Region 5	1	14%	6	86%
Region 6	7	47%	8	53%
Region 7	4	36%	7	64%

Region 8	4	36%	7	64%
Region 9	2	33%	4	67%
Region 10	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Region 11	9	56%	7	44%
Statewide	36	37.5%	60	62.5%

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?  
 FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

- Forty employees said they were unaware if there was a policy for staffing cases.
- Five employees said there is no policy for staffing in person.
- Four employees said policy requires employees to staff cases in person with their supervisor, but were unsure of when policy required the staffing.
- One employee believes the requirement to staff in person is immediately on Priority 1 cases and during the investigation on Priority 2 cases.
- Five employees said staffing in person is required on all removals of a child.
- Two employees said staffing in person is immediately on “Priority 1” cases and monthly on other cases.
- Two employees said staffing in person is required weekly.
- One employee said staffing in person is required on children under the age of three on “Reason to Believe” or if a caseworker cannot make a determination.
- One employee said workers are required to staff, within 24 hours, all high-profile cases involving child deaths and when critical criteria are involved.
- One employee said workers are required to staff, within 24 hours, on all Priority 1 cases and within 30 days on Priority 2 cases.
- One employee said staffing in person is required on high-risk cases and involving children with special needs.
- One employee said, after a caseworker meets face-to-face with the child and returns to the office, they are required to staff the case in person with their supervisor.
- One employee said staffing in person is required at the beginning of the case.
- One employee said staffing in person is required before closing the case.
- One employee said caseworkers are required to staff in person when there are pictures or documents to be reviewed.
- One employee said staffing in person is required in a child’s death case and/or serious injury. The employee said the Program Director or higher management will also be involved with these type of cases. The employee said, on removals, they also staff with the program director and program administrator.
- One employee said he/she believes that staffing in person is a requirement on the fifteenth day, thirtieth day, and when closing the case.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

23	107
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	1	8%	11	92%
Region 2	1	14%	6	86%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	1	9%	10	91%
Region 5	1	11%	8	89%
Region 6	3	12.5%	21	87.5%
Region 7	5	26%	14	74%
Region 8	3	21%	11	79%
Region 9	2	25%	6	75%
Region 10	2	20%	8	80%
Region 11	4	25%	12	75%
Statewide	23	18%	107	82%

13A. If so, why?

- Six employees said assistant district attorneys do not like to prosecute CPS cases.
- Three employees said there is too much emphasis on closing cases.
- One employee said supervisors have told caseworkers they are not authorized to contact CPS attorneys or assistant district attorneys.
- One employee said many of the CPS attorneys are not knowledgeable in CPS policies and procedures and they do not seem to know how to deal with people.
- One employee said they are discouraged from seeking legal intervention because workers are stretched too thin and legal work requires more of the worker’s time.
- One employee said he/she is not discouraged from seeking legal intervention by supervisors, but sometimes by the judges.
- One employee said that caseworkers are allowed to contact the district attorney’s office for removal issues, but all other issues must go through the supervisor.
- One employee said he/she feels there are some supervisors who know there are no grounds for removal and, because of that, will not seek legal counsel.
- One employee said there seems to be an attitude of just letting things go, rather than allowing a case to get bogged down in the legal system.
- One employee referenced a case involving a diabetic child that he/she felt was in danger, which took forever to remove, because management was not convinced there was enough evidence.
- One employee said taking a case to legal requires more work and, considering the workload, some workers close cases by minimizing factors to avoid the legal process.
- Three employees said CPS legal personnel are busy and employees are discouraged from contacting them with questions.
- One employee said the supervisor tries to “second guess” how the prosecutor would handle the case and discourages the worker from pursuing legal intervention because it might be a waste of time.
- One employee said they believe some workers are discouraged from seeking legal intervention because supervisors and program directors have forgotten the purpose of CPS.
- One employee said, in some areas, CPS legal personnel and prosecutors will not write affidavits for the caseworkers, which increases their workload.
- One employee said some supervisors do not want the hassle of getting involved with CPS legal personnel or prosecutors and will not file to remove children even when circumstances dictate they should be removed.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?
- Forty-two employees said they would go to their program director.
  - Thirty-six employees said they would discuss the issues further with the supervisor.
  - Twenty-one employees said they would comply with the directives from the supervisor.
  - Eight employees said they had not had this problem with their supervisor, but they would discuss the matter further, if it happened.
  - Six employees said they would talk to another supervisor.
  - Eight employees said they would discuss with their supervisor, then document it; then follow the chain of command.
  - One employee said he/she has not had this to happen, but when their supervisor is not available, they can go to other supervisors or a worker V.
  - One employee said, he/she would re-staff or go to the next person in their chain of command.
  - One employee said, his/her supervisor is a dictator and will not debate any issues.
  - One employee said his/her supervisor does not give good directives.
  - One employee said caseworkers are not permitted to go to another supervisor or program director.
  - One employee said he/she would staff with the risk director.
  - One employee said he/she would try to get more evidence to prove their case.
  - One employee said he/she would talk to the Program Administrator because there is an open-door policy in their office.
  - One employee said he/she complies with directives of the supervisor, but feels comfortable discussing cases with other supervisors when necessary.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

76	54
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	9	75%	3	25%
Region 2	7	100%	0	0
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	5	45%	6	55%
Region 5	6	67%	3	33%
Region 6	14	58%	10	42%
Region 7	11	58%	8	42%
Region 8	7	50%	7	50%
Region 9	6	75%	2	25%
Region 10	4	40%	6	60%
Region 11	7	44%	9	56%
Statewide	76	58%	54	42%

15A. Explain:

- Twenty-three employees said they believe CPS has left children in potentially dangerous situations.
- Eight employees said they believe children have been removed from homes when they should not have been removed.

- Five employees said judges have returned children to abusive homes.
- Three employees said they believe caseworkers are not conducting complete investigations, a practice that is supported by a supervisor who tells the caseworkers not to bother with interviews of other children or collaterals.
- Two employees said workers get overwhelmed and start closing cases with invalid information or false documentation.
- Two employees said, sometimes, services are not offered to parents because a caseworker does not want to take time to work with the parents.
- One employee said he/she is aware of a case in which CPS did not attempt to keep a family close together, as evidenced by the fact that they placed the family's infant approximately 400 miles away from the mother, who did not have the money to travel that distance to see her baby.
- One employee said, at times, when a child is at risk, poor decisions by a supervisor, contributes to a child not being located for several hours.
- One employee said he/she believes a co-worker has cases that have been open for over a year.
- One employee said he/she believes cases were closed simply because of lack of cooperation by parents.
- One employee believes a supervisor changed the wording in a case file to reflect emotional abuse, simply because an aggressive defense attorney said he was going to fight the physical abuse charge and the supervisor did not want to go to court.
- One employee said a case was transferred to another CPS office because the family moved to that region, but the CPS office in that area said they do not accept transfer cases and refused to check on the welfare of the children in that family.
- One employee said FBSS/Sub-care positions were cut, which resulted in families not receiving the services they need.
- One employee said that, due to shortages of caseworkers, Child-care Licensing units are forced to conduct regular investigation cases, without the proper training.
- Two employees said some cases assigned to FBSS for services should have been custody cases because the children were left at too much risk.
- One employee said he/she believes there are cases of child sex offenders that are on probation, but are allowed access to the children.
- One employee said clients are not receiving attention or being provided services because of the high caseloads and short time frames in which to complete cases.
- One employee said some workers, who recently quit their jobs, had cases that were incomplete and required additional work by other investigators.
- One employee said he/she believes CPS should have monitored a mother for six months who had tested positive for drugs, instead of removing her children.
- One employee said that, over the years, numerous cases have been closed when they should not have been, in order to deal with the heavy caseloads.
- One employee said some prosecutors are not concerned about marijuana being used in a home (only hard drugs).
- One employee said that another CPS investigator received a "reviewed" case from 2001, which had to be re-investigated.
- One employee said a supervisor became upset with a caseworker when he/she responded to a call from law enforcement instead of completing a report.
- One employee said supervisors are more concerned about time frames and deadlines than the safety of children.
- One employee said some cases seem to fall in a gray area, making it difficult to determine whether, or not, to remove a child.
- One employee said if legal personnel are busy, the removal of children will not happen.

- Two workers said they believe that, if a complaint is filed against a caseworker or if there is a problem with a case, supervisors attack workers without hearing the caseworker’s explanation or justification for the actions they took on the case.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker said workers identify too much with their clients and lose focus on their main objective, which is protecting the child.
- One employee said a political figure made a phone call to management, which resulted in the removal of a child, without a complete investigation. The employee said the decision proved correct, but the caseworker believes the manner in which it was done was not proper.
- One employee believes many cases are handled inappropriately in certain situations. The example given was: reasonable efforts to locate families are not always followed to the end because of time constraints.
- One employee believes CPS receives federal funds when children are removed from homes, making money an issue in the decision to remove children.
- One employee believes there are cases in which doctors will not provide medical information for cases and will not testify in court. The employee said this inappropriate behavior jeopardizes the case and, when the judge returns the child to a dangerous situation, the doctors and the judges should be held accountable.
- One employee cited a case in which a weak supervisor would not stand up to aggressive parents, leaving the children in an unsafe environment, when there was an option of placing the children with other relatives.
- One employee believes a supervisor has falsified risk assessments on the Impact System, leaving children in a dangerous environment.
- One employee believes, when prosecutors refuse to accept cases, children are left at risk.

16. Are you able to make a decision of “Rule-out” or “Unable to Determine” a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

59	14
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question:

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed investigator caseworkers:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	5	71%	2	29%
Region 2	4	80%	1	20%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	8	100%	0	0
Region 5	6	100%	0	0
Region 6	8	89%	1	11%
Region 7	8	80%	2	20%
Region 8	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Region 9	4	80%	1	20%
Region 10	6	100%	0	0
Region 11	5	56%	4	44%
Statewide	59	81%	14	19%

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	0	0	12	100%
Region 2	1	14%	6	86%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	1	9%	10	91%
Region 5	0	0	9	100%
Region 6	0	0	24	100%
Region 7	1	5%	18	95%
Region 8	3	21%	11	79%
Region 9	0	0	8	100%
Region 10	2	20%	8	80%
Region 11	0	0	16	100%
Statewide	8	6%	122	94%

Explain:

- One employee said a case involved a perpetrator that had access to a child and the case notes needed to be changed to reflect this, which the employee agreed was the appropriate action to take.
- One employee said changes were made only to add documentation to the case investigation, never to falsify information
- Two employees said they were directed to make changes when the caseworker made errors in grammar, etc.
- Four employees said they were directed to make changes when the employee made errors in judgment and, after the supervisors explained, the caseworkers were in agreement with the supervisors.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

3	127
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	0	0	12	100%
Region 2	1	14%	6	86%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	0	0	11	100%
Region 5	0	0	9	100%
Region 6	0	0	24	100%
Region 7	2	11%	17	89%
Region 8	0	0	14	100%
Region 9	0	0	8	100%
Region 10	0	0	10	100%
Region 11	0	0	16	100%
Statewide	3	2%	127	98%



18A. If so, by who and what was said?

Two employees said their supervisors told them to be honest with their responses.  
 One employee said the supervisor asked that he/she not get the supervisor in trouble.

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

99	31
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	8	67%	4	33%
Region 2	5	71%	2	29%
Region 3 *	*	*	*	*
Region 4	9	82%	2	18%
Region 5	8	89%	1	11%
Region 6	20	83%	4	17%
Region 7	16	84%	3	16%
Region 8	6	43%	8	57%
Region 9	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Region 10	10	100%	0	0
Region 11	12	75%	4	25%
Statewide	99	76%	31	24%

19A. If so, what?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

18	112
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Below are percentages for “Yes” and “No” responses for all interviewed employees:

Region	Yes	Yes %	No	No%
Region 1	2	17%	10	83%
Region 2	2	29%	5	71%
Region 3	*	*	*	*
Region 4	1	9%	10	91%
Region 5	1	11%	8	89%
Region 6	4	17%	20	83%
Region 7	2	11%	17	89%
Region 8	3	21%	11	79%
Region 9	2	25%	6	75%
Region 10	1	10%	9	90%
Region 11	0	0	16	100%
Statewide	18	14%	112	86%

20A. If so, who and why?

- Five employees said they are intimidated by supervisors who are not approachable, provide no feedback to employees and are not interested in working with the employees to help find solutions to some of the problems they may be having with their job.
- One employee said program directors distance themselves from the caseworkers, are not sensitive to the workers' problems and are not open to ideas and suggestions on how to improve the process.
- One employee is afraid of his/her supervisor, because an unfounded complaint had been filed against him/her and he/she felt it was causing undue scrutiny by management.
- Eight employees said they feel their job is in jeopardy if they disagree with management, in any way. They said it is evident that management does not appreciate employees who speak up, suggest new ideas or offer different viewpoints. They said the most obvious evidence of this is found in the consistent promotion of employees who have less experience and are less qualified, but who continually agree with management and are considered their favorites. They said many good employees have left because the "favoritism" way of promotion is prevalent in the agency.
- Two employees said they could not say who or why for fear of retaliation.
- One employee said they feel intimidated because a worker's performance is based on an ideal caseload, which no one has. The employee said workers are put on probation when they cannot maintain a current caseload and their jobs are threatened, which increases the anxiety level in an already stressful job.

## **CPS EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

### **Training issues:**

- Employees suggested that management place an importance on training by allotting time for employees to attend training. Many employees interviewed said PSTI (Protective Services Training Institute) training is offered on a continuous basis, but employees' workload prevents them from attending.
- Employees said if training could be offered locally, it would reduce the amount of time taken from their casework.
- Employees said the academy should include training on how to deal with the emotional aspect of a caseworker's job, coping with stress and how to avoid depression.
- Employees said the academy was focused predominately on investigation of cases and was inadequate in preparing employees who planned to work in a family based service unit or an on-going care unit.
- Employees said child abuse training provided by law enforcement and other outside sources would be beneficial.
- Employees suggested more caseworkers be allowed to attend the Crimes Against Children Conference each year.
- Employees suggested the legal training they receive should include more information from the Family Code.
- Employees suggested their training should include child custody issues.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on the Americans With Disabilities Act.
- Employees suggested their training include how-to effectively interview people, conduct a thorough investigation and write a comprehensive investigation report.
- Employees suggested additional training on legal issues, such as, writing affidavits, courtroom procedures and effectively testifying in court be provided after caseworkers have accumulated field experience.
- Employees suggested they be provided legal update training, especially as it applies to each county and region.

- Employees suggested additional training on risk assessment should be provided after caseworkers have accumulated field experience.
- Employees said they need full time, field-training workers to assist new caseworkers in applying their classroom instructions to the field. Employees said, the current system in place allows tenured workers to act as mentors in this capacity, but they also remain on regular rotation for case assignments and their caseload is not reduced to compensate for the time they spend training new caseworkers.
- Employees suggested previous cases involving a child's death should be used as a teaching tool. Employees said, presently, management is too concerned about the confidentiality of the case to realize the lessons that could be learned in analyzing these cases in a classroom setting.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on domestic violence.
- Employees suggested they be provided cultural diversity training.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on child development.
- Employees suggested State Wide Intake (SWI) employees should be better trained on how to obtain complete and accurate information for their reports and how to conduct research for prior CPS history, to avoid creating a duplicate case.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to locate resources and services in each county and region.
- Employees suggested training should be provided in conversational Spanish for caseworkers who do not speak Spanish. Employees suggest some cases are not being worked timely, for lack of Spanish-speaking employees.
- Employees suggested additional hands-on training with the Impact System should be provided. Employees suggest they be more adept at using the system to reduce the amount of time they spend documenting their cases.
- Employees suggested additional computer training should be provided.
- Employees suggested they be provided classes on time management.
- Employees suggested ethics training should be provided.
- Employees said they need self-defense training and training in dealing with uncooperative people and managing volatile situations.
- Employees suggested they receive authorization to carry pepper spray for protection against dogs and be provided training on proper use of pepper spray.
- Employees suggested they be provided CPR and first aid training during the academy and periodic refresher courses as part of their continued education.
- Employees suggested they be provided training from law enforcement officers in identifying new drug trends, recognizing various drugs, identifying articles used in methamphetamine laboratories and other drug paraphernalia.
- Employees suggested they be provided training in identifying the signs of drug use and understanding the effects of various drugs and how substance abuse affects the family.
- Employees suggested CPS refrain from contracting with instructors teaching substance abuse classes who support the idea that occasional use of illegal drugs is acceptable if it does not place the children in danger. Employees said, currently, CPS contracts with instructors who support this belief.
- Employees said they need training on how to identify and interact with individuals with various psychological problems, such as, recognizing suicidal tendencies and signs of self-mutilation.
- Employees suggested they be provided training regarding the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) and how to read psychiatric reports.
- Employees suggested they be provided training regarding the use of psychotropic medication.
- Employees suggested that medical assessment training be provided to caseworkers before emails are sent to them suggesting they evaluate non-verbal children by assessing physical attributes, such as; scalp, eyes, pupils and capillary response.

- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to identify physical abuse, such as, burns and broken bones and how to recognize if a child has an injury that is under the skin and not visible to the eye.
- Employees suggested they be provided training in identifying the verbal and physical signs of sexual abuse.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to recognize when a child has been neglected or malnourished.
- Employees suggested they provide training for parents on how to deal with teenagers.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to direct youth on birth-control issues.
- Employees suggested they be provided training in skills for parenting children with special needs and the proper way of transporting children with special needs.
- Employees suggested they be provided developmental training for handling toddlers and small children.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to communicate serious issues to a family, such as, how to explain to a woman that her child has accused the father sexual abuse.

### **Tools and Resources needed:**

- Employees suggested CPS open additional offices to make caseworkers more accessible to their clients and reduce the amount of time caseworkers spend traveling to make contact with families. Employees who are responsible for a large regional area made these suggestions.
- Employees suggested that agency office space be changed in order to provide for additional space for family visitations.
- Employees suggested the caller identification feature be added to the phones in the offices.
- Employees suggested the agency locate facilities, outside the CPS offices, to be used to conduct interviews with children. Employees said, currently, some school officials are not cooperative in finding a room available for caseworkers to utilize in conducting interviews with children.
- Employees suggested video recorders should be provided for use during school interviews to prevent further traumatizing a child by transporting them to the Children's Advocacy Center.
- Employees suggested that an adequate amount of office equipment be provided.
- Employees said many offices have only one fax machine, printer and copier for an office of workers and valuable time is spent waiting to use the fax machine or copier.
- Employees suggested that offices maintain an adequate amount of normal office supplies to prevent caseworkers from having to purchase supplies with personal funds.
- Employees suggested additional laptop computers be provided.
- Employees suggested digital cameras and additional batteries should be provided for each caseworker. Employees said the new, recently purchased cameras have cards that do not fit the printers in the office and workers cannot download pictures onto their computers. Employees suggested color printers to be used with the cameras also be provided.
- Employees suggested that new audio tape recorders and additional tapes should be provided for use during interviews of family members.
- Employees suggested the agency provide a more efficient database system. Employees said the Impact System is slow, duplicative and broken down an inordinately amount of time. Employees said the risk assessment policies on the system are outdated and should be re-evaluated and shortened. Employees suggested the screens be changed to eliminate the duplication and programmed to utilize pull-down screens that would relate to specific allegations.
- Employees suggested they be given access to Internet search sites that would assist them in locating information on their clients. Employees said some workers are asked to use their personal computers to access to the Internet.

- Employees suggested they be provided Internet access that would allow workers to load clerical programs on their computers that would assist them with documentation. Employees suggest the new “Cyber-Secretary” software is a good program for helping caseworkers in narrating their documentation.
- Employees suggested they be provided access to the Food Stamp system to allow caseworkers another avenue in which to locate and contact families.
- Employees suggested car seats for children of various ages be provided.
- Employees suggested they be provided state vehicles for transporting children and families. Employees said there are great risks, involving liability issues, when transporting CPS children and CPS families in caseworkers’ personal vehicles.
- Employees suggested an adjustment from the \$.35 a mile reimbursement for use of personal vehicles be provided to reflect the current cost of operating a vehicle.
- Employees suggested they be provided state issued cell phones, in lieu of the insufficient \$50 stipend they now receive for state use of their personal cell phones. Employees suggested this would also reduce the time employees spend completing paperwork for reimbursement of these expenses.
- Employees suggested they be provided pagers.
- Employees suggested they be provided protective vests and mace for their own safety.
- Employees suggested they be provided funds for children to have such things as food, clothing, school supplies, diapers, birthday gifts and Christmas gifts. Employees said, currently, caseworkers provide money for these items out of their own pockets. Employees said some communities have resources for these items, but many do not.
- Employees suggested they be provided swab testing drug kits.
- Employees said they need different avenues for developing their film, as workers in rural areas do not have enough agency-contracted locations for film development.
- Employees suggested they be provided professional looking identification badges with a leather case. Employees said their current identification consist of a photograph on a plastic card that looks similar to an electronic access card and does not give the appearance that the holder has authority to request cooperation from clients.
- Employees suggested a condensed version of the Texas Family Code be provided to caseworkers.

### **Service delivery:**

- Employees said they are prevented from providing adequate services to families because there is a lack of community services for families, such as drug assessment, testing and rehabilitation facilities, parenting classes, family outreach centers, anger management classes and therapist.
- Employees said they are prevented from providing adequate services to families because of a lack of funds to pay for the services and home studies.
- Employees said there is a severe lack of foster homes and facilities in which to place children within their own region. Employees said, currently, some children are placed in facilities 200-300 miles away, which creates a more traumatic situation for the children and an additional burden on caseworkers in meeting policy requirements to visit children once a month.
- Employees said there is, especially, a lack of foster care parents for teenagers and hard to place children.
- Employees said there is a lack of Children’s Advocacy Centers.
- Employees said there is a lack of Child Welfare Boards.
- Employees suggested needed funding is not being projected correctly as, two months into 2005 Fiscal Year, they were told their unit was out of funding for protective daycare.
- Employees said the process for drug and alcohol testing and treatment must be streamlined. Employees said, currently, contracts with some of the treatment facilities have not been renewed and the agency must rely on TCADA’s self-assessment test, which caseworkers said they do not think is an effective tool. Employees said a large portion of their clients are in need of these services and, when it takes sixty

days to receive a drug analysis test, it creates a major breakdown in the process of providing services to clients.

- Employees suggested an investigation be conducted into the foster care homes to eliminate those who are not providing a good environment for children. Employees said they believe some foster families have children over-medicated. Employees said if a family can get a doctor to raise the level of care required for the child, determined by the type of drugs prescribed by the doctor, the foster family receives more money for the care of the child. Employees suggest there should be increased monitoring of any changes in medication for children and caseworkers should receive information regarding the change prior to the change. Employees suggest this be written into the agency's policies and procedures.
- Employees said they frequently receive progress notes from service providers that do not specifically indicate what services were provided to the clients. Employees suggest completion of a standard form required from all providers, would assist caseworkers in identifying the services provided and eliminate fraudulent billing.
- Employees suggested changes be made to allow relatives who are willing to have children placed in their home be allowed to receive the same financial assistance provided to a foster home. Employees said this would be less traumatic for the children than being placed in a foster home and would assist relatives who are willing to provide a home but cannot afford the additional financial burden.
- Employees said there are not enough doctors, dentists and service providers in the rural areas and there is a lack of transportation to assist families in attending their classes.
- Employees said evening counseling and therapy sessions are needed to accommodate working parents and prevent children from missing school.
- Employees said they do not believe people who are staff members of residential treatment centers and group homes or therapeutic outdoor camps should be allowed to take children home with them.
- Employees said management encourages workers to spend only twenty minutes on face-to-face interviews with a child, which they feel, is an endorsement of providing the minimum of service and moving on to the next case.
- Employees said the physical locations of CPS offices should be accessible to the clients they serve because the financial limitations of the families dictate travel arrangements and visitations with the children.
- Employees suggested that providing bus tokens for clients is a more cost effective way of assisting clients to classes and visitations than having caseworkers provide the transportation.
- Employees said Family Group counseling should be offered everywhere.
- Employees said there are problems with Youth For Tomorrow, the company contracted to set levels of care for CPS children. Employees said there used to be six levels of care, which has been reduced to four. They said they do not believe the system used by Youth For Tomorrow meets the needs of the children. They said Youth for Tomorrow is outside of the loop and workers do not believe they understand the sense of urgency with cases and the workers have serious problems in getting care for the children. Employees said they also believe many cases are evaluated at a lower level of care than what the client actually needs.
- Employees said the focus of the agency should be on the delivery of services to prevent repeat clients.
- Employees said supervisors and Program Directors of some FBSS units limit the workload of their caseworkers, which places families on hold, causing them to lose hope when services are not provided for over a month.

### **Community:**

- Employees suggested that CPS administration initiate a proactive approach in developing a better working relationship with the community by meeting with law enforcement officials, judges, district attorneys, school officials, hospital staff and news media reporters on a regular basis.

- Employees said they have difficulty receiving medical information on families when trying to conduct a risk assessment.
- Employees suggested that, if judges and prosecutors were better educated on CPS related issues, they may be less likely to leave children in dangerous situations.
- Employees said they would like to see the media hold the judges and prosecutors accountable when the decisions they make, against the recommendation of CPS, leave a child in a dangerous situation,
- Employees said they spend numerous hours waiting for court hearings that have been delayed or cancelled entirely and no one from the prosecutor's office informed them of the change.
- Employees suggested management better educate the juvenile probation officers to the goals and authority of CPS to prevent them from referring juveniles to CPS when they do not qualify as a CPS case. Employees said juvenile probation frequently contacts CPS, requesting that workers observe the inside of a home and inform them of the living conditions in the home.
- Employees said Post Office personnel and law enforcement are not always cooperative in providing directions to residences when only a post office box address was obtained by SWI. Employees said their job to protect children should dictate cooperation by other agencies.
- Employees said they need help in developing a more cooperative working relationship with some of the law enforcement agencies. They said some police departments are not providing entire criminal histories on an alleged perpetrator, only violations pertaining to child abuse. Employees said this prevents them from knowing if the perpetrator also has violations of assault, drugs, DWI or unlawful weapons. Employees said this puts the caseworker's safety at risk and also hinders caseworkers from identifying services needed by the perpetrator.

### **Management:**

- Employees suggested the number of meetings required by management be minimized to allow more time for investigations.
- Employees suggested top administration ensure that statewide policies and procedures are applied consistently throughout the state. They said that, currently, each region and each supervisor decides which of the policies and procedures will be used and which ones will be ignored. They said this changes frequently, especially when a negative incident occurs.
- Employees suggested top administration should investigate and remove many inept supervisors who obtained their positions through the "favoritism" form of promotion that is prevalent throughout the agency. They believe supervisor changes are needed in order to professionalize the agency. Employees suggest that morale in the office would improve if favoritism was not so evident in the way management treats workers on an every day basis. Employees said that bad supervisors cannot keep good workers, which is evident in the number of workers who transfer out of a unit.
- Experienced, tenured caseworkers said they do not feel they are valued employees. They said management surrounds themselves with like-minded people and requests for information regarding promotions are ignored. They said they feel there is no chance of advancement for individuals who are not "yes" people. One example given for an inept supervisor was a situation where closed case files were left for months in an open clerical area, not protected and not kept confidential. Employees said the cleaning staff threw out numerous case files, thinking them to be boxes of trash, thereby losing permanent case information that had not yet been entered into the system. One employee said, because of the lack of security for the files, he/she refused to leave his/her case files in the open with the rest and was reprimanded for not obeying directives.
- Employees suggested it is evidence of management's lack of concern for caseworkers when they transfer them to new positions without prior discussions with the worker.
- Employees suggested the current practice of micro managing, with numerous associated reports and detail accountability and continued expectations of good social work practice and positive outcomes is unattainable.

- Employees suggested that management refrain from a knee-jerk reaction to a family's complaint about a worker by listening to the worker and being supportive of what they are trying to accomplish with the family.
- Employees suggested that management not distance themselves from workers to the point where they no longer have empathy for them as they are dealing with the stress of removals, feuding family members and filing reports for court. They suggest the agency establish a better support system for staff.
- Employees suggested that management develop a plan of cooperation among CPS offices in different regions. They said, currently, there is limited cooperation among CPS offices to allow for courtesy interviews. Employees gave examples in which clients from one region were transferred to a hospital in another region and caseworkers in other regions refused to conduct courtesy interviews of the client. Employees said if caseworkers in each region would conduct courtesy interviews for other regions, it would save time and money for the state by eliminating caseworkers traveling a long distances for face-to-face interviews.
- Employees said they believe CPS is management heavy and do not think it necessary to have, both, Program Directors and Program Administrators.
- Employees said that many in management are focused on quantity, not quality of the work and the children are the ones suffering.
- Employees said that some individuals in management focus on theory and do not see the practical solutions.
- Employees suggested that an individual's people skills, not just knowledge of policies and procedures, be taken into consideration before they are promoted.
- Employees said a lack of communication and feedback from management contributes to workers' lack of confidence in leadership from supervisors, program directors, program administrators and the district director.
- Employees said staffing cases with supervisors should be scheduled and consistent, not something for which workers have to plead.
- Employees said supervisors need management training after receiving their promotion to teach them how to motivate and retain workers. Employees said there is so much negativity in the work place it eliminates the desire for even the most dedicated social workers to stay. Employees suggest supervisors manage their units with a positive reinforcement approach.
- Employees said there is a lack of support from supervisors who do not attempt to find ways to assist workers in managing their overwhelming caseloads. Employees said some supervisors are allowed to work from home and can be reach through their pager, but this increases the feeling workers have that they are not really there to support them.
- Employees said management attempts to "guilt-trip" caseworkers by telling them that paying overtime takes money away from any new position the unit may gain.
- Employees said some excellent, tenured workers capable of working without tight supervision are to the point of quitting because of micro-managing supervisors.
- Employees said there is a lack of supervisory oversight and accountability.
- Employees said supervisors do not show a concern for workers or an ability to assess individual situations. An employee gave an example in which he/she was disciplined for taking another worker for assistance when removing eleven children from a home, when it was their normal policy to not work in pairs.
- Employees said the decisions made by management reflect an "us" against "them" attitude.
- Employees suggested management should be attentive to the emotional needs caseworkers have after being involved in a high stress or critical incident. They said, instead of mandatory counseling to assure the caseworker is handling the situation well, management is critical of the worker, looking to place blame. Employees said, in some instances, caseworkers have not been allowed to explain or present evidence to justify the decisions they made in handling their case.



- Employees suggested the Family Code be amended to allow a format for CPS to recoup the cost of an investigation when the complaint that was filed was bogus, retaliatory or custodial.
- Employees suggested the Workers Advisory Committee be brought reinstated, as workers feel they no longer have an avenue in which to voice their concerns.
- Employees suggested Program Directors visit the field on a regular basis to assure supervisors are presenting a clear picture of the problems faced by the workers.

### **Workload:**

- Employees believe some caseworkers are closing cases too soon when parents deny the allegations and there is an absence of an outcry by the child. That needs to be checked by supervisors.
- Employees believe some workers fail to go the extra step and obtain a written medical report on related injuries. That needs to be checked by supervisors.
- Employees believe some workers fail to assure children are checked on per policy during investigations. That needs to be checked by supervisors.
- Employees believe some workers are ruling out injuries or incidents, because the worker did not observe the allegation, although reported by a professional or credible collateral. That needs to be checked by supervisors.
- Employees believe perpetrators are not being included in the Family Based Safety Services stage of the investigation. That needs to be checked by supervisors.
- Employees believe when a sexual abuse investigation has “Reason to Believe”, there is insufficient documentation in the file to indicate the alleged perpetrator is no longer in the home and investigations are being closed without providing services. This needs to be checked by supervisors.
- Employees believe some workers are not documenting in the file when safety plans are completed. That needs to change.
- Employees believe some workers are not conducting home visits when they are required to conduct home visits. This needs to be checked by supervisors.
- Employees believe that supervisors are closing cases that need more work, so supervisors need to be supervised closer.
- Employees believe some workers are not obtaining past history, because history is not in a lot of case files. Failure to merge cases allows previous history to be ignored. This needs to be checked by supervisors.
- Employees suggested that the assistance provided by additional support staff and transport aides would allow workers more time to conduct investigations and provide client services. They said the time spent completing time sheets and travel vouchers takes valuable time away from investigations.
- Employees suggested that an unmanageable caseload is the origination of most all other problems they face each day because it reduces the amount of time to effectively investigate cases, provide services and assure the safety of children, thereby, leading to additional complaints on the same family and the possibility of children being left in an unsafe environment.
- Employees suggested that eliminating the FBSS contracts with outside counseling and drug treatment facilities may not have been the most cost-effective measure to be taken. Employees at the facilities handled the entire case, providing services and monitoring the case, the same as an FBSS worker. New positions were not allocated to take on the additional work that was returned to the FBSS workers. Employees said repeat and multiple referrals on the same families have quadrupled since the cancellations of the contracts.
- Employees suggested the night shift be reinstated instead of workers being placed “on call”. Workers who are out all night on a “Priority 1” removal must still be at work at 8 a.m. the following day. They said the on-call situation should be changed, because it is extremely difficult on the caseworkers family life.

- Employees suggested that the formula being used for the basis of providing new full time employees is wrong. They said the number of intake and closed cases handled by a unit are being considered, which does not give a true picture of the workload. The formula does not take into consideration the pending cases, which is always a much higher number.
- Employees suggested the Impact System should be revamped because it is slow, repetitive and difficult to use and an effort must be made to assist workers in reducing the amount of paperwork required for each case.
- Employees suggested SWI be better trained in identifying complaints that are not a CPS issue, to allow workers more time to investigate legitimate complaints.
- Employees suggest additional CPS attorneys and legal staff are needed to assist caseworkers in preparing affidavits and representing caseworkers in court hearings.
- Employees suggested that caseworkers are too understaffed to handle a regular caseload and to also be assigned to private facilities on a permanent basis. They gave an example of a new pilot program to assign investigators to monitor a residential treatment center.
- Employees suggested an investigation be conducted into the number of cases being closed prematurely. They said they believe some caseworkers are falsifying case narratives and showing that a family has moved or they cannot locate, allowing them to quickly close the case.
- Employees said they are required to contact two collaterals in each case, with no requirement that a professional opinion be obtained. They said collaterals could be anyone the family wants to provide, which does not give an unbiased view of the family's home life.
- Employees said they are required to make contact with all people in the household before closing a case, which is difficult to do within the time frames they are given to work.
- Employees said more consideration should be given to the amount of cases assigned to workers in which large areas of responsibility and distances are a time consuming issue. They also said supervisors should assign cases to workers assigned to cover that particular geographical area.
- Some workers believe the state office determines the workload by dividing the number of cases by investigative positions, instead of the number of workers. They believe this needs to be changed because many units are operating with half the staff they normally have.

### **Policies and Procedures and Laws:**

- Employees said the law does not allow CPS to use the prior death of a child to remove a new child in the home. CPS is required to wait for another intake report of abuse and follow all the procedures of providing services, etc., thereby, leaving the new child in a dangerous situation.
- Employees said they recently received training on the Fourth Amendment, which was interpreted in a way that prevents CPS workers from having the authority to force parents to allow them to see a child and confirm the child is not in danger or injured. Employees want the legislature to make changes/amendments that would give CPS the legal authority to confirm the safety of the child.
- There is no prosecution of mothers who give birth to drug-addicted babies.
- The "Baby Moses" law needs to be clarified. Medical personnel do not seem to know how to handle a situation where a mother leaves a newborn baby on the steps of a hospital. They don't know if they should call CPS.
- Employees said that providing services and counseling of children in abusive situations is an important part of helping the child become a healthy individual. They said the legal system should be mandated to prosecute in a timely manner to allow the child to heal; the more time goes by, the more detrimental it is on the child and the less likely the perpetrator will be prosecuted.
- Employees said the law should allow the Attorney General's Office to share contact information from their child support database with CPS.

- Employees suggested the law regarding the procedures taken by private schools be changed. Presently, school officials notify parents prior to CPS interviewing a child and, at times, the parents have removed the child from school before CPS arrives.
- Employees suggested laws regarding caseworkers' testimony in a final permanency hearing be changed to allow for use of that same testimony in subsequent hearings, which it presently does not permit.
- Employees suggest that policies be changed to eliminate workers from being required to maintain contact and offer services to someone who is incarcerated.
- Employees suggested the civil and criminal laws be changed to coincide with each other regarding all people that are seventeen years old. Employees said CPS receives calls regarding runaway children, which does not fall under the civil laws. Runaway children issues fall under criminal laws.
- Employees suggested policies and procedures be changed to limit the look-back time on certain criminal offenses for family members willing to have children placed in their homes. They said if a home study reveals a drug charge from twenty years prior, the home is automatically eliminated as an option in placing a child.
- Employees suggested laws be established to give workers an appeal or review process in situations in which the judges and/or prosecutors' decisions contradict the recommendations of the caseworkers and they believe a child is being left in a dangerous environment.
- Employees suggested changes be made in the philosophy of the agency. They said that, currently, in a child death case, the caseworker is fired, regardless of the fact that the worker may have followed all policies and procedures and had received supervisor approval for all actions taken. This is the belief of the employees in one area, but in another area, a caseworker said changes should be made in how caseworkers are treated during a child death review. They said, due to the voluminous amount of cases, it is impossible to document all cases as well as he/she would prefer, which makes the caseworker look bad during the review.
- Employees said agency policies on removal of children are not geared to protect multi-child families; removing only one child (the victim) leaves remaining children in the home at risk.
- Employees suggested the time frame requirements that must be met, according to policies and procedures, be reevaluated to take into consideration the caseload carried by workers today.
- Employees suggested that all service plans for families be court-ordered to give workers leverage if families do not follow the plan. Employees said, without a court order, cases take longer because workers have no way of forcing families to abide by the plan.
- Employees suggested statewide policies and procedures be revamped and simplified, as they are too voluminous to remember or be used effectively in an efficient manner. They suggested one good overhaul should eliminate the need for the constant changes in the policies and procedures received every week by workers.
- Employees suggested that policies be changed to allow cases involving children under the age of six to be closed without staffing with the program director.
- Employees suggest that policies be changed to allow caseworkers to be paid for overtime hours worked. They said it is difficult, with their caseloads, to take time off and forcing them to take the overtime to avoid paying them perpetuates the problem because they return with additional work assigned and further behind on their cases.
- Employees said they want the agency to do away with the new program, in which a "placement specialist" must be utilized in locating a placement facility for a child. Employees said this is not in the best interest of the child, as the worker knows the child and understands the child's needs more than someone whose job it is to just find a "slot" for a child somewhere.
- Procedures are too confining for the workload. There is too much time spent looking for absent fathers and families that worker is unable to locate.

- Policy requires that pictures be taken of everyone in the home before closing a case, even when all work is done. This prevents worker from meeting the 60-day time frame. Something needs to change to ease pressure of the workers.
- Employees would like to see more male workers and more workers of color.
- There are problems in faxing information to the Youth for Tomorrow. The documents are up to twenty-seven pages long, so workers would like to know if YFT could have access to Impact?
- CPS needs to hire consultants to study our jobs and suggest better ways to do our jobs.
- Statewide intake should be localized. They know the people, how to spell the names, how to research past history and how to obtain directions to rural residences.
- The same families are arguing constantly, so they call the hot line on each other over and over, causing unnecessary investigations to be conducted. CPS or law enforcement should be able to file criminal charges for false reporting on these type issues.
- Laws are too vague and need to be tightened. Definitions of abuse and neglect make it easy for defense attorneys to have an answer for all issues. The legislature should make changes in law regarding discovery issues. Currently, defense attorneys, through the rule of discovery, request information on every case that a caseworker has investigated, so the defense attorney can try to find something that the investigator might have handled improperly on a previous case.
- Law enforcement needs to be trained on domestic violence; because they don't know that they are supposed to make arrests when they see bruises.

### **Employees:**

- Employees suggested the agency hire more qualified individuals, pay them well and provide adequate and timely salary actions to the existing employees to help reduce the turnover rate.
- Employees suggest a psychological exam and a criminal history report is a requirement before employment with the agency.
- Employees suggested random drug testing should be implemented for CPS workers.
- Employees in one area believe that, currently, in a child death case, the worker is fired, regardless of the fact that the worker may have followed all policies and procedures and had received supervisor approval for all actions taken.
- Employees suggested that management value good workers by providing merit raises and promotions. One worker said he/she obtained a master's degree while working for CPS, but never received additional compensation after he/she completed the degree, not even a merit raise in fourteen years.
- Employees suggested the agency maintain an adequate amount of employees to handle the workload. They suggest this will provide better service to families, offer more protection to the children and reduce the turnover rate by decreasing the level of stress caseworkers have when their workload is unmanageable.
- Employees said the morale is lower than they have ever witnessed in the past. They said psychological assistance should be provided for caseworkers because of job related stress. They said they have noticed that many employees are on antidepressants, antacid medications and are riddled with numerous health issues stemming from the stress of the unmanageable workload.
- Employees said that an Investigator IV reaches the salary ceiling and financially, has no incentive to stay in an investigative unit, so they transfer to a less stressful unit. A \$3,000 salary increase would be incentive to stay, but not a one-time \$3,000 bonus. They also said they do not trust management to come through with the bonus because the stipulation that was included stating that workers must be current with their cases to qualify for the bonus is almost impossible to attain with current caseloads.
- Employees suggested the dress code be relaxed to allow caseworkers to dress according to the area they will be visiting, which would make some families more comfortable during their interviews.
- Provide workers with a better healthcare insurance plan, including a better dental plan.

- Employees said there is no additional stipend for bilingual workers, although they have an additional burden of translating for most of the workers in the office.
- Employees said there are not enough safety measures in place for the hazards workers encounter and the diseases to which they are exposed. They said, in addition, they are not allowed to carry any type of personal protection devices for protection.
- Employees said workers are expected to spend \$400- \$700 of their personal finances to pay for travel and feeding children and reimbursement can take approximately thirty days.

# Field Investigation/Validation

The following field investigation/validation drew the sample of cases reviewed from cases read in the statewide case reading. Case were selected from each region based on the random sample size drawn from each region. The field investigation/validation for region 3 was conducted separately and is included in Appendix A in the section for region 3. CPS case narrative/documentation was reviewed to gather information about the CPS investigations. Complainants, collaterals and family members were contacted to verify documentation in the CPS case file. OIG field investigators made phone contacts and field visits to verify multiple random facts in 119 case files. The findings are detailed below:

<b>CPS Field Validation Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>% No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Did the intake report accurately reflect the reporter's comments?	97	95%	5	5%	17
2. Did the caseworker make contact with the alleged victim(s) and parent(s) as reflected in the case narrative/documentation?	98	92%	8	8%	13
3. Did the caseworker make contact with other persons (family members, staff, community stakeholders) as reflected in the case narrative/documentation?	100	93%	7	7%	12
4. Were all of the reported allegations accurately reflected in the case narrative/documentation?	107	95%	6	5%	5
5. Was the outcome of the case accurately reflected in the case narrative/documentation?	104	97%	3	3%	12
6. If evidence of a criminal act appeared to be present, was it reported to the appropriate authorities?	48	87%	7	13%	63
7. Were services offered/provided to the family as reflected in the case narrative/documentation?	46	84%	9	16%	62
8. Was there any evidence that the caseworker permitted a child or children to remain in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation (such as leaving the child accessible to a sexual predator)?	9	9%	89	91%	11
9. Is there any evidence that the caseworker committed a criminal act?	3	3%	116	97%	0
10. Is the family currently in need of additional services to ensure the safety and protection of the child or children?	7	7%	96	93%	13
11. Are there any other aspects of the case you feel need to be brought to the attention of authorities or the caseworker's supervisor?	35	30%	81	70%	4

A detailed explanation of the no/na responses can be found in the Regional section of the report.

### Field Validation Case selection Methodology

The cases chosen for field validation were selected utilizing a judgmental sample, as a percentage of total investigations from the primary sample size, which is the percentage amount of sample cases allocated to each region, except for region 3. Our selected percentage of 6 percent was used to ensure a minimum of 60 cases being chosen for validation. The same methodology was utilized for Region 3 and included a larger sample. Fifty cases were reviewed in Region 3. The percentage was multiplied by the total cases in the primary sample per region as indicated in the chart below:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number of Investigations</b>	<b>Percentage of Investigations</b>	<b>Primary Sample Size Allocation of 1,117</b>	<b># Of Cases per Region to be used for Field Validation</b>
1	8,725	5.84%	65	4
2	6,071	4.06%	45	3
4	10,733	7.19%	80	5
5	7,833	5.25%	59	4
6	39,920	26.74%	299	18
7	24,959	16.72%	187	11*
8	20,701	13.87%	155	9*
9	5,205	3.49%	39	2
10	5,382	3.61%	40	2
11	19,751	13.23%	148	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>149,280</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>67</b>

\*3 cases were eliminated from the sample because of insufficient information.

# **CPS Policy**

A limited review of CPS policy was conducted. Generally CPS policy appears to comport with applicable sections of the Texas Family Code. The primary issue appears to be that compliance with policy is not required by management. Simple compliance with CPS policy would generally eliminate many if not most of the failures of CPS to protect children. There are two areas of concern with CPS policy.

1. The requirements for taking an action, such as removal, are disseminated throughout policy. To verify all the requirements and obtain guidance you have to access numerous sections of the policy manual.
2. Many of the references to titles etc. in the policy manual are outdated. The policy manual needs to be reviewed and updated.

## **CPS Policy vs CPS Culture**

CPS policy<sup>8</sup> requires that “*The decision to remove a child only occurs when there is no reasonable way to protect the child from abuse or neglect in the immediate or short term future without removal.*” This policy is strongly embedded in CPS culture to the extent that it contributes to caseworkers’ failure to initiate a removal when it is appropriate. This culture has migrated beyond statutory<sup>9</sup> and policy requirements to overemphasize keeping the family together rather than keeping the child safe. Until this culture is realigned the agency will continue to leave children at risk.

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<sup>8</sup> CPS Policy Handbook , Section 6121 is included in Appendix F.

<sup>9</sup> Texas Family Code, Section 262.102 is included in Appendix F.



# **Internal/External CPS Reports**

There are numerous internal and external reports regarding Child Protective Services. The two reports that appear to provide the best insight into CPS performance in achieving positive outcomes for children are the:

United States Department of Health and Human Services, “Child and Family Services Review;”

Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), “Texas Child and Family Service Review.”

The DFPS Texas Child and Family Service Review was developed as part of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services due to CPS’s failure to substantially conform with six of seven safety, permanency, and well being outcomes.

## **United States Department of Health and Human Services - Child and Family Services Review**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued the Child and Family Services Review report in June 2002. The report found that CPS achieved substantial conformity with seven systemic factors, with several strengths noted. However, CPS did not achieve substantial conformity in six of the seven safety, permanency, and well being outcomes. Substantial conformity is a score of 90% or better. CPS was required to develop and file a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to avoid payment of fines. As part of the plan CPS completed case readings, tracking many of the same measures contained in the prior review. CPS achieved the following scores in regards to safety, permanency, and well being outcomes.

Federal %	Measure Description
86%	Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.
77.6%	Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
71.9%	Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
93.8%	Permanency outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.
70%	Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.
84.2%	Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their education needs.
72.9%	Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The review looked at over 45 separate and distinct items covering CPS performance in addition to the items noted above.

## **Department of Family and Protective Services - Texas Child and Family Service Review**

The Texas Child and Family Service Review (TCFSR) is part of the Program Improvement Plan developed in response to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Review. Below is a chart that details the outcome performance of CPS from 2001 to present. CPS provided this chart to OIG. The only change OIG made to the chart was to add the full language for the measures in the “Outcome” column to provide clarity in understanding what is being measured. Review of the chart suggests a strong correlation between CPS’s internal findings and the findings of the OIG case reading. The CPS practice of allowing cases

to be recorded as “Ruled Out” or “Unable to Determine” when they are actually substantiated and should be recorded as “Reason to Believe” would change certain of the statistics in a negative manner had they been recorded appropriately. CPS’s clarifying language is included at the end of the chart.

Outcome/Item/Data Indicator	CFSR Standard	Baseline 02	FY 03	Q2 04	Q3 04	Q4 04	Target	Due Date
<b>Safety 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>82.7%</b>	<b>64.6%</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	June-04
Item 1: Timeliness of initial investigations of reports of child maltreatment.	90%	90%	84.4%	78.9%	81.3%	70.0%	90.0%	N/A
Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment.	90%	92%	93.6%	92.5%	89.6%	83.1%	90.0%	N/A
Safety Indicator: Repeat Maltreatment	<6.1%	4.2%	4.6%	3.7%		3.8%	N/A	N/A
Safety Indicator: Maltreatment of Children in Foster Care	<0.57%	0.29%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	N/A	N/A
<b>Safety 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>77.6%</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>90.9%</b>	<b>84.1%</b>	<b>82.6%</b>	December-04
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal.	90%	81%	100	93.5%	91.7%	92.7%	86.0%	December-04
Item 4: Risk of harm to children.	90%	80%	99.7	95.4%	92.2%	85.0%	85.0%	December-04
<b>Permanency 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>71.9%</b>	<b>73.4</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>72.7%</b>	<b>61.0%</b>	<b>82.0%</b>	December-05
Item 5: Foster Care re-entries.	90.0%	91.0%	100	98.8%	97.9%	98.2%	N/A	N/A
FC Re-entry Indicator*	<8.6	1.5%	2.56%	2.9%	2.8%	2.2%	N/A	N/A
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	90.0%	78.0%	86.50%	77.7%	84.6%	82.2%	83.0%	March-05
Stability Indicator*	86.7%	71.2%	69.70%	70.8%	71.2%	73.8%	83.0%	March-05
Item 7: Permanency goal for the child.	90.0%	78.0%	88.9	88.8%	90.0%	87.2%	83.0%	March-05
Item 8: Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement with Relatives.	90.0%	92.0%	N/A	87.5%	83.7%	79.4%	N/A	N/A
Reunification Indicator*	76.2%	64.4%	59.6	63.8%	60.7%	61.1%	70.0%	March-05
Item 9: Adoption	90.0%	57.0%	57.5	47.8%	46.9%	40.0%	65.0%	March-05
Adoption Indicator*	32.0%	43.7%	46.1	46.7%	50.1%	41.3%	N/A	N/A
Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	90.0%	100.0%	91.2	88.2%	80.6%	76.7%	N/A	N/A
<b>Permanency 2: The continuity of family relations and connections is preserved for children.</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>88.1%</b>	<b>79.9%</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	March-05
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement.	90.0%	100.0%	95.8	96.0%	93.8%	96.2%	N/A	N/A
Item 12: Placement with siblings.	90.0%	84.0%	91.1	93.5%	94.8%	93.8%	N/A	N/A
Item 13: Visits with parents and siblings in foster care.	90.0%	85.0%	80.5	78.9%	89.3%	71.0%	N/A	N/A
Item 14: Preserving connections.	90.0%	84.0%	81.7	84.2%	89.9%	90.2%	N/A	N/A
Item 15: Relative placement.	90.0%	94.0%	91.9	94.6%	96.3%	87.0%	N/A	N/A
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents.	90.0%	100.0%	88	88.5%	85.2%	83.2%	N/A	N/A
<b>Well Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>70.0%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>74.2%</b>	<b>68.5%</b>	<b>58.9%</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	March-05
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents.	90.0%	72.0%	83.8%	82.1%	77.7%	74.0%	80.0%	March-05
Item 18: Child and family involvement in	90.0%	79.0%	76.9%	82.4%	75.5%	73.8%	85.0%	March-05

case planning.								
Item 19: Worker visits with child	90.0%	82.0%	75.5%	74.5%	69.6%	66.9%	87.0%	March-05
Caseworker Visits Data Indicator (SA_03s)**	N/A	68.6%	70.0%	72.9%	73.8%	68.7%	87.0%	March-05
Item 20: Worker visits with parents	90.0%	81.0%	74.0%	75.2%	70.9%	64.7%	86.0%	March-05
<b>Well Being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>84.2%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>86.5%</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>82.3%</b>	90.0%	March-05
Item 21: Educational needs of the child.	90.0%	84.0%	83.4%	87.0%	87.4%	82.1%	90.0%	March-05
<b>Well Being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>68.0%</b>	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>76.4%</b>	<b>68.3%</b>	<b>85.0%</b>	March-05
Item 22: Physical health of the child.	90.0%	82.0%	71.3%	83.7%	79.2%	73.1%	87.0%	March-05
Item 23: Mental Health of the child.	90.0%	82.5%	81.8%	87.3%	83.1%	77.3%	87.0%	March-05

\* = Data for the national standard indicators (light blue highlight) for FY 03 is from the Texas CFSR Data Profile 2001, 2002, and 2003, provided July 27, 2004 by the Children's Bureau. National standard indicator data for FY 04 is from the Texas DFPS Data Warehouse. Baseline refers to the Texas on-site CFSR which occurred in February 2002. All other data is from CFSR Structured Case Readings, FY 2003 and 2004 (4th Quarter end of FY data). \*\*A national standard threshold for monthly face-to-face contacts has not yet been established. Texas is monitoring this measure due to it's correlation with better permanency and well being outcomes for children, as established by the Children's Bureau.

# **Child Fatality Policy Review**

## **Summary**

The patchwork of statutes and policy that direct child death investigations creates a convoluted process with minimal accountability that effectively leaves CPS policing itself in child fatality cases. The policies and processes between the various committees and teams<sup>10</sup> responsible for death reviews are disjointed and do not form a cohesive framework for child fatality investigations. There is a lack of clarity in policy as to the roles and responsibilities for CPS staff in the death review process. The current system does not ensure that anyone is held accountable and the oversight appears ineffective. The loss of the State Risk Director has caused an accountability void and communication disconnect. There does not appear to be an effective system of checks and balances. The only semi-independent oversight appears to be Citizen Review Team members who are primarily recruited and appointed by CPS. This appears to create a conflict of interest or at a minimum a bias favorable to CPS. The summaries below provide a glimpse at how the process works. Specific death cases were not reviewed.

## **CPS Handbook, Section 2310 through 2314**

### **Notifications:**

When CPS receives a report that a child death is alleged to have occurred from abuse or neglect the following notifications occur:

- CPS caseworker must notify law enforcement and request a joint investigation.
- CPS caseworker must report the death of the child if younger than six to the medical examiner (ME) in the county in which the death occurred. If no ME is available the death is reported to the county justice of peace.
- When a child death is either assigned for investigation or involves a child in an open case regardless of the stage of service or cause of death the following occurs. The caseworker completes a Form 2701A within 24 hours (excluding holidays and weekends) notifying:
  - District director
  - Program administrator
  - Program director
  - Regional risk director
  - Local public information officer
  - The state office child fatality program specialist

### **Investigation:**

When CPS receives a report of a child death alleged to have occurred from abuse or neglect, CPS must investigate the death using standard policies and procedures. The worker first must determine, by a preponderance of the evidence, if the child death was a result of abuse or neglect. Next the worker must determine, by a preponderance of the evidence, whether there was an open CPS case, a closed CPS case, or no prior CPS case at the time of the child's death.

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<sup>10</sup> Regional Death Review Committee (RDRC), Citizen Review Team (CRT), Child Safety Review Committee (CSRC), Child Fatality Review Teams (CFRT)

## **Regional Responsibility:**

Each region must establish its own protocol for review of child death cases involving abuse or neglect. The only requirements for this review process are that:

1. The regions designate a single point of contact for the state office for child death investigation.
2. A system is in place to ensure that Form 2701-A is completed and sent to state office.
3. A system where the regional risk director reviews child death investigation for:
  - Consistency of data elements;
  - Compliance with policy, procedure and good casework practice;
  - Identification of training needs; and
  - Issues for consideration by the Child Safety Review Committee.

## **Regional Review Process:**

The Regional Death Review Committee reviews child deaths alleged to have occurred from abuse or neglect. If the death did not occur from abuse or neglect or CPS does not have a prior intake complaint of abuse or neglect then no committee review is required. If there is a local Citizen Review Team they can substitute for the Regional Death Review Committee.

## **Fatality Review Committees and Teams**

### **Regional Death Review Committee (RDRC)**

Each region must review cases involving investigations of child deaths resulting from abuse or neglect involving cases that were previously known to CPS and or had an open case with CPS at the time of the child's death.

- The CPS Program Administrator or designee must convene a committee to review child deaths alleged to be from abuse or neglect in cases involving children.
- The review committee must have three members, two of which must be recruited by CPS from outside the agency.
- Reviews must occur within 30 days of receipt of the autopsy report.
- Staff is to provide all pertinent written materials to the committee for review.
- The committee may schedule interviews with staff and other parties as needed.
- The committee must summarize meetings on Form 2701-B. Copies are sent to the
  - Regional director,
  - CPS program administrator,
  - Program director,
  - Regional risk director, and the
  - Child fatality program specialist within 15 days of the meeting.

The Regional Death Review Committee simply appears to review cases and refer a summary back to CPS management.

## **Citizen Review Team (CRT)**

The Citizen Review Team reviews fatality cases referred to it or cases that come to its attention.

- The DFPS executive commissioner appoints five volunteer members who serve staggered two-year terms on the CRT.
- Members consist of community representatives and private citizens who live in the region for which the team is established and each member is a parent.
- Reviews are conducted quarterly by examining the facts of a death case as outlined by a CPS caseworker and law enforcement personnel.
- The review teams results are reported to the region in which the investigation occurred. The report is subject to disclosure under Chapter 552, of the Government Code. Neither policy nor statute states what happens with the report to the department.

No information, links or directions were found in policy regarding standards, procedures or protocol for conducting CRT reviews. There are no mandatory referral criteria in policy for the RDRC to refer cases to the CRT. It is not clear what the criterion is to refer cases to the CRT, nor the timeframe for the referral. The Citizen Review Team can be used in place of the Regional Death Review Committee.

## **Child Safety Review Committee (CSRC)**

The Child Safety Review Committee (CSCR) is the CPS State Office process that reviews cases that the RDRC sends forward. The CSRC considers issues that have statewide implications for CPS policy, training, resource development, casework practice, and coordination with external entities. These issues are identified by the regional risk directors based on their review of child fatalities or through review of other case review activities that are communicated to state office for consideration by the CSRC.

The CSRC meets quarterly and consists of individuals with diverse knowledge and skill sets such as State Office legal, Program staff, Policy Development Division, Child Care Licensing, Statewide Intake, The State Risk Director (position no longer exists), CPS program administrator and a representative of the Texas Council on Family Violence.

From December 2002 through June 2004 the Child Safety committee did not have meetings regarding child deaths. In July 03, the DFPS was reorganized. A reduction in force was implemented. The State Office Risk Director position was eliminated and the responsibilities were moved to the CPS policy section, Child Safety Specialist. Regional Risk Directors were reclassified to Child Safety Specialists. Child Safety Specialists currently report to regional program administrators in regional offices statewide and serve on all committees or teams responsible for CPS child death investigations.

## **Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT)**

In accordance with the Texas Family Code §264.505, §264.510 and CPS Handbook, Section 2314, child fatality review teams are multi-disciplinary, multi-agency panels that review all child deaths regardless of the cause. Local teams identify gaps in service and coordination among all agencies represented on the team, and focus on developing community programs and activities to reduce the incidence of preventable child deaths. Statewide coordination of the local CFRT is conducted through the Child Fatality Review Team Committee. The death review includes a reexamination of information regarding the deceased child from relevant agencies, professionals, and health care providers. On receipt of the list of child fatalities, each review team member

reviews the member's agency records for information regarding each listed child. The CPS caseworker makes an oral presentation of their review of the case to the CFRT.

The Texas Family Code indicates the CFRT looks at cases of children younger than 18 years of age in which a death may have been prevented by reasonable medical, social, legal, psychological, or educational intervention. CFRT meets on a regular basis to review child fatality cases and recommend methods to improve coordination of services and investigations between agencies that are represented on the team. CFRT submits to the Bureau of Vital Statistics data reports on deaths reviewed as specified by the committee.

### **Child Fatality Quick Response Team (QRT)**

On March 29, 2004, in a memo identified as PSA 04-088, DFPS created the Child Fatality Quick Response Team (QRT). The Quick Response Team (QRT) was created to assist in tracking child fatalities in which CPS had a prior “reason to believe (RTB)” finding of abuse or neglect of a current household member and the child’s death is a result of abuse or neglect. The QRT is also to be utilized when a child death case receives a “high level of media attention.” The Quick Response Team’s role is to coordinate efforts to:

- Effectively manage media/legislative inquires;
- Provide sufficient staff support during the investigation;
- Efficiently communicate with all staff and stakeholders who need access to case related information.

The primary purpose of this team appears to be damage control after a death occurs. The team does not address cases other than where there was a prior finding of “reason to believe” that abuse occurred. Caseworkers are allowed by policy to record a case as “ruled out” or “unable to determine” even when they have substantiated the allegations. Therefore, these cases would not be looked at by the QRT. The QRT does provide additional staff support and coordinates the release of information by knowledgeable onsite management personnel. The QRT does not appear to have any child fatality investigation responsibilities.

# Wilderness Camp Inspections

## Summary

The Health and Human Services Commission-Office of Inspector General (OIG) organized and conducted unannounced inspections of three (3) therapeutic “wilderness” camps, where children in CPS custody were residents for sexual behavioral issues and treatment. According to CPS, there were only four total therapeutic treatment (wilderness camps) facilities used by them for the treatment of children in their custody. The purpose of the visits was to determine whether the children were in a safe and healthy environment. Only male children are housed at these facilities. The camps are independently owned and operated. The camps contract with the state to provide a variety of services. They also house male children from juvenile probation as well as “private pay” families. Children in custody of Child Protective Services (CPS) range in age from 10 to 17. Although the majority of the children are there for sexual offenses such as rape and molestation, some children are there for other criminal violations. Some children are on probation while others are not.

Four camps were scheduled for visits: Woodside Trails in Bastrop, Pegasus Camp in Lockhart, Pathfinders Camp in Driftwood and Pathways 3H Camp in Mountain Home. However, Woodside Trails was not visited, because it was closed and the children had been removed by Child Protective Services before interviews began.

The investigative team was comprised of men and women from the Internal Affairs and the General Investigations sections of the Office of Inspector General’s Enforcement Division. Children to be interviewed were identified by a list of names provided by CPS staff.

The following issues were identified in the course of the wilderness camps inspections.

- According to both staff and kids, caseworkers do not regularly visit children in CPS custody in compliance with policy standards requiring visits every 30 days.
- According to Executive staff, in all three camps, the average CPS child comes to the camp on four to five psychotropic drugs. Within a month or two they are either off the medication completely or down to one or two drugs. Staff indicated that this is more common for children coming from a State Hospital. Some children have reported to the camp on as many as six to nine psychotropic drugs and in a lethargic state.
- In two of the camps, sex offenders are housed with non-sex offenders.
- Juvenile probationers are mandated to complete sex-offender treatment; but CPS children, unless court mandated, are not required to complete the sex-offender treatment program.
- Personal identifying information provided by CPS for children in CPS custody, such as date of birth and race, were often incorrect.
- Inappropriate physical contact between children was noted at one camp.
- Children campers are escorting younger children to a remote location to shower at one camp.
- There appears to be insufficient monitoring and supervision of children during bedtime hours at one camp.
- Use of profanity towards children.
- One facility was generally not clean.

The following table summarizes the individual statistical findings of the wilderness camps investigated. These figures relate to (1) supervision ratios of counselors to children, (2) total full-time employees, (3) total number of children, (4) number of CPS children, and (5) maximum number of children licensed per facility.



<b>SUMMARY TABLE</b>							
<b>Name of Wilderness Camps</b>	<b># CPS Kids</b>	<b>Licensed For</b>	<b>Total # of kids</b>	<b>FTE's</b>	<b>Counselor to Child Ratio</b>	<b>National Counselor Avg. Ratio</b>	<b>Counselor to Child Ratio At-Night</b>
<b>Pegasus/Camp Comanche</b> Lockhart, Texas	47	120	120	160	1 to 6	1 to 8	1 to 12
<b>Pathways 3H Camp</b> Kerrville, Texas	10	30	26	30	1 to 4	1 to 8	1 to 8
<b>Pathfinders Camp</b> Driftwood, Texas	21	26	24	24	1 to 6	1 to 8	1 to 12
<b>Woodside Trails</b> Bastrop, Texas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

## **Pegasus/ Camp Comanche**

### **Lockhart, Texas**

On August 18, 2004, Pegasus Camp was visited. Upon arrival, the director was contacted and briefed about the purpose of the visit. Private interview locations were established and staff were assigned to assist investigators. Investigators toured the entire facility, documenting the tour with a video camera and a digital camera.

Forty-three children were interviewed using a questionnaire designed by OIG to assess the child's health, welfare and safety. Each interview was recorded with audio equipment. Several children indicated that their caseworkers did **not** visit them regularly.

An interview was conducted with Executive Staff members, Robert Ellis and Tim Brown. According to Mr. Ellis, their camp is licensed for one hundred and twenty kids and they are usually at or near full capacity. The camp appears very structured in daily activities and child interaction. The children appear to be involved daily activities, such as meal preparations, lawn care, and maintenance. Camp Comanche provided a copy of the health and fire inspection reports during this visit. Pegasus employs one hundred sixty full-time employees. There is a staff to camper ratio of 1 to 6. The national average is 1 to 8. At night, during sleep, the ratio increases to 1 to 12. The children are divided based on age, size and maturity. There was no integration of sex offenders with non-sex offenders at this camp. The director was debriefed at the conclusion of the interviews and thanked for his cooperation. According to staff, most CPS caseworkers only visit children in CPS custody once every two months or more. This is not consistent with CPS policy that requires a monthly visit.

According to Executive staff, the average child comes to the camp on four to five psychotropic drugs. Within a month or two they are either off the medication completely or down to one or two drugs. They indicated that this is more common for children coming from the State Hospital. Some children have reported to the camp on as many as six to nine psychotropic drugs and in a lethargic state. The children at this camp appeared to be well regimented and in good spirits.

## **POSITIVE**

### **FACILITY**

- Grounds well maintained and clean
- Building exteriors and interiors clean
- Kitchen immaculately clean and well stocked with supplies and food
- Commendable school facilities with age appropriate books in library

### **STAFF**

- Operationally well organized
- Easily identified and respected authority figures
- Cooperative and open with information
- Sense of pride in job
- Staff to resident ratio of 1-6 maintained
- Provide structured environment and routine
- Evidence of positive reinforcement given to residents

### **RESIDENTS**

- Very polite and respectful
- Demonstrated detailed knowledge of rules
- Demonstrated detailed knowledge of consequences
- Appeared well nourished
- Well disciplined
- Openly discussed reasons they are at facility
- Verbalized accountability for behaviors that sent them to facility
- Demonstrated that therapeutic skills are used throughout the day
- Reported feeling safe in facility
- No evidence of untreated injuries

## **NEGATIVE**

Some staff use profanity. Residents are not permitted to use profanity. This is a double standard and sends the wrong message to residents.

## **Pathways 3H Camp**

### **Mountain Home, TX (Kerrville, Texas)**

On August 20, 2004, Pathways 3H Camp was visited. Upon arrival, the camp director was contacted and briefed about the purpose of the inspection. Private interview locations were established and staff were assigned to assist investigators. Investigators toured the entire facility, documenting the tour with a video camera and a digital camera.

CPS had ten (10) children assigned and placed at this facility. All ten were interviewed using a questionnaire designed by OIG to assess the child's health, welfare and safety. Of those ten children, two had recently been transferred from Woodside Trails in Bastrop, Texas. One child was not interviewed, because he was off-site and on suicide watch. Each interview was recorded with audio equipment. Several children indicated that their caseworkers did **not** visit them on a regular basis.

An interview was conducted with the Director of Operations, Joel Grimmatt, in reference to daily operational issues. According to Mr. Grimmatt their camp is licensed for thirty kids. Mr. Grimmatt stated that they are rarely filled to capacity. The camp appeared very structured in daily activities and child interaction. The facility is very small. A copy of the most recent health and fire inspection reports were obtained during this visit. Pathways 3H has thirty full-time employees on staff. There is a staff to camper ratio of 1 to 4. The national average is 1 to 8. At night, during sleep the ratio increases to 1 to 8. The children are divided based on age, size and maturity. The population is comprised of sex offenders and non-sex offenders at this camp and there is no segregation.

The Pathways 3H camp has an online medical needs/injury reporting system, which means if a child reports or is reported to be injured or in need of medical attention the report is sent directly to CPS. According to staff, most CPS caseworkers are not visiting their children very often. This is not consistent with CPS policy that requires a monthly visit. There were no notable issues which concerned staff at this facility.

According to Executive staff, the average child comes to the camp on four to five psychotropic drugs. Within a month or two they are either off the medication completely or down to one or two drugs. They indicated that this is more common for children coming from the State Hospital. Some children have reported to the camp on as many as six to nine psychotropic drugs and in a lethargic state. The children at this camp appeared to be in good spirits.

The camp director was debriefed at the conclusion of the interviews and thanked for the cooperation of their staff.

## **POSITIVE**

### **FACILITY**

Adequate sleeping areas  
Grounds well maintained  
Evidence of remodeling/rebuilding improvements

### **STAFF**

Cooperative and open with information  
Easily identified as authority figures  
Evidence of positive reinforcement given to residents

### **RESIDENTS**

Very polite and respectful  
Most demonstrated detailed knowledge of rules  
Most demonstrated detailed knowledge of consequences  
Appeared well nourished  
Reported feeling safe in facility

## **NEGATIVE**

No segregation of sex offenders from general population  
Main office building very dirty inside

## **Pathfinders Camp**

### **Driftwood, TX**

On August 19, 2004, Pathfinders Camp was visited. Upon arrival, the director was contacted and briefed about the purpose of the visit. Private interview locations were established and staff were assigned to assist investigators. Investigators toured the entire facility, documenting the tour with a video camera and a digital camera.

CPS had twenty (20) children placed and assigned to this facility, all were interviewed using a questionnaire designed by OIG to assess the child's health, welfare and safety. Each interview was recorded with audio equipment. Several children indicated that their caseworkers did **not** visit them on a regular basis.

An interview was conducted with the Executive Director, Karen Rogers, in reference to daily operational issues. According to Ms. Rogers their camp is licensed for twenty-six kids. Currently they house twenty-one kids in CPS custody. Ms. Rogers stated that they house twenty-four kids in two buildings, four rooms with six kids to a room. The camp had recently moved them from outdoor sleeping facilities. The camp appeared very structured in their daily classroom schedule. However, there appeared to be minimal to no structure between the staff and kids. The kids were observed playing contact (tackle) football during this visit. According to many of the kids they are allowed to masturbate twice a day in the showers only. The dorm rooms do not allow for direct supervision of the kids by staff. According to the Director, staff is responsible for meal preparation, while being assigned to watch kids at night. The method of monitoring the kids while cooking is a 9" television monitor that provides a view of the sleeping facilities. However, the camera to view one bedroom was not wired and the bedroom could not be observed on the monitor. The fact that the camera was not in operation due to the wiring was pointed out by one of the camp kids. The facility is relatively small. A copy of the most recent health and fire inspection reports was obtained during this visit. There is a staff to camper ratio of 1 to 6 during the day. The national average is 1 to 8. At night, during sleep, the ratio increases to 1 to 12. The children are divided based on age, size and maturity. The camp is primarily intended to house and work with sex offenders, but does accept children who are not sex offenders. Sex offenders and non-sex offenders are not segregated. OIG received a sexual harassment complaint by a child in CPS custody at this camp. OIG contacted CPS and requested assistance. A CPS-Child Care Licensing caseworker arrived and conducted an interview of the alleged victim. The caseworker also noticed and documented the lack of structure between the staff and children. In addition, the caseworker observed the inoperative camera and monitor.

The caseworker stated to OIG staff that there were several areas of concern at this facility and that a record of the concerns would be made. OIG staff spoke with the camp director and expressed concern about the safety of the children based on the dorm structure and the additional responsibilities placed on staff while they are assigned to supervise the kids.

According to Executive staff, the average child comes to the camp on four to five psychotropic drugs. Within a month or two they are either off the medication completely or down to one or two drugs. They indicated that this is more common for children coming from the State Hospital. Some children have reported to the camp on as many as six to nine psychotropic drugs and in a lethargic state. The children at this camp appeared to be in good spirits.

### **POSITIVE**

Schools appeared adequate with dedicated teachers

Adequate sleeping areas

Residents appeared well nourished

## **NEGATIVE**

### **FACILITY**

Buildings in poor repair

Offices dirty

Overflowing trashcans

Used coffee filter on counter in main office

Carpets not vacuumed

Main office and archives building had scattered files and documents on floor

Debris and trash scattered throughout campus grounds

Pantry poorly stocked

No evidence of rebuilding/remodeling improvements as described by camp director

Inability to monitor resident's safety in adjacent room (camera not functional)

### **STAFF**

Failure to obtain immediate medical treatment for residents, brown recluse spider bite untreated for six weeks

Leg injury requiring stitches treated with simple first aid leaving thumb-size scar

Complaints of back injuries treated with Ibuprofen and had no medical examination

Inappropriate staff attire included cut-off shorts and flip-flop shoes

Difficult to distinguish staff from residents

Staff left keys on table unattended and easily accessible to residents

Prepares food at night for following day, while assigned to watch residents

Some staff uncooperative and evasive with responses and information

Access to various places at campsite was hindered while keys were obtained

Isolated resident are made to sleep outside and staff checks on him "every once in a while"

### **RESIDENTS**

Poor hygiene and ill-fitting, dirty clothes

No consistent time for rising and retiring

Frequently failed to demonstrate understanding of rules

Residents allowed full access to campsite without staff accompaniment

Residents used as "trustees" during interactions with peers

Minimal to no supervision at night

Reportedly permitted to masturbate up to twice a day in showers

No residents reported having use of facility horses, contrary to staff assertions that they were used for therapy

# Child Drug Study

## Executive Summary

OIG enlisted the expertise of the ACS-Heritage staff to perform a high-level analysis of selected drug utilization among all Medicaid clients under age 18. The report produced for OIG by ACS-Heritage was designed to serve as a pro-active high-level initial review of the specified child population. It was not designed to represent a complete analysis of the services rendered to the client population. It is used as a diagnostic tool that will be followed by more extensive data collection and further clinical analysis.

The initial analysis entailed the retrospective review of 5,709,263 pharmacy claims for the time period of July through August 2004, matched against 3,332,040 medical acute care claims going back 720 days (2 years). The acute care medical claims were searched for FDA approved diagnoses to support the use of the prescribed drugs. FDA adult standards were used as a baseline if there were no FDA approved standards for children. An analysis was then performed evaluating clinical issues such as inappropriate drug use (prescription not supported by diagnosis), inappropriate dosing, drug safety, and combination therapy. The three drug classes reviewed were stimulants, antidepressants, and antipsychotics. The majority of the drugs reviewed and being prescribed were not approved for use by children under the age of 18 by the FDA. The analysis identified these areas of significant concern.

- Data analysis showed that 19,403 children filed claims for an antipsychotic agent. Of these, nearly 98% of the claims were for an atypical antipsychotic.
- Approximately 23,183 children received a claim for an antidepressant agent. Of these, nearly 75% of the claims were for a drug referenced in the March 2004 suicide warning letter issued by the FDA.
- Of the approximately 43,521 children receiving treatment with stimulants, approximately 12,335 or 28% do not appear to have a proper diagnosis to warrant the use.
- Of the approximately 23,400 children receiving treatment with antidepressants, approximately 12,168 or 52% do not appear to have a proper diagnosis to warrant the use.
- Of the approximately 19,403 children receiving treatment with antipsychotics, 47% do not appear to have a proper diagnosis warranting their use.
- A dosing analysis revealed that 52% of antipsychotics, 14% of stimulants, and 10% of antidepressants were potentially administered inappropriately.
- Approximately 19,365 or 31% of the children identified are receiving two or more of the drugs selected for review.

A copy of the report on the Child Drug Study is included in Appendix G.

# CPS Training Model

## Overview

The CPS training curriculum for new caseworkers consists of three components, Pre-BSD, BSD/OJT, and Transition to Practice. These components are designed to provide a comprehensive overview of working within the system, as well as to gradually transition the new worker to the field. The training should be provided to new workers during the first four to five months of employment with CPS

Pre-BSD activities (first two weeks) are intended to familiarize the new worker with their future unit. The worker is assigned to a mentor or supervisor, and is assigned a list of tasks to complete. These tasks include conferencing with the supervisor, learning how to operate office equipment, completion of computer software training, shadowing caseworkers, overview of IMPACT and Statewide Intake systems, and various C.P.S. policy readings.

Classroom activities (Basic Skills Development) and OJT (On-the-Job Training) are provided over a six-week period (see breakdown below). The curriculum and activities are geared to assist the worker in applying what is being learned in the classroom.

Upon graduation from BSD, the training model is designed to help new workers transition to working in the field. During the transition to practice period, the supervisor, a mentor, trainers, and other unit staff should support new workers in their development. The emphasis is intensive supervision, use of conferences to obtain feedback, gradual development of a caseload, and a capped workload.

## CPS BSD Classroom and OJT – Breakdown of Topics/Activities

TIME	DAY	BSD CLASSROOM/OJT
		WEEK 1
1 day	Day 1	Introduction to CPS
1 day	Day 2	Human Development and Attachment
3 days	Day 3 Day 4 Day 5	Maltreatment
		WEEK 2
1 day	Day 6	Family Dynamics (2-4 hours) Domestic Violence (2-4 hours)
1 day	Day 7	Substance Abuse
3 days	Day 8 Day 9 Day 10	Interviewing and Communication
		WEEK 3
4 days	Day 11 Day 12 Day 13 Day 14	Intake, Investigation and Risk  Assessment
1 day	Day 15	Legal I
		WEEK 4

5 days		On-the job training
		WEEK 5
2 days	Day 16 Day 17	Family Assessments and Family Plans of Service in CPS Cases
2 days	Day 18 Day 19	Legal II
4 days	Day 20	Removal, Placement, and Permanency
		WEEK 6
	Day 21 Day 22 Day 23	Removal, Placement, and Permanency (continued)
1 day	Day 24	Automation (service authorizations, eligibility, narratives)
½ day	½ of Day 25	BSD Knowledge Assessment and Graduation

Classroom Instruction: 20 days  
Automation: 4 days  
BSD Knowledge Assessment and Graduation: ½ day

TOTAL: 24 ½ days

## **CPS Employee Training Comments**

The OIG conducted a limited review of the six (6) week Child Protective Services Training Academy curriculum. The review revealed that the training curriculum did not appear to allow enough time on specific topics for a new employee to properly understand what was expected of them. The monitoring and oversight phase appears to be insufficient to expect anyone to graduate with a functional understanding of the volume of information covered in such a short period of time. The OIG conducted Statewide employee interviews, results depicted below support the OIG findings:

- 63% of the employees interviewed stated that the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for the legal procedures and protocol relating to their jobs.
- 79% of the employees interviewed stated that the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them to conduct case investigations.
- 55% of the employees interviewed stated that they did not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.
- 76% of the employees interviewed stated that they believe there is training they need and have not been provided.

In addition, the employees interviewed also stated that there were areas that CPS met their training expectation.

- 70% of the employees interviewed stated that the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety.
- 72% of the employees interviewed stated that the initial training academy adequately prepared them for CPS Policies and Procedures.
- 65% of the employees interviewed stated that CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their job.



# Continuing Education Training

## Overview

In addition to basic training (BSD) provided to new CPS staff, continuing education credits and additional training opportunities are also made available to agency staff. Texas Family Code, (Section 261.310), Investigation Standards, provides general guidelines for required training of investigative staff. These guidelines are intended to establish uniform training standards and to maintain the professionalism of workers who are charged with investigating child abuse and neglect. Appendix 2240: Voluntary Standards for Investigators of Child Abuse (CPSH) also incorporates training standards for investigative workers, in compliance with TFC 261.310.

The Department of Protective and Regulatory Services has established a “certification process” for CPS caseworkers and supervisors. Although participation in the certification process is voluntary, a primary motivating factor is an increase in base salary upon successful completion of these programs. Caseworkers and supervisors are required to complete additional training on an on-going basis in order to maintain their certification. DFPS contracts with the Protective Services Training Institute (PSTI) to administer the certification programs. PSTI provides continual training opportunities for agency staff throughout the state.

### Section 261.310. INVESTIGATION STANDARDS

- (a) The department shall by rule develop and adopt voluntary standards for persons who Investigate suspected child abuse or neglect at the state or local level. The standards shall encourage professionalism and consistency in the investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect.
- (b) The standards must provide for a minimum number of hours of annual professional training for interviewers and investigators of suspected child abuse or neglect.
- (c) The professional training curriculum developed under this section shall include information concerning:
  - (1) physical abuse and neglect, including distinguishing physical abuse from ordinary childhood injuries;
  - (2) psychological abuse and neglect;
  - (3) available treatment resources; and the incidence and types of reports of child abuse and neglect that are received by the investigating agencies, including information concerning false reports
- (d) The standards shall recommend:  
*that videotaped and audiotaped interviews with a suspected victim be uninterrupted;*  
*a maximum number of interviews with and examinations of a suspected victim;*  
*procedures to preserve evidence, including the original notes, videotapes, and audiotapes; and that an investigator of suspected child abuse or neglect make a reasonable effort to locate and inform each parent of a child of any report of abuse or neglect relating to the child.*

## Training Standards (CPSH)

In compliance with Texas Family Code (Section 261.31D), the CPS Policy Handbook includes the following standards for training (investigators of child abuse). This information is contained in:

### Appendix 2240: Voluntary Standards for Investigators of Child Abuse

DFPS has adopted the following rule to comply with House Bill (H.B.) 2252 as passed by the 72nd Texas Legislature. H.B. 2252 amended the Texas Family Code (TFC) by adding

TFC, §34.054, which requires DFPS to adopt voluntary standards for investigators of child abuse. The following rule meets all the requirements specified in TFC, §34.054.

To encourage professionalism and consistency in the investigation of reports of child abuse as specified in the Texas Family Code (TFC), §34.054, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) recommends the voluntary standards set forth in this section to individuals who investigate reports of child abuse.

1. As specified in TFC, §34.054, and in the Child-Care Licensing division's *Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies*, each individual responsible for investigating reports of child abuse, or for conducting interviews during investigations of child abuse, must receive at least 20 hours of professional training every year.

1. The professional training curriculum for individuals who conduct investigations or investigation interviews must include information about

A. physical abuse as defined in [paragraphs (C) and (D) of the definition of abuse in Item 2411, Primary Statutory Definitions,] including the distinction between

- i. physical injuries resulting from abuse, and
- ii. ordinary childhood injuries;

B. psychological abuse as defined in [paragraphs (A) and (B) of the definition of abuse in Item 2411, Primary Statutory Definitions;]

C. available treatment resources; and

D. the types of abuse reported to the investigating agency for whom the investigator works, including information about

- i. the incidence of each type of abuse reported, and
- ii. the receipt of false reports. (Brackets added.)

3. Individuals who conduct videotaped or audiotaped interviews with suspected victims of child abuse must ensure that the interviews meet the requirements for recorded interviews specified in TFC, §11.21(b), including the requirement in §11.21(b)(3) that the recording be accurate and unaltered.

4. Children often disclose information about the occurrence of abuse progressively over the course of several interviews. Accordingly, individuals who investigate reports of child abuse must

A. conduct enough interviews and examinations of suspected victims of child abuse to give them sufficient opportunity to disclose what they know; but

B. refrain from conducting additional interviews or examinations after a child has disclosed enough information to confirm or rule out the occurrence or risk of abuse, unless there is a good reason for conducting additional interviews or examinations. When there is a good reason for conducting additional interviews or examinations, the individual responsible for conducting the interviews or examinations may consult with a supervisor or another individual with appropriate expertise to confirm the need for additional interviews or examinations. All decisions about conducting additional interviews or examinations as specified in this subparagraph must be based on the best interest of the child.

5. Investigating agencies must keep all documents generated during investigations in the child's case record for the life of the record.

6. Investigators must make reasonable efforts to locate and notify each parent of a suspected victim of child abuse regarding the disposition of the investigation, except for absent parents who are abusive, dangerous, or otherwise unlikely to protect the child, as specified in Item 2273, Notification About Results.

## **CPS Certification Process**

Certification is a voluntary process designed to recognize professional development beyond the basic job skills required for CPS Specialists and Supervisors. Those who are certified have demonstrated a mastery of specialized knowledge and skills to perform the tasks of a CPS Specialist or Supervisor. The process includes specific requirements for education, agency and program experience, training, performance, evaluation components and testing (for supervisors only). Certification differs from social work licensure in that most requirements are specific to CPS Specialists and Supervisors and only they are eligible to apply.

## **Protective Services Training Institute (PSTI)**

The certification program is managed by PSTI, the Protective Services Training Institute. PSTI is a consortium comprised of DFPS and the graduate schools of social work in Texas (University of Texas-Austin, University of Texas-Arlington, and the University of Houston). PSTI is federally funded (Title IV-E) with matching funds from the Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) and the universities. The main objectives of PSTI are to implement competency-based training and certification for DFPS staff and to facilitate other university-agency partnership activities.

## **Certification Development (for Supervisors)**

The certification program was first developed for C.P.S Supervisors in the mid-1990's. The first phase of the process entailed formation of a certification committee (representatives from CPS, schools of social work, and PSTI). The committee identified supervisor competencies and validated them with supervisors in the field. Focus groups were held statewide to solicit input from practicing supervisors. The focus groups generated a comprehensive list of competencies, which were organized into five areas: Foundations of CPS Work; Common Knowledge and Skills; CPS Casework Methods and Practice; The Supervisor as Manager in Public Social Services; The Supervisor as Leader; and Development of Staff.

During the second phase of the project, components and requirements of the certification plan were developed. The third phase entailed development, testing, and administer a written exam for supervisors, and development of a video skills examination. The first certified supervisors received their certificates in February 1995. The certification program, requiring passing scores on both the knowledge-based and skills-based sections of the certification examination was fully implemented by January 1997.

## **Certification for C.P.S. Specialists**

In 1999, the Certification Committee and an ad hoc subcommittee met numerous times through the year to develop and refine Specialist Certification guidelines. The certification program for CPS Specialists was implemented in September 1999. In addition to developing a basic Specialist Certification program, the Committee decided that an Advanced Certification was also necessary. An Advanced Specialist Certification would recognize the advanced skill and expertise of a tenured CPS worker. Both levels must meet specific requirements for experience, training, and performance.

## **CPS Specialist Requirements (for certification)**

### **Education and Experience**

- Currently employed as CPS Specialist II, III, IV, V or a CPS Supervisor. See Applying for Certification for additional information.
- If hired before 10/01/2002, must have at least one year cumulative experience as a CPS Specialist after completion of Basic Skills Development (BSD).
- If hired or rehired after 10/01/2002, must have at least 18 months cumulative experience as a CPS Specialist.

### **Performance**

- Performance review and productivity are currently successful or are above that normally expected or required (verified through supervisory signature on application).
- Must not be in violation of standards of conduct or on departmental probation at the time of application.

### **Training**

Must have attended all training as outlined below:

- The two-day agency provided Risk Assessment training, which was offered during the summer and fall of 1999. The two-day Risk Assessment meets both the risk assessment and the one-day child development requirement.
- If the employee did not attend this training, they must complete one day of risk assessment training and one day of child development training provided either by the agency or PSTI.
- Agency-provided Cultural Diversity: Building Bridges or Walls training. Agency-provided Advanced Investigation Training (TCLEOSE).

## **CPS Advanced Specialist Requirements (for certification)**

Advanced Specialist Certification is an Advanced Certification for CPS Specialists who obtain increased knowledge of CPS clients and resources, and show leadership within their unit, agency, and community. Training should be intensive and focused on clinical skill building.

### **Education and Experience**

- Must be currently employed as CPS Specialist II, III, IV, V or a CPS Supervisor.
- If hired before 10/01/2002, must have at least 3 years cumulative experience as a CPS Specialist after the completion of BSD.
- If hired after 10/01/2002, must have at least 3 ½ years cumulative experience as a CPS Specialist.
- Must currently be a CPS Certified Specialist or CPS Supervisor.

### **Performance**

- Performance review and productivity are currently successful or are above that normally expected or required (verified by supervisory signature on application).
- Must not be in violation of standards of conduct or on departmental probation at the time of application.

## **Training**

- Documented completion of 72 hours of training in the three years prior to the application date of Advanced Specialist Certification.
- Training that applied towards Specialist Certification cannot apply to Advanced Specialist Certification
- Agency provided, PSTI-provided, university and college courses, conference workshops and other workshops are applicable.
- Training should be family and children related.
- Training that is CEU-eligible or practice-based agency contact hours can apply.
- Credit may be earned through successful completion of postgraduate training programs or successful completion of social work-related courses that are part of the curriculum of a college, university or graduate school of social work at a rate of 5 credit hours (0.5 CEU) per each semester hour or its equivalent.
- Up to 6 hours of technology may apply.
- Agency practice-based policy training is applicable.

## **CPS Supervisor Requirements (for certification)**

### **Education and Experience**

- Currently a CPS Certified Specialist (either Specialist or Advanced Specialist).
- Currently a CPS Supervisor, with two years of Texas CPS supervisory experience, or a master's degree in social work and 16 months of Texas CPS supervisory experience.
- With a master's degree in a human services-related field, may apply for an exception to the two-year experience requirement.

### **Performance**

- Performance evaluation and productivity are currently successful or are above that normally expected or required (verified by supervisory signature on application).
- Must not be in violation of standards of conduct or on departmental probation at the time of application.

### **Training**

- Must have attended all the training required of supervisors by DFPS for the first two years as a supervisor.
  - Agency-provided *Managing Workplace Harmony*
  - *CPS Supervisor Management Training, Parts 1 and 2*
- Must have attended the following PSTI Supervisor Training
  - *Supervising Individuals with Diverse Needs*
  - *Developing Worker Competency*
  - *Leadership: Empowering Yourself and Others*
  - *What's Happening in this Family*

### **Knowledge and Skills Assessment**

- Must pass the Supervisor Certification Exam

## **Suggested Training Topics for Advanced Certification**

- I. Strengthening Families
  - Family Dynamics
  - Foster Care/Adoption
  - Working with Parents
- II. Domestic Violence/Physical Abuse
- III. Child Maltreatment
  - Physical Abuse
  - Neglect
  - Emotional Abuse
  - Sexual Abuse
- IV. Cultural Competency
  - Cultural Diversity/Sensitivity
  - Specialized Populations/Cultures
- V. Client Mental Health Issues
  - Adults & Children
  - DSM IV
- VI. Substance Abuse & Addiction
  - Specific Populations
- VII. Children & Adolescents
  - Special Populations
- VIII. Skills, Safety, & Well Being
  - Interpersonal
  - Documentation/Casework
  - Clinical/Intervention
  - Personal/Professional Management
- IX. Ethical Decision Making
- X. Medical Conditions
  - Sexually Transmitted Diseases
  - Injuries
  - Memory Capacity

## **Continuing Education Employee Comments**

Statewide interviews of employees resulted in the following comments regarding continuing education:

- Employees suggested that management place an importance on training by allotting time for employees to attend training. Many employees interviewed said PSTI training is offered on a continuous basis, but employees' workload prevents them from attending.
- Employees said if training could be offered locally, it would reduce the amount of time taken from their casework.
- Employees said child abuse training provided by law enforcement and other outside sources would be beneficial.
- Employees suggested more caseworkers be allowed to attend the Crimes Against Children Conference each year.
- Employees suggested the legal training they receive should include more information from the Family Code.
- Employees suggested their training should include child custody issues.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on the Americans With Disabilities Act.
- Employees suggested their training include how-to effectively interview people, conduct a thorough investigation and write a comprehensive investigation report.
- Employees suggested additional training on legal issues, such as, writing affidavits, courtroom procedures and effectively testifying in court be provided after caseworkers have accumulated field experience.
- Employees suggested they be provided legal update training, especially as it applies to each county and region.
- Employees suggested additional training on risk assessment should be provided after caseworkers have accumulated field experience.
- Employees suggested previous cases involving a child's death should be used as a teaching tool. Employees said, presently, management is too concerned about the confidentiality of the case to realize the lessons that could be learned in analyzing these cases in a classroom setting.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on domestic violence.
- Employees suggested they be provided cultural diversity training.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on child development.
- Employees suggested State Wide Intake (SWI) employees should be better trained on how to obtain complete and accurate information for their reports and how to conduct research for prior CPS history, to avoid creating a duplicate case.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to locate resources and services in each county and region.
- Employees suggested training should be provided in conversational Spanish for caseworkers who do not speak Spanish. Employees suggest some cases are not being worked timely, for lack of Spanish-speaking employees.
- Employees suggested additional hands-on training with the Impact System should be provided. Employees suggest they be more adept at using the system to reduce the amount of time they spend documenting their cases.
- Employees suggested additional computer training should be provided.
- Employees suggested they be provided classes on time management.
- Employees suggested ethics training should be provided.
- Employees said they need self-defense training and training in dealing with uncooperative people and managing volatile situations.
- Employees suggested they be provided CPR and first aid training during the academy and periodic refresher courses as part of their continued education.

- Employees suggested they be provided training from law enforcement officers in identifying new drug trends, recognizing various drugs, identifying articles used in methamphetamine laboratories and other drug paraphernalia.
- Employees suggested they be provided training in identifying the signs of drug use and understanding the effects of various drugs and how substance abuse affects the family.
- Employees suggested they be provided training regarding the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) and how to read psychiatric reports.
- Employees suggested they be provided training regarding the use of psychotropic medication.
- Employees suggested that medical assessment training be provided to caseworkers before emails are sent to them suggesting they evaluate non-verbal children by assessing physical attributes, such as; scalp, eyes, pupils and capillary response.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to identify physical abuse, such as, burns and broken bones and how to recognize if a child has an injury that is under the skin and not visible to the eye.
- Employees suggested they be provided training in identifying the verbal and physical signs of sexual abuse.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to recognize when a child has been neglected or malnourished.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to direct youth on birth-control issues.
- Employees suggested they be provided training in skills for parenting children with special needs and the proper way of transporting children with special needs.
- Employees suggested they be provided developmental training for handling toddlers and small children.
- Employees suggested they be provided training on how to communicate serious issues to a family, such as, how to explain to a woman that her child has accused the father sexual abuse.



# Appendices

## Appendix A

### *REGIONAL REPORTS*

The results for each region are included in Appendix A divided by region. The section for each region contains the information for the case reading, case reading validation, community questionnaires, staff allocation and employee interviews.

### Region 1 Report

#### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 65 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please see Appendix C for sampling methodology. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

Question	%Yes	%No	Total
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>78.46%</b>	<b>21.54%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>58.46%</b>	<b>41.54%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>71.79%</b>	<b>28.21%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>46.15%</b>	<b>53.85%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>27.69%</b>	<b>72.31%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>47.73%</b>	<b>52.27%</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>60.53%</b>	<b>39.47%</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>26.15%</b>	<b>73.85%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>77.78%</b>	<b>22.22%</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>92.31%</b>	<b>7.69%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>7.84%</b>	<b>92.16%</b>	<b>51</b>

<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>9.23%</b>	<b>90.77%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>93.1%</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>18.46%</b>	<b>81.54%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>16.33%</b>	<b>83.67%</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>54.55%</b>	<b>45.45%</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>72.73%</b>	<b>27.27%</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>72.73%</b>	<b>27.27%</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>54.17%</b>	<b>45.83%</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>22.22%</b>	<b>77.78%</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>21.54%</b>	<b>78.46%</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>6.15%</b>	<b>93.85%</b>	<b>65</b>

### **Prior Cases**

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 71.79% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.11 cases with 29% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 4% of the time.

### **Subsequent Cases**

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 62.5% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.32 cases with 8% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 20% of the time.

### **Validation**

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file, that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions. Please see Appendix E for validation methodology.

## Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

## COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. A County Court at Law Judge was also surveyed. Three respondents requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 6.86. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

### Results

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	3	43%	4	57%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (800 number)	6	86%	1	14%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	6	86%	1	14%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	7	100%	0	0%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	1	14%	6	86%

Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:

**Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:**

- High caseworker staff turnover ratio is detrimental to the children.
- Excessively large case load for caseworkers.
- The 800 number for state reporting system is a problem. The person calling in the complaint is speaking with someone who will not address the issue. By the time the caseworker receives the information; the complaint issue has changed.
- Liberties are taken with the penal code (increased punishment with no basis for the increase).
- When CPS case files are requested for the identification of witnesses, outcry's, etc., we have to make a request through the Lubbock CPS office. When the records are received, they are "De-identified".

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Problems are on the part of caseworkers, management, agency philosophy and a lack of resources.
- Staffs with problems are moved to other areas instead of appropriate action being taken.
- Caseworkers who do not understand the difference between a CPS action and a Felony prosecution.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Extensive updated training for caseworkers.
- Increase the number of caseworkers.
- Increase the level of salaries for caseworkers.
- Decrease the caseload.

**Staff Allocation**

*Management/Administrative*

Program Administrators:	2 (1 C.P.S. P.A., 1 P.A. V)
Program Directors:	6 (4 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 1 Permanency P..D., 1 Risk P.D.)
Supervisors:	26 (C.P.S. Supervisors)
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Subtotal:	34

*Caseworkers*

Investigations:	37
Family Based Safety Services:	19
Substitute Care:	77
Generic:	15
Foster Care/Adoptions:	17
<hr/>	
Subtotal:	165

*Clerical/Support*

Administrative Assistants:	26
Clerks:	6
Human Services Technician:	1
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Subtotal:	33

*Other Staff*

Program Specialists:	(7)	Worker V's:	(4)
Contracts:	(4)	Human Services Specialists:	(3)
Volunteer Coordinators:	(3)	Accountants:	(2)
District Trainers:	(2)	Case Analysts:	(2)
Kinship Specialist:	(2)	Permanency Planning Team Convenors:	(2)
PRIDE (Foster Parent) Trainer:	(1)	Public Information Officer:	(1)
Subtotal:		33	

*TOTAL REGION 1 (Lubbock):* 265

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	4	33.3%
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	1	08.3%
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	4	33.3%
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	2	16.7%
Employed: 10 + Years	1	08.3%

Number of first line supervisors since your first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	5
2	2
3	2
4	1
5+	2

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	2	0	0	0	1	3
Bachelor's	3	2	0	1	3	9

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?  
 YES NO

3	4
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

43% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

57% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Incorrect address or address omitted from report.

Incorrect telephone number or telephone information omitted from report.

No school information.

Incorrect directions in the county.

Not enough information on the number of children at the same home.

Intake argues with reporters, saying that it is not abuse when drugs are being provided to children, so intake will not take the information.

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

7	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

100% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Five employees said too much time is wasted, trying to locate the child and family.

Two employees said incorrect information causes employees to not be able to locate a child within an immediate time period, which places the child at risk.

**CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-2.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-3.

Two investigators answered 3.

One Investigator answered 3-5.

Two investigators answered 4-5.

One investigator answered 5.

One investigator answered 5-6.

One investigator answered 12.

Based on answers of FBSS/Sub-care employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week for FBSS/Sub-care workers is approximately 1 case/family.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week for investigators are approximately 5 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

Four FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1 per week.

Five investigators answered 3.

One investigator answered 4.

One investigator answered 4-5 per week.

One investigator answered 5-6 per week.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 1 case/family.

Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 4 cases.

3. What is your average caseload?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 6-8 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 12 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 15 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 40-42 per month.

One FBSS/Sib-care worker answered 50-55 per month.

One investigator answered 12-20 per month.

One investigator answered 17-20 per month.

One investigator answered 18 per month.

One investigator answered 20 per month.

One investigator answered 45-60 per month.

One investigator answered 55-60 per month.

One investigator answered 60-70 per month.

All employees said they were unaware of what their average caseload is per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers said their average caseload per month is approximately 26 cases/families. Investigators said their average caseload per month is approximately 38 cases.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 6-8 per month.

Three FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested 25-30 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 30 per month.

One investigator suggested 5-8 per month.

Three investigators suggested 12 per month.

One investigator suggested 12-15 per month.

One investigator suggested 25 per month.

One investigator suggested 30 per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that in order to take care of children and families, a reasonable caseload per month should be approximately 24 cases/families.

Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 16 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

Seven employees said that a caseworker attempts to get caught up on cases before taking a vacation, and then cases sit idle. Another caseworker will take care of any emergency issues, depending on which caseworker is available and willing to take care of the emergency.

Two employees said the cases sit idle.

Three investigators said the cases would be re-assigned to another worker.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

5	2
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

71% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

29% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

One employee said that with so many cases, it is not unusual to overlook one or two cases. The caseworker also said that the lack of information obtained by intake causes delays in locating a family.

One new investigator said he/she did not always have a tenured worker to go with him/her.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

5	2
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

71% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

29% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

One investigator said that sometimes weather conditions prevent travel.

One investigator said statewide intake has 3 hours to call on a Priority 1 case. By the time the investigators receive the information, the urgency has grown or the child has recanted.

One investigator said that after statewide intake receives information, 2-3 days pass before investigators receive the cases.

One investigator said that after statewide intake receives information, 5-6 days pass before investigators receive the cases.

One investigator said that after statewide intake receives information, on many occasions, 10 days have passed before investigators receive the cases. On Priority 2 cases, investigators are required to make contact within 10 days, so this is a major problem.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

2	10
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17% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

83% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

10	2
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer.



83% of the employees interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

17% of the employees interviewed said there is not an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

Three employees said all cases are required to be closed within 60 days, but unknown why.

One employee said statewide has a list of employees names that have cases open longer than 60 days and employees on that list will be written up.

Four employees said CPS receives money on all closed cases, so it is about money.

Two employees said it is a numbers game.

## **WORK PROCESS:**

One Substitute Care (SUB) worker explained that it is necessary to multi-task constantly, because there are so many cases. FBSS must check on the welfare of the children and there is a lot of paperwork involved on long-term cases. FBSS has to work with parents in an attempt to keep parents happy regarding the location their children are located. Sometimes parents want children moved to a different foster care location that would be more convenient for the parents.

One FBSS worker said after being assigned a family, the worker has five days to meet face to face with the family. Next, the worker has one month to develop a plan for services. The worker monitors the family for approximately six months, with home visits to assure the family is following the plan. The amount of time a case is kept open depends on how well parents are doing; sometimes services are extended, if the case warrants. The worker staffs the case with a supervisor, program director and risk director and makes a recommendation to close the case, continue with contract services, to place child with the family or to remove the child.

One Intensive Family Unification Worker said that after being assigned a case, it is staffed with a supervisor, CVS worker and their supervisor. Worker assesses family and makes a decision on whether the family will benefit from the intensive work; ultimately, family makes the decision whether to work together. Worker staffs with the same group again. The family works with the worker on their plan of services; the worker provides all counseling, parenting, etc. except independent therapy and drug therapy, relapse prevention. The worker's goal is to work with families 4-6 weeks before the children are returned to the home and to close within four months. The worker staffs with supervisor and Risk Director before closing the case.

One substitute care (SUB) worker said that after being assigned a case, it is necessary to review the intake report and investigation report; then enter information from the case and staff with investigators and supervisors. The worker meets face to face at least once a month with the child, also monitors visitation. The worker meets face to face once a month with the family. The worker staffs with supervisor before closing case.

One FBSS worker said if a child is removed from a home, as an FBSS worker, it is rewarding to follow the child all the way through the adoption phase if the case goes that far.

Six investigators agreed that they prioritize cases and will work several cases in the same general area. On those cases, criminal history information must be obtained and employees will usually conduct a face-to-face interview with children at their school or take children to the CPS office and conduct interviews. Family and collaterals need to be interviewed. Sometimes it takes a couple of hours to drive to some of the locations. The employees said it is difficult to be able to document all cases because there are so many cases.

One program director said he/she deals with complaints against CPS workers from clients and the public in general. A lot of time is spent meeting with service providers and fielding concerns regarding the lack of follow-up contacts by caseworkers. A lot of time is spent with human resources issues, hiring, etc. and lots of meetings regarding permanency planning for children.

## INVESTIGATIONS:

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

7	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

Six employees said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual abuse and/or physical abuse cases.

One employee said statewide intake makes contact with law enforcement on every case and joint investigations by CPS and law enforcement validate sexual abuse and physical abuse.

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

7	0
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

100% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

Six employees said law enforcement is required to assist anytime there is sexual abuse or physical abuse.

One employee said that law enforcement is required to assist on severe sexual assaults and/or physical abuse.

3. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

11	1
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92% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the community.

8% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the community.

3A. Explain:

One employee said relations are not good, because of negative news releases and that CPS has probably affected everyone indirectly at one time or another. People believe that CPS goals are to remove children from homes.

4. Does CPS have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

11	1
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92% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.

8% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

One employee said new employees do not understand the role of law enforcement officers. With the high turnover rate of CPS workers, relations are strained.

5. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

11	1
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92% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.

8% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

One employee said the relationship is poor, because judges are partial towards particular attorneys, so if parents hire an attorney that is a friend of the judge, CPS already knows what the decision will be by the judge.

## TRAINING BARRIERS

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

7	5
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58% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

42% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

2	10
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17% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.

83% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

Five employees said it is impossible to prepare anyone for this type of work. On-the-job training is desperately needed.

Two employees said the information does not relate to actual case issues.

Two employees said there is not enough practical information covered in training for real happenings on the streets.

One employee said workers were led to believe they would be working normal working hours and would be able to spend time with their personal families, which is not true

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

7	5
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58% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

42% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

Three employees said the training barely touches the surface on legal issues and protocol issues.

One employee said the training is wrong kind of training for actual issues.

One employee said the training does not make sense until a caseworker is actually doing work in the field.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

8	4
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67% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

33% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for C.P.S. Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

8	4
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67% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

33% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

7	5
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58% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

42% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

4	8
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33% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are available to them.

67% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

10	2
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83% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

17% of the employees interviewed said there are not obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

8A. If so, what are they?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

9. Are CPS policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

5	7
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42% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.

58% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

9A. If no, why?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

7	5
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58% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.

42% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are no adequate to perform their jobs.

10A. If no, why?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

### **SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES NO

5	0
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES NO

1	4
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20% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

80% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) do not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

One worker said the time frame is not long enough to workout issues, because some cases required additional time.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES NO

5	0
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

3A. Explain:

Four workers said that within one year, you should be able to determine if a change will or has taken place.

One worker said if you remove children, they should not be in foster care for more than 12 months.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

3	2
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60% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

40% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe CPS was able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:

One worker said there are not enough services available. The services that are available are full and cannot handle additional cases.

One worker said a lack of funding for services is a problem.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

2	3
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40% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

60% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

Three workers said more resources are needed, such as foster homes, transportation, psychologists, drug testing, parenting classes, drug assessment and treatment facilities, in-patient patient rehab facilities, housing, and legal assistance for grandparents filing for custody.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

7	5
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58% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

42% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

Three employees said they did not remember the date of their last evaluation.

One employee said it has been 3 or 4 years ago.

One employee said he/she was just hired.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

Three employees answered 5-6.

Two employees answered 6.

One employee answered 7-9.

One employee answered 7-10.

Two employees answered 8.

One employee answered 12.

One employee answered 13.

One employee answered 14.

Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 8 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

10	2
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83% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

17% of the employees interviewed said there are no systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

Eight employees said call the supervisor and if needed, the supervisor will call the program director and if necessary, the program director will call the program administrator.

One employee said after staffing, a judge makes the final decision.

One employee said that staffing is done with a supervisor, therapist and psychologist.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

9	3
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75% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

25% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

One employee said additional risk directors are needed in making those type decisions.

One employee said a supervisor or tenured worker should go to the location of a child, in order to make a good decision on whether to remove or not.

One employee said there are too many cases that keep everyone busy, including the supervisors.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

7	5
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58% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

42% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

One employee said that his/her supervisor has work cases, so the supervisor does not have time to assist the caseworker.

Two employees said his/her supervisor is incompetent and should not be a supervisor. One employee said his/her supervisor will never make a decision and the other employee said there has been 100% turnover, because of his/her supervisor's attitude.

Two employees said their supervisor is never available.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

8	4
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67% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

33% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

Two employees said their manager meets with them weekly.

Two employees said their manager meets with them every two or three weeks.

Four employees said their manager meets with them monthly.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee quarterly.

Three employees said it has been a long time and can't remember when they met.

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

Five employees said their manager should meet with them weekly.

One employee said 3 times per week.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee monthly.

Five employees said they should meet as needed.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

1	6
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

14% of the employees interviewed said policy requires employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

86% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

One employee said they are required to meet in person on all removals and dispositions.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

8	4
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67% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

33% of the employees interviewed said they have not noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

Two employees said inconsistent practices are a constant issue with supervisors. Some supervisors will remove children in all cases and others will never remove children in all cases.

One employee said some supervisors are incompetent and should not be supervisors.

Five employees said some supervisors have a strong opinion about how things should be done and others are simply inconsistent.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

1	7
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12.5% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures.

87.5% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

Four employees said they were unaware if there was a policy for staffing cases.

One employee said staffing in person is required on all removals and dispositions.

Two employees said there is no policy for staffing in person.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

1	11
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8% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

92% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

One employee said there is too much emphasis on closing cases.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Three employees said they would discuss the issues further with the supervisor.

Four employees said they comply with directives of the supervisor.

One employee said he/she would talk to another supervisor.

Three employees said they would go to the program director.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

9	3
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75% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

25% of the employees interviewed said they did not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

Three employees said they believe there have been cases where CPS did not remove a child from a potential dangerous environment.

One employee said he/she was aware of a case where CPS did not attempt to keep a family close together, by placing an infant approximately 400 miles away from a mother that did not have the money to travel that distance to see her baby.

One employee said a child was not removed when the child should have been. Later, the child burned down a house and was finally removed.

One employee said a child was at risk and due to poor decisions by a supervisor the child was not located for several hours.

One employee said a co-worker has cases open that are over a year old.

Two employees said a judge has returned children to an abusive home.

16. Are you able to make a decision of "Rule-out" or "Unable to Determine" a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

5	2
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked these questions.

71% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of "Rule-out or "Unable to Determine" a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

29% of the employees interviewed said they were not able to make a decision of "Rule-out or "Unable to Determine" a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

0	12
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100% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

0	12
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100% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

18A. If so, by who and what was said?

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

8	4
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67% of the employees interviewed said they had other information for the OIG.

33% of the employees interviewed said they did not have other information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

2	10
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17% of the employees interviewed said they were afraid or intimidated by someone in their management structure.

83% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

20A. If so, who and why?

Two employees mentioned supervisors that give no positive feedback and are inept in their positions.

#### **EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Provide additional caseworkers and incentives to keep them, which will help alleviate the workload.
- Increase caseworker salaries.
- Provide self-defense classes for caseworkers.
- Provide stress management classes for caseworkers.
- Provide better training for State Wide Intake (SWI) on gathering correct information, such as addresses or directions to the home, and the name of the school attended by the child. Also, training so they do not open duplicate cases.

- In order to improve relations, CPS administration should initiate some type of proactive program so someone with CPS meets with law enforcement officials, judges, district attorneys, school officials, hospital staff and news media reporters on a regular basis.
- New caseworkers need on-the-job training with an experienced caseworker for several weeks or months. A few days of classes are good for basics, but classes do not prepare caseworkers for the real world.
- Provide law enforcement courses on how to handle dangerous situations involving perpetrators and people on drugs and how to recognize drug paraphernalia.
- Provide state provided cell phones or enough money to cover all CPS calls made on caseworkers personal cell phones. \$50 per month does not cover the monthly charges for CPS calls.
- Provide state provided cars or additional money for driving personal cars for several reasons. There are great risks involving liability issues, in case of accidents, when transporting CPS children and CPS families in caseworkers personal cars; the wear and tear on personal cars takes its toll, because of the voluminous amount of miles driven each month; \$.35 per mile for gas is not enough to cover such things as the costs of tires being replaced, brakes being repaired, oil changes, and various other normal repairs.
- Provide car seats for children of various ages.
- Changes must be made in order to ensure that statewide policies and procedures are the same throughout the state. Currently, each region decides which policies and procedures will be used and which ones will be ignored. In many instances, supervisors will decide which policies and procedures they will use and which ones they will ignore. Every time a negative incident occurs, there is a change in policies and procedures. Statewide policies and procedures are too voluminous to remember, so they need to be revamped. Policies need to be changed, so cases involving children under the age of 6 can be closed without staffing with the program director. Policies need to be changed, so caseworkers can be paid for overtime hours worked, because it is difficult for workers to take time off, due to the caseloads. Change the policies, so caseworkers can make decisions as to which facility would be best for a child, because supervisors do not know the child as well as the caseworker.
- Provide digital cameras.
- Provide extra batteries for digital cameras.
- Legislature needs to change the law so parents cannot prohibit CPS caseworkers from entering the parents home to check on the welfare of their child. By the time a court order is obtained, the swelling and bruising is gone and the parents have had ample time to clean the house and hide drugs.
- Legislature needs to change the law regarding private schools, because school officials in private schools currently notify parents when CPS is planning to interview a child. At times, the parents will take the child from school before CPS arrives.
- Legislature needs to change the law regarding a caseworker testifying in court. Currently, when a caseworker testifies in a final hearing for permanency, the abuse testified about cannot be used again in a subsequent hearing.
- Additional shelters are needed for families and for children.
- The Impact System needs to be revamped, because it is slow and difficult to use.
- Supervisors should be available when needed.
- Provide psychological assistance for caseworkers, because of job related stress.
- Hire enough employees, so FBSS workers do not have to conduct investigations along with their normal duties.
- Judges should be held accountable for making bad decisions and leaving children in dangerous situation.
- Someone should investigate and remove some supervisors, because there are many CPS supervisors that are inept in their positions.
- The dress code should be relaxed, so caseworkers can dress according to the area they will be visiting. Some families think that caseworkers try to dress better than what the families can afford for themselves.

- Provide training on how to conduct interviews.
- Provide training on legal issues, such as writing affidavits.
- Provide additional training on risk assessment issues.
- Provide training on how to testify in court.
- Provide new audio tape recorders and extra tapes.

## Region 2 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 45 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

<b>Question</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>%No</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>91.11%</b>	<b>8.89%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>68.89%</b>	<b>31.11%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>65.62%</b>	<b>34.38%</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>46.67%</b>	<b>53.33%</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>35.56%</b>	<b>64.44%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>21.88%</b>	<b>78.12%</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>26.67%</b>	<b>73.33%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>14.29%</b>	<b>85.71%</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>86.67%</b>	<b>13.33%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>97.3%</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>2.22%</b>	<b>97.78%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>13.33%</b>	<b>86.67%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>2.22%</b>	<b>97.78%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>13.16%</b>	<b>86.84%</b>	<b>38</b>

<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>22.22%</b>	<b>77.78%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>13.33%</b>	<b>86.67%</b>	<b>45</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 65.62% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.2 cases with 29% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 19% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 46.67% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.22 cases with 7% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 17% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file, that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions. Please see Appendix E for validation methodology.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

substitute care?	
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. The Judge of the 97th District Court was also surveyed. Three respondents requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 7.63. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

### **Results**

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (1-800 number)	8	100%	0	0%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	8	100%	0	0%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	8	100%	0	0%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	0	0%	8	100%

Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:

### **Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:**

- Excessively large caseload for caseworkers.
- Additional funding is needed to provide adequate funding for CPS services.
- Caseworkers lack understanding of the importance of the investigations.



- Difficulty in contacting caseworkers about cases.
- Reduced funding for contract services.
- Poor compensation (salary) of CPS employees.
- Upper management's lack of understanding of the local situation.
- No back up caseworker to contact when a caseworker is out on a leave.
- Inadequate number of middle management employees.
- Inadequate travel budget for workers for investigative work.
- CPS reassigns workers to different areas too frequently. Workers are not assigned to one area long enough to get the proper skills and experience.

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Problems are on the part of caseworkers, management, agency philosophy and a lack of resources.
- Inadequate number of middle management employees.
- Inadequate counseling for misbehaving parents.
- The CPS program is not adequately funded.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Increase the number of caseworkers.
- Reduce the caseload per caseworkers.
- Provide support for foster care families.
- CPS needs steady funding basis.
- Statutory changes are needed to improve CPS services.
- Enroll more contract providers for CPS services.
- Allow more flexibility in closing a case. Closing a case in 30 days is not always in the child's best interest.
- Increase the travel budget for investigative work.
- Provide adequate counseling for misbehaving parents.
- Reduce the reassignments of caseworkers. Keep caseworkers in areas long enough to get the skills and experience.

**Staff Allocation**

*Management/Administrative*

Program Administrators:	1
Program Directors:	5 (3 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 1 Permanency P..D., 1 Risk P.D.)
Supervisors:	15 (C.P.S. Supervisors)

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Subtotal: 21

*Caseworkers*

Investigations:	16
Family Based Safety Services:	12
Substitute Care:	3
Generic:	43
Foster Care/Adoptions:	11

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Subtotal: 85

Clerical/Support

Administrative Assistants: 4  
Clerks: 2  
Human Services Technicians: 16

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Subtotal: 22

Other Staff

Worker V's: (3)      Community Partners: (2)  
Legal Assistants: (2)      Case Analysts: (2)  
Family Group Conference Specialist: (2)      Adoption Subsidy Specialist: (1)  
Public Information Officer: (1)      Faith-Based Worker: (1)  
Program Improvement Leader: (1)      Training Specialist: (1)  
Residential Treatment Specialist: (1)      Volunteer Coordinator: (1)  
Accountant: (1)      Permanency Planning Team Convenor: (1)  
Education/Disability Specialist: (1)      Preparation for Adult Living (PAL): (1)

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Subtotal: 22

**TOTAL REGION 2 (Abilene): 150**

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	0	0
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	1	14.3%
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	3	42.8%
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	0	0
Employed: 10 + Years	3	42.8%

Number of first line supervisors since you first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	1
5 +	3

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bachelor's	3	1	1	0	1	6

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

0	5
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

100% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Incorrect address or address omitted from report.

Incorrect telephone number or telephone information omitted from report.

Incorrect directions.

Incorrect name or no name.

Many names and words misspelled.

Classification incorrect, such as Priority 1 should be a Priority 2 or visa versa.

The complaint is routed to the wrong region, delaying time it is received in the correct office.

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

5	0
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

100% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Five employees said too much time is wasted, trying to locate the child and family, which cause additional work for the caseworker. This domino effect hurts the quality on all investigations, because the caseworker gets behind.

**CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 1-2.

One generic investigator answered 3-4.

Three investigators answered 4-5.

One investigator answered 5.

One investigator answered 6-8.

Based on answers of FBSS/Sub-care employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week is approximately 2.5 cases/families.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week is approximately 6 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

One FBSS/Sub-care (generic) worker answered 3-4.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-1.

Two investigators answered 2-3.

Two investigators answered 3.

One investigator answered 5.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 2 cases/families.

Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 3 cases.

3. What is your average caseload?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 14 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care (generic) worker answered 20-28 per month.

One investigator answered 18-19 per month.

Two investigators answered 20-22 per month.

One investigator answered 21-33 per month.

One investigator answered 30-40 per month.

All employees said they were unaware of what their average caseload is per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers answered approximately 23 cases/families.

Investigators answered approximately 25 cases.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 8 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care (generic) worker suggested 12-15 per month.

One investigator suggested 10 per month.

One investigator suggested 10-12 per month.

Two investigators suggested 12-16 cases per month.

One investigator suggested 24-27 cases per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that in order to take care of children and families, a reasonable caseload per month should be approximately 11 cases/families.

Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 15 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

Six employees said that a caseworker attempts to get caught up on cases before taking a vacation, and then cases sit idle. Another caseworker will take care of any emergency issues, depending on which caseworker is available and willing to take care of the emergency.

One employee said the cases would be re-assigned to another worker.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

1	4
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

20% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

80% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

One employee said there are too many cases to do them all.

One investigator said it is difficult to catch people at home, so it takes several trips.

Two investigators said an incorrect address causes stress and make it difficult to locate the family.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

4	1
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

80% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

20% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

One employee said that after statewide intake receives information, 6-8 days pass before investigators receive the cases.

One employee said that after statewide intake receives information, several hours have passed before the investigators receive the cases. On Priority 1 cases, a few hours are too long for children at risk.

Two employees said that delay in receiving cases creates a problem with case and time management; working in cases with less than ten days to make contact is a problem.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

2	5
---	---

29% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

71% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

7	0
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer.

100% of the investigators interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame? Two employees said with safety issues for children, caseworkers should not be sitting on cases. One employee said it is a numbers game and the agency is not interested in the welfare of the children. One employee said it is about statistics. One employee said closing cases is all about money, because federal funding is not received if the case is not closed within the 60-day time frame.

**WORK PROCESS:**

One generic worker said they would be assigned investigations, just like a worker with an investigative unit. Therefore, the investigative process is the same. The difference is that an investigator will not have further contact with a child at a particular point. A generic worker, on the other hand, will follow through with a child from the initial investigation, while the child is placed in foster care and through adoption, which takes a long time.

One FBSS worker said that he/she is usually assigned high-risk family cases. The worker conducts a transfer visit meeting with the family and the investigator, to discuss services that are needed; the cooperation expected from the family and the family signs a contract agreement. A plan of service is developed and the worker immediately makes all referrals for services. The worker meets with the family on intense cases twice per week, moderate cases once a week and regular cases once a month. Cases are open for 3-6 months and the worker staffs with the supervisor to determine if services were sufficient or other action needs to be taken. Three investigators agreed that they prioritize cases and will work several cases in the same general area. On those cases, criminal history information must be obtained and employees will usually conduct a face-to-face interview with children at their school or take children to the CPS office and conduct interviews. Family and collaterals need to be interviewed. Sometimes it takes a couple of hours to drive to some of the locations. The employees said it is difficult to be able to document all cases because there are so many cases.

One investigator said that when a worker is assigned a case, he/she conducts research for prior CPS history, calls law enforcement for more details and requests a criminal history on perpetrator, then contacts reporter and collaterals. The worker makes contact with the child, preferably at school and makes contact with the parents and additional collaterals received from parents. Then, staffs the case with the supervisor with recommendation to close case or open for services.

One investigator said that when a case is assigned from law enforcement the worker meets with Risk Director and staffs with PD. Workers investigate cases that include agency employees (i.e. investigating a death case that had been a CPS employee's case). Decisions have to be made to determine which people the worker should talk to. The worker staffs with the Risk Director every day and makes a recommendation for disposition.

**INVESTIGATIONS:**

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES	NO
5	0

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said that they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

Five employees said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual abuse and/or physical abuse cases.

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

5	0
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

100% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

Three employees said law enforcement is required to assist anytime there is sexual abuse or physical abuse.

One employee said that law enforcement is required to assist on sexual assaults and serious physical abuse and neglect.

One investigator said he/she was aware that laws were in effect, but unknown which laws.

3. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

6	1
---	---

86% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the community.

14% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the community.

3A. Explain:

One employee said relations are fair, because of adverse news releases.

One employee said the relationship is good, because of a very good supervisor that handles media issues and meets with teachers, law enforcement and doctors.

One employee said caseworkers work well with the public, so relations are good.

One employee said relationships are good, because there is a coalition of community resources.

One employee said everyone works well together.

One employee said the negative media attention diminishes workers' credibility and makes it difficult to work with anyone in the community.

4. Does CPS have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

5	2
---	---

71% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.

29% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

One employee said law enforcement does not support CPS. If they arrive when called, the officers will stand in the background and not say a word.

One employee said that law enforcement officers always say they do not have time to assist CPS.

5. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

4	3
---	---

57% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.

43% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

One employee said there is a personality conflict between the assistance district attorneys and the sub-care unit. One employee said a meeting is planned between the CPS supervisors and the prosecutor's office to work out the differences.

One FBSS worker said the people involved in the court system appear to be listening to the criticism of CPS in the media and adopting their viewpoint. One judge in the area said, "CPS looks stupid and ineffective in court." Lack of support by the prosecutors and ad litem adds to the problem. The worker said one CVS worker has discussed resigning because she feels she cannot be effective in her job because of the treatment they receive in court.

## TRAINING BARRIERS

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

0	7
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100% of the employees interviewed said they did not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

0	7
---	---

100% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

Three employees said it is impossible to prepare anyone for this type of work. On-the-job training is needed. Two employees said the training should be focused on reality issues about what happens every day on the job. One employee said there is too much covered in a short period of time. One employee said the information is focused on investigations and does not prepare workers for FBSS or CVS work.

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

3	4
---	---

43% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

57% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

Three employees said the issues were covered during one day, which is not enough time for comprehension. One employee said the information did not make sense until after working in the field.



4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

3	4
---	---

43% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

57% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for CPS Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

3	4
---	---

43% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

57% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

7	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

6A. If so, what training?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

0	7
---	---

100% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

7	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

8A. If so, what are they?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

9. Are CPS policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

3	4
---	---

43% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.

57% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

9A. If no, why?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

1	6
---	---

14% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.

86% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are not adequate to perform their jobs.

10A. If no, why?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

## **SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care employees were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES NO

2	0
---	---

100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they are familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES NO

1	1
---	---

50% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

50% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) do not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

One worker said the time frame is a way to measure success or failure of the parents on drug rehab, attending classes, etc.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES NO

1	1
---	---

50% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable.

50% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable.

3A. Explain:

One employee said that most of the time, it is sufficient time to see a pattern, but it is difficult for anyone to complete drug rehab within a short period of time.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

0	2
---	---

100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe CPS is not able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:

One employee said rural areas have very limited resources such as counseling classes. The worker said that parents have to travel long distances for services, so transportation is an issue.

One employee said the problem is a lack of funding for services.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

0	2
---	---

100% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

One employee said rural areas do not have resources, so more resources are needed, such as foster homes, transportation, psychologists, drug testing, parenting classes, drug assessment and treatment facilities.

One employee said more resources are needed and the services that are available have long waiting lines for clients.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

6	1
---	---

86% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

14% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

One employee answered January 2003.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

One employee answered 5.

Two employees answered 6.

One employee answered 6-7.

One employee answered 6-8.

One employee answered 7.

One employee answered 9.

Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 7 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

7	0
---	---

100% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

Seven employees said they call the supervisor and if needed, the supervisor will call the program director and if necessary, the program director will call the program administrator.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

3	4
---	---

43% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

57% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

One employee said workers should be able to call the program director direct, which would cut an extra step, when a caseworker is waiting in the field for directives.

Three employees said the supervisors are never available.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

5	2
---	---

71% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

29% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

Two employees said their supervisors are unavailable, because they have to work cases, so the supervisors do not have time to assist caseworkers.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

5	2
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71% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

29% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

Two employees said his/her manager meets with him/her weekly.

Four employees said their manager meets with them monthly.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee only on legal staff meetings and removal hearings.

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

Two employees said his/her manager should meet with him/her weekly.

Four employees said his/her manager should meet with him/her weekly or as needed.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with him/her once every six weeks.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

3	2
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

60% of the employees interviewed said policy does require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

40% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

Two employees said they are required to meet in person for weekly dispositions.

One employee said they are required to meet in person before 30 days, for disposition.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

7	0
---	---

100% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

One employee said inconsistent practices depends on interpretation of a case.

One employee said some supervisors believe bruising on buttocks is abuse and others do not.

One employee said there is a huge difference between program directors outlook on things.

One employee said the inconsistencies might be due to the different expectations of caseworkers.

One employee said some supervisors surround themselves with workers who only agree with them; certain staff are picked on if they dare to speak up; workers have to develop a “don’t rock the boat” mentality to be treated fairly.

One employee said supervisors have been quick to remove children because of the OIG investigation.

One employee said “Priority 1” cases are more likely to be maintained by a new supervisor, whereas, a tenured supervisor will review and can determine when a “Priority 1” case should be downgraded.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

0	7
---	---

100% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

One employee said on children under the age of 3 on “Reason to Believe” or if a caseworker cannot determine.

Two employees said staffing in person is required weekly.

Two employees said they were unaware of a policy requiring cases to be staffed in person with the supervisor.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

1	6
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14% of the employees interviewed said they feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

86% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

One employee said supervisors have told caseworkers they are not authorized to contact CPS attorneys or assistant district attorneys.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Five employees said they would discuss the issues further with the supervisor.

Two employees said they would talk to the program director.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

7	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

Three employees said they believe there are cases where CPS did not remove a child from a potential dangerous environment.

One employee said he/she believes children have been removed from homes when they should not have been removed.

One employee said he/she believes cases were closed because of lack of cooperation by parents.

One employee said a supervisor changed the wording in a case file to reflect emotional abuse, simply because an aggressive defense attorney said he was going to fight the physical abuse charge.

One employee said a case was transferred to another CPS office because the family moved to another region. The CPS office where they moved, said they would not accept transfer cases.

16. Are you able to make a decision of “Rule-out” or “Unable to Determine” a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

4	1
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked these questions.

80% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of “Rule-out or “Unable to Determine” a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

20% of the employees interviewed said they were not able to make a decision of “Rule-out or “Unable to Determine” a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

1	6
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14% of the employees interviewed said they had been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

86% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

17A. Explain:

One employee said a case involved a perpetrator that had access to a child and the case notes needed to be changed. The employee agreed that the case notes should have been changed.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

1	6
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14% on the employees interviewed said they had been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

86% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

18A. If so, by who and what was said?

The supervisor told the employee to be brutally honest.

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

5	2
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71% of the employees interviewed said they had information for the OIG.

29% of the employees interviewed said they did not have information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

2	5
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29% of the employees interviewed said they were afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

71% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

20A. If so, who and why?

One employee mentioned a supervisor that is not approachable and not interested in listening to employee problems.

One employee said program directors are not sensitive to worker’s problems and are not open to ideas to improve processes. They also show favoritism to a point that has forced good workers to leave CPS.

**EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Provide additional caseworkers and incentives to keep them, which will help alleviate the workload.
- Increase caseworker salaries.
- Provide self-defense classes for caseworkers.
- Provide training and authorization to carry pepper spray for defense against dogs.
- Provide better training for State Wide Intake (SWI) on gathering correct information, such as addresses or directions to the home, and the name of the school attended by the child. Also, training so they do not open duplicate cases.
- New caseworkers need on-the-job training with an experienced caseworker for several weeks or months. A few days of classes are good for basics, but classes do not prepare caseworkers for the real world.
- Provide law enforcement courses on how to handle dangerous situations involving perpetrators and people on drugs and how to recognize drug paraphernalia.
- Provide state provided cell phones or enough money to cover all CPS calls made on caseworkers personal cell phones. \$50 per month does not cover the monthly charges for CPS calls.
- Provide state provided cars or additional money for driving personal cars for several reasons. There are great risks involving liability issues, in case of accidents, when transporting CPS children and CPS families in caseworkers personal cars; the wear and tear on personal cars takes its toll, because of the voluminous amount of miles driven each month; \$.35 per mile for gas is not enough to cover such things as the costs of tires being replaced, brakes being repaired, oil changes, and various other normal repairs.
- Provide car seats for children of various ages.
- Changes must be made in order to ensure that statewide policies and procedures are the same throughout the state. Currently, each region decides which policies and procedures will be used and which ones will be ignored. In many instances, supervisors will decide which policies and procedures they will use



and which ones they will ignore. Every time a negative incident occurs, there is a change in policies and procedures. Statewide policies and procedures are too voluminous to remember, so they need to be revamped.

- Provide digital cameras.
- Provide extra batteries for digital cameras.
- Legislature needs to change the law so parents cannot prohibit CPS caseworkers from entering the parents home to check on the welfare of their child. By the time a court order is obtained, the swelling and bruising is gone and the parents have had ample time to clean the house and hide drugs.
- Legislature needs to change the law regarding private schools, because school officials in private schools currently notify parents when CPS is planning to interview a child. At times, the parents will take the child from school before CPS arrives.
- Additional shelters are needed for families and for children.
- Supervisors should be available when needed.
- Someone should investigate and remove some supervisors, because there are many CPS supervisors that are inept in their positions.
- Provide training on how to conduct interviews.
- Provide training on legal issues, such as writing affidavits.
- Provide additional training on risk assessment issues.
- Provide training on how to testify in court.
- Provide new audio tape recorders and extra tapes.
- Provide color printers.
- Provide workers with a better healthcare insurance plan, including a better dental plan.
- Improve the Impact System, because it is down a lot.
- Provide more community resources, treatment centers, family outreach centers,
- Provide additional foster care parents for teenagers, because most people do not want to deal with teenagers.
- Need additional staff to type reports for caseworkers.
- Provide a software program, so workers can access the Food Stamp system, in order to gather addresses, etc.
- Provide additional offices in every county, so caseworkers will not have to drive long distance to contact families.
- The legislature should ensure that judges are held accountable when they allow children to be returned to a dangerous environment.
- Legislature should enact a law that forces uncooperative parents to attend parenting classes, drug rehab centers, etc.
- Workers said they need to be trained in self-defense and safety issues.
- Workers said interview skills and techniques training is needed.
- Workers said they need to be trained in dealing with difficult/volatile people.
- Workers said they need training in crisis management.
- Funding for protective daycare is needed.
- Administrative support and transport aides are needed to allow workers more time for investigations.
- Swab testing drug kits are needed.
- Video recorders are needed for use at the school rather than further traumatizing a child in having to transport them to the Children's Advocacy Center.
- Provide additional printers for workers.
- Need additional CPS attorneys to handle the workload.
- Need manageable workload so workers can provide quality service to clients.

- Policies need to be changed so workers are not required to maintain contact and offer services to someone who is incarcerated.
- Things need to change regarding favoritism in the office by supervisors.
- Changes need to take place, regarding decisions to move workers to different positions without discussing the need to do so with the worker. Management is unwilling to hear concerns about such moves and suggests that conversations between the worker and supervisor be written up as “conference”.
- Need to change the current practice of micro managing, with associated reports and detail accountability but with continued expectations of good social work practice and positive outcomes.
- Need to change the practice of workers being expected to get the job done, but then are also required to keep overtime hours down. This is a vicious cycle because, when the worker takes off overtime hours, duties pile up and more overtime is accrued.
- Upper management needs to be more supportive of workers, i.e. when clients’ family members call to complain or file an ombudsman’s report, workers are criticized and told they need to be more understanding of the family members’ position.
- Upper management needs to have empathy for the stress of removals, dealing with feuding family members, filing court reports but only seem concerned for keeping everyone happy so they do not have calls to handle from irate family members. This was also evidenced when supervisors and managers were made responsible for on-call duties for two days to enable workers to attend a worker retreat; they voiced their nervousness about receiving “Priority 1” complaints and planned to go out in pairs.
- Things need to be changed regarding the lack of support from management, because the stress level of the job is increasing everyday. One worker left with post-traumatic stress syndrome. One worker left after her doctor told her it would be less stressful for her to go back to her job in the military. Many workers are not sleeping and are on anti-depressants.
- The agency is so desperate for personnel, they are hiring anyone who will take the job, which needs to be changed.
- Changes need to be done regarding the lack of supervision. For example, there was a huge backlog of cases that need to be merged in the computer system. Workers were required to work weekends to get this caught up because clerical could not handle it, but nothing is being done differently and the backlog is building again. Closed case files were left in boxes for months in an open clerical area; not protected and not kept confidential. Worker refused to move her closed files to that area because of previous problems of cleaning staff tossing out records. Worker was disciplined.
- Changes need to take place to keep good workers. A worker obtained a master’s degree while with CPS, but never received additional compensation: not even a merit raise in 14 yrs. Worker states she worked hard with no support from management and eventually developed numerous health problems from the stress.

## Region 3 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 1100 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix B for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

Question	%Yes	%No	Total
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>83.18%</b>	<b>16.82%</b>	<b>1100</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>65.27%</b>	<b>34.73%</b>	<b>1100</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>68.01%</b>	<b>31.99%</b>	<b>669</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>41.16%</b>	<b>58.84%</b>	<b>379</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>1100</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>33.82%</b>	<b>66.18%</b>	<b>1100</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>69.6%</b>	<b>671</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>71.23%</b>	<b>28.77%</b>	<b>636</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>18.02%</b>	<b>81.98%</b>	<b>1099</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>27.11%</b>	<b>72.89%</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>74.32%</b>	<b>25.68%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>38.27%</b>	<b>61.73%</b>	<b>1100</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>5.19%</b>	<b>94.81%</b>	<b>848</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>6.55%</b>	<b>93.45%</b>	<b>1100</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>13.25%</b>	<b>86.75%</b>	<b>1019</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>10.19%</b>	<b>89.81%</b>	<b>1099</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>13.52%</b>	<b>86.48%</b>	<b>799</b>
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>61.79%</b>	<b>38.21%</b>	<b>123</b>

<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>81.13%</b>	<b>18.87%</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>79.82%</b>	<b>20.18%</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>49.01%</b>	<b>50.99%</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>8.48%</b>	<b>91.52%</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>47.14%</b>	<b>52.86%</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>55.56%</b>	<b>44.44%</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>12.91%</b>	<b>87.09%</b>	<b>1100</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>3.09%</b>	<b>96.91%</b>	<b>1100</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 68.01% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 0.98 cases with 22% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 8% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 41.16% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.2 cases with 3% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 41% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. HHSC-OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file, that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>99% validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into</b>	<b>99% validation rate</b>

substitute care?	
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>99% validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>99% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>99% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>99% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>99% validation rate</b>

**COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations ranging from Child Welfare Board members, law enforcement officers, foster parents, medical professionals, attorney ad litems, county attorney, county commissioners, county judge, assistant district attorney, CASA(Court Appointed Special Advocates), and staff from non-profit agencies in Hood, Erath, Somervell, Cooke, and Dallas Counties.

Forty-three respondents requested that their organization’s name remain confidential. The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 7.21. The results of respondents’ answers to questions are indicated in the tables below.

**Results**

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Percent N/A</b>		
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable?	55	78%	16	22%	5			
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your requests for assistance?	66	93%	5	7%	5			
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	63	89%	8	11%	5			
Have you or your organization been threatened with any type of retaliation if you complain about CPS?	10	14%	63	86%	3			
	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Percent Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Percent Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Percent Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Percent Poor</b>
How do you think CPS is doing in protecting children from abuse/neglect?*	22	29%	27	36%	20	27%	6	8%

How do you think CPS is doing in helping children achieve permanency?***	14	22%	29	45%	16	25%	5	8%
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\* 1 interviewee did not wish to respond to this question.

\*\*\* 12 interviewees did not feel they could appropriately respond to this question.

**Respondent’s comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:**

**Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS**

- Foster families have too many children to adequately address all the needs of the children.
- CPS policy guidelines for removal are too stringent, making it too difficult to remove at risk children.
- A special hotline number is needed for doctors to report child abuse and neglect.
- Sometimes CPS tries to put sexually abused children back in the family with the abuser.
- There is no consistency in what CPS wants. Sometimes they want to prosecute persons unjustifiably and sometimes they don’t want to prosecute persons where prosecution is warranted.
- CPS often takes several days to get back to a caller. Calls should be returned within a day.
- Higher levels of CPS management are more open to the CASA role, while local supervisors are more territorial, and tend to discount the role of CASA.
- There is a problem with the quality of psychiatric/psychological care for the children. Huge numbers of children are on psychotropic medications.
- In some cases CPS abuses their enormous power. Individually they can be petty and seek retribution against parents and children.
- Caseloads are impossible. Asking the caseworkers to make serious decisions without the time to do it is wrong.
- CPS employees often are placed in dangerous situations.
- Home studies take too long. Movement from foster home to relatives should be done quickly.
- CPS attorneys are not very aggressive. They are inexperienced and poorly motivated.
- Caseworker’s assessments to remove children from the home are overridden by some judges.
- Respite pay for foster care parents is needed.
- Some regional program directors that retire and return to CPS appear to be apathetic and set the tone for new caseworkers.
- In cases involving medical facilities, caseworkers question the facilities reason for the patient’s discharge and feel that it is a financial reason and not a medical reason.
- There is a tendency for caseworkers fail to monitor adoption and independent living cases when the final order has been initiated.
- Foster care parents are not provided with sufficient background on the children.
- Caseworkers conducting investigations need training on law enforcement perspective and procedures related to criminal investigations.
- Attorneys working with CPS cases cite difficulty in getting copies of records and sometimes get an incomplete record, which is not known until a court hearing.
- There is a breakdown in communication between legal and placement caseworkers.
- Due to a budget shortfall, another home caseworker was assigned that is now housed at a greater distance. This causes a strain on the relationship with the home caseworker.
- Slow response time between initial call to 1-800 number and then having to contact a local CPS office. Staff is not familiar with law enforcement terminology and tend to generalize the information as opposed to the detailed information provided and needed.

- Sometimes caseworkers do not move rapidly for adoption if a child is in a safe foster home because of the high workload.
- DFPS internet web page for adoption is not updated, children will be placed, but are still shown on the system.
- Inconsistent application of respite care policy; if caseworkers need to place children and cannot find a location, they will overlook the allotted number of children in the home.
- Better lines of communications are needed with law enforcement. Sometimes CPS staff do not share all the information regarding a case.

### **Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems with CPS**

- Additional funding is needed to provide adequate funding for CPS. The same thing is true of juvenile probation.
- It is difficult to get older children adopted.
- The caseworkers have minimal training, lack experience, and are not replaced as they leave.
- Caseworkers are stretched very thin, their workload does not allow them to complete the number of visits required.
- Sometimes privacy considerations prevent caseworkers from knowing all of the facts.
- Teachers often feel that referring students to CPS is unproductive.
- Under funding, understaffing, and low salaries results in poor morale and burnout.
- Foster care has some real problems in that some children need more care than foster homes can give them. CPS needs greater control over facilities for therapeutic children, as some of the treatment they receive is atrocious.
- Too much specialization of job functions.
- Questionable investigation quality, particularly with new caseworkers who fail to recognize risk factors.
- Some regional program directors that retire and return to CPS appear to be apathetic and set the tone for new caseworkers.
- There is a tendency for caseworkers to not monitor adoption and independent living cases when the final order has been initiated.
- Shortage of foster homes.
- Parents with mental limitations do not receive the appropriate services because the caseworkers do not find remedial services to meet their mental capacity needs or language skills.
- Children are placed out of the area; children need to be placed close to the other siblings and their families
- Caseworkers get bogged down by paperwork, lack of sufficient budget, and lack of resources for the kids.
- Inconsistency of knowledge between caseworkers.
- Caseworkers sometimes lack knowledge of the foster family. (Interviewee's husband was activated and in Iraq and the caseworker was not aware of this.)
- Budget shortfall and realignments have caused caseworkers to cover larger geographical areas. It has increased the length and time of travel for visitations, and there is no continuity for foster children, foster parents, and caseworkers.
- In some instances transportation aides are not getting reimbursements for travel.
- CPS is not able to protect the children from abuse/neglect because of decisions made by judges, such as sending children to grandparents or relatives who barely pass the social study.
- Having a dual goal of protecting children and reuniting families are often at odds with each other.
- Caseworkers need training in the law enforcement process when presenting a criminal case through the court process.

## **Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS**

- The entire agency is completely failing its purpose. The agency should be completely reorganized.
- CPS workers are too quick to accept the explanation of the parents. They should investigate more, talk to more neighbors.
- Speed up the child removal process. Kids are kept in turmoil too long under the present process.
- Parents of the child should not be allowed an additional six months to “clean up their act.” A year is sufficient time for the original parents to become responsible.
- Would like to see a system in which the local police dispatchers have a list of the local CPS duty person to contact. Contacting the local person without having to go through the Austin hotline would speed up response time.
- Would like to change some of the regulations to reflect that a failure to teach your children personal hygiene is child neglect, as tooth decay, for example, can affect not only a child’s immediate health, but can cause lifetime problems.
- Better funding would alleviate most of the problems.
- De-centralize services. Each county should fund its own CPS services.
- The need is to fix a systemic problem and not respond to a tragic death incident with a rash of new paperwork or the creation of new jobs.
- That caseworker investigators need to have peace officer status.
- Supervisors need to be directly involved with new caseworkers since the caseworker training does not prepare them for real life situations and caseworkers are basically thrown into ongoing investigations.
- Direct access to CPS’ database by attorneys assigned the CPS cases, i.e. read and print only. This would reduce caseworkers from having to make copies of case records and would also reduce caseworkers administrative activities.
- Training in the legal processes and legal responsibilities.
- Greater emphasis on preparing older children for independent living.
- De-centralize CPS, as opposed to all being in one location, which makes it difficult for law enforcement and families.
- In the foster care program, reduce the mandatory training, such as behavior training and HIV. It appears to be more of an administrative requirement to be met. (One interviewee is an instructor of CPR, but still was required to take annual CPR training.)
- Better accommodations in the Gainesville CPS office. The staff offices and Rainbow room are very cramped.
- Home caseworkers in the foster care program should have the same training as is required of the foster parents.
- Change CPS policy regarding the CPS’ goal to reunite the children with a family member.
- More awareness by the caseworkers and judges when assigning visitations because other children not involved with the visitations will need to accompany the foster parents.

## **Other comments made by interviewees**

- Have seen that caseworkers place children in good foster homes.
- CPS staff does proper planning when placing children in foster homes.
- Have a good working relationship with caseworkers when working joint investigations with law enforcement.
- They are doing the best they can with what they have.
- The caseworkers have a great desire to work with children.
- CPS caseworkers that leave do not leave because of the pay because they sometimes go to non-profit agencies with a lower pay scale.
- Dedicated staff.



- CPS staff are good people who work hard at reuniting families. Very zealous in the protection of the children.
- Quality of leadership has increased with the appointment of the district director in Dallas.

## **Staff Allocation**

### *Management/Administrative*

District Director:	1	
Program Administrators:	8 (4 CPS P.A.'s, 2 P.A. V's, 2 P.A. I's)	
Program Directors:	23 (18 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 3 Risk P.D.'s, 2 Permanency P.D.'s)	
Supervisors:	118	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		150

### *Caseworkers*

Investigations:	259	
Family Based Safety Services:	117	
Substitute Care:	201	
Generic:	30	
Foster Care/Adoptions:	57	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		664

### *Clerical/Support*

Administrative Assistants:	68	
Administrative Technicians:	10	
Clerks:	21	
Human Services Technicians:	66	
Switchboard Operator:	6	
Secretaries:	15	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		186

### *Other Staff*

Worker V's:	(23)	Legal Liaison (Worker V's):	(19)
Foster Care Eligibility Specialists:	(9)	Contracts:	(9)
Family Group Conf. (Facilitators):	(9)	Skilled Response Team Workers:	(6)
Kinship Caregiver Specialists:	(5)	Accountants:	(4)
Foster Care/Adoptions Recruiters:	(4)	Adoption Negotiators:	(4)
Volunteer Coordinators:	(4)	Budget Analysts:	(3)
Case Analysts:	(3)	Hospital Liaisons:	(3)
District Trainers:	(3)	Faith-Based Workers:	(3)
Family Group Conference Specialists:	(3)	Transition Specialists:	(2)
Program Specialist III's:	(2)	Education Specialists:	(2)
OMB/ARIF:	(2)	Juvenile Probation Dept. Liaison:	(2)
Best Practices Specialist:	(1)	Basis Skills Development (BSD) Supervisor:	(1)
Disability Specialist:	(1)	Disability Specialist (Nurse):	(1)
DISD Liaison:	(1)	District Director Executive Asst.:	(1)
Family Outreach Manager:	(1)	Intensive Adoption Coordinator:	(1)

PRIDE (Foster Parent) Trainer:	(1)	Net Care Specialist:	(1)
Peer Trainer:	(1)	Public Information Officer:	(1)
Program Improvement Specialist:	(1)	Rainbow Room Coordinator:	(1)
Regional Records Coordinator:	(1)	Residential Treatment Placement Specialist:	(1)
S.A.V.E Coordinator:	(1)	SSI Coordinator:	(1)
Training Administrator:	(1)		

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Subtotal: 143

*TOTAL REGION 3 (Arlington): 1143*

**Employee Interviews**

**Source**

Interviews conducted with Region 3 staff during the week July 12 – 22, 2004.

**Purpose**

To document areas of concern and suggestions for improvements to the CPS program as identified by Region 3 staff.

**Procedures**

Interviewees were selected based on a judgmental sample; however volunteers were also interviewed. The objective was to ensure that all levels of management were represented and that at least one person from each unit in Region 3 was interviewed.

**Results**

The following information summarizes areas of concern and recommendations for improvement:

**AREAS OF CONCERN**

**INTAKE PROCESS**

- Statewide Intake frequently fails to obtain complete and accurate information such as full addresses and telephone numbers, causing additional administrative burdens to caseworkers.
- Statewide Intake should be given the latitude to administratively close referrals instead of routing every call to the field.
- Statewide Intake frequently assigns inaccurate priority levels but supervisors are able to modify inaccurate priority; however, this adds to the supervisor’s workload and reduces time available for supervisory tasks.
- Statewide Intake personnel were paid overtime during legislators’ visits to give the impression that the office was fully staffed.

- Supervisors inconsistently process administrative closures. For example, two cases with identical situations and priority levels are routed to different offices. One supervisor questions why it was assigned that particular priority level and the other supervisor questions why it was even opened.
- Supervisors assign cases to caseworkers when they are on leave contributing to an overwhelming backlog and lack of response.
- Supervisors assign several cases with the same priority levels to one investigator all at the same time preventing timely responses and thorough investigations.
- Supervisors assign investigations without the full time allotted to investigate. For example, a Priority 2 case has a 10-day response time but the investigator may not receive it until the eighth day.
- Children on Medicaid requiring residential treatment are needlessly entered into the system. Medicaid will not pay for residential treatment unless a child is in state custody. Parents are then coerced into signing documents refusing parental responsibility when that is untrue. This process is unnecessary because a child can be certified as a family of one and then be authorized for residential treatment without ever entering the CPS system.

## CASE MANAGEMENT

- Policies and procedures are inconsistently applied, misinterpreted and changed so frequently that workers cannot keep pace.
- Critical decisions, such as removing a child, are subjective and often based upon philosophical differences. One caseworker indicated that what happens to a family depends not on CPS policies but which caseworker knocks at the door.
- Caseworkers frequently feel pressure from supervisors to close cases in spite of the child's risk.
- The average caseload is routinely twice the recommended maximum of 12-15 as established by the Child Welfare League of America. Caseworkers indicate it should be about 15 for seasoned investigators and 10 for new investigators, with exception of high risk and sexual abuse cases, which should then be 8-12.
- Children are placed in foster homes and residential treatment centers several hours from their homes with siblings frequently placed in separate homes. It is more difficult, more time-consuming and more costly to facilitate visits by siblings, family members and caseworkers. Visits that could take only two hours of a caseworker's time now can take five or six hours.
- Allegations that are clearly Ruled Out demand the same documentations and professional contacts as allegations that are determined Reason to Believe.
- All investigations are weighted the same. There are significant differences between a removal that will take days; a Reason to Believe that could take hours and a fatality that could take weeks.
- Services to families stop toward the end of the fiscal year when funds are depleted; however, the need is still present.

- Conservatorship workers and placement workers are assigned investigations to help with overflow. Many are not trained for investigations, it takes them longer, and they are done poorly. Their own caseloads continue to mount.
- Caseworkers current with their caseloads are sent to other offices with managerial problems and backlogged casework. They are behind when they return.
- Placement with relatives:
  - Home studies conducted to assess the safety of a home can take as much as seven months or longer to complete; should be completed within 30 days once a potential relative is identified. Services and funds could then go to more urgent needs.
  - Some children have family members that would care for them but cannot afford the financial impact. Financial assistance to relatives is not permitted; however, payment to strangers (foster parents) is allowed.
- Death staffings exclude caseworkers involved with the case. They are perceived as punitive and blaming; not as an opportunity to learn or correct shortcomings.
- Confidentiality is routinely compromised. Files are maintained in the same room where family conferences are held and families have no privacy when discussing personal information in open rooms and cubicles
- There is no standard guidance about what to do with children in custody of a biological parent who has a drug relapse. Some supervisors believe relapse is a normal part of recovery; therefore a child remains with a parent who has relapsed with heroine, crack or cocaine.
- Caseworkers remove children after hours and frequently must transport children to their offices if a home or shelter is not immediately available. They do not always have immediate access to locked office buildings and must wait for someone to open the building.
- Personnel are assigned to high-risk units directly out of the academy. These positions should be filled by tenured caseworkers.
- Criminal history checks take as long as one week.
- Caseworkers lack sufficient knowledge about medications but are required to sign authorizations to dispense medications to children in residential treatment centers. Full medication histories are not obtained and children are overmedicated and medicated too quickly.
- New caseworkers are immediately assigned heavy caseloads without being fully trained or experienced.
- Cases are not documented and fully completed as they progress from investigations through substitution care to ongoing care. Receiving caseworker is overburdened and must do work that should have already been completed.

- The requirement to close cases within a sixty-day period is reasonable but unattainable with an unmanageable caseload. Unmanageable caseloads affect every aspect of service delivery with a serious domino effect directly related to failures in protecting children.
- Out-of-state cases: Caseworkers are not able to disposition out-of-state offenses when a child moves into the state. The result is that a child victimized in another state cannot be protected from a confirmed perpetrator in this state. Children are frequently already in the state before they have been entered into the system for services. Caseworkers cannot provide services to kids placed in Texas from out-of-state courts. Only 4.5 workers are assigned to manage in excess of 200+ children placed throughout the state. Funds are not available to provide for the needs of out-of-state children.
- Concerns with foster homes include the following:
  - Potential foster parents must submit to a home study but there is no psychological evaluation administered.
  - Caseworkers conduct fire and health inspections that must be repeated every six months. Texas Department of Health conducts the same inspections every two years but charges foster homes for the service.
  - Caseworkers are often in the middle of placing a child in a home when they learn the home was placed on hold or removed from the provider's list causing the search to begin anew.
  - Children remain in foster care longer than necessary because of overworked caseworkers and program directors and crowded court dockets. CPS is mandated to find permanent placement for children within 12 months; however, this is not always possible because of crowded dockets. The services provided during this period could be given to children with more urgent needs.
  - Foster parents are paid for fostering their children but frequently rely on caseworkers to transport them to various appointments, taking the caseworker away from more critical functions. A non-professional could do this task.
  - The list of foster and adoptive homes is not automated. Time is wasted in manually matching available resources with a child's needs.
  - Children are frequently placed in foster homes that are already strained to capacity increasing risk to children.
- Lack of support staff contributes to overwhelming caseloads.
- Caseworkers and case aides use personally owned vehicles to transport children and family members exposing the employee and the state to a high liability. For example:
  - There are no standards for vehicle maintenance and supervisors do not routinely require proof of insurance.
  - Case aides reported the following specific examples:

- Not feeling safe or sufficiently trained when transporting sexual offenders and violently aggressive children.
- Transporting an infant with a tracheotomy and heart monitor without anyone to assist her. She retrieved her teenage son from home to accompany her to the appointment.
- Siblings engaged in sexual conduct in the rear seat.
- Exposing children to genital herpes when they were unknowingly transported with an infected child.
- Not filing workers compensation claims when injured by children they transport.
- Not advising their private insurance companies that they use their vehicles for business purposes.

## **MANAGEMENT / RETENTION ISSUES**

- Performance evaluations are not current. One caseworker had one in seven years.
- Workers are pushed into working overtime and then reprimanded for doing so. They routinely work 60-70 hours per week. They must have pre-approval but the job does not permit this. They are also told not to document their overtime. One caseworker totaled her vehicle after working non-stop for 31 hours.
- There is a perception that managers and above have been out of the field so long that they have lost touch with current conditions.
- There is a wide disparity between upper management and caseworkers regarding the lack of problems related to policy implementation and interpretation.
- Low morale is pervasive and there is the sense CPS is a ticking time bomb.
- Supervisors do not adequately address workplace violence issues.

## **TRAINING**

- Academy training does not fully address practical needs of the job nor does it adequately prepare new employees.
- On-going training is available but job demands do not facilitate attendance. This is particularly problematic as it relates to required continuing education training or training needed for promotion.
- Training is lacking or more is needed in the following areas:
  - Legal processes
  - Family code
  - Mental health issues
  - Internal policies and procedures
  - Forensic interviews
  - Courtroom etiquette and attire
  - Interpersonal communication skills
  - Managing aggressive behaviors

- CPR and first aid
- Placing children in car seats
- Interview techniques
- Infectious disease control
- Cultural practices that may appear as abuse

## **EQUIPMENT / RESOURCES**

- Caseworkers are required to document living conditions and physical injuries; however, they lack enough cameras. They drive throughout the state but lack maps. They transport children but have insufficient car seats and booster seats. They must know applicable laws and community resources but they lack reference materials. Additional examples of shortages include:
  - Polaroid and 35mm cameras are available in some offices but funds are not available to purchase and develop the film.
  - Digital cameras are superior for documenting physical injuries but there are insufficient quantities available for investigators and less for other caseworkers. Distribution of cameras failed to include the software to download onto computers. Training on how to use the equipment was not provided.
  - Audio recorders and laptop computers could assist in word processing functions and reduce idle time spent waiting in court or traveling.
  - Scanners could assist in gathering a more complete case history. Cases prior to 1995 are not in the IMPACT system. A more complete history is vital when considering current service needs. Capturing supporting documents in previous referral files would improve service delivery and reduce the risk to families and the agency.
  - Video cameras are not available to record family visits and outcries of physical and sexual abuse. Monitoring family visits is critical to protect children and without a video of outcries children are exposed to numerous interviews and additional trauma.
- There are a variety of community resources available to caseworkers but there are not enough and not enough in convenient locations.
  - Resources for rural and outlying offices are scarcer than those provided in the metropolitan areas. Not every county has a welfare board, sufficient treatment providers, drug testing facilities, etc.
  - Juvenile detention facilities sometimes refuse to accept children, even for short stays, whose only problems may simply be adolescent misbehavior. This causes unnecessary referrals to CPS that not only impacts caseloads but also negatively affects the child since they are unnecessarily entered into the CPS system.
- Caseworkers and case aides routinely incur out-of-pocket expenses directly related to their jobs. Reimbursements are sometimes authorized but many are not. Examples include:

- Entertainment and shopping expenses incurred during routine visits. One unmarried caseworker estimates that she spends an average of \$200.00 each month on the children for whom she is responsible.
- Caseworkers are reimbursed up to \$50.00 per month for business calls on their personal cellular phones; however, costs are frequently more than \$50.00. One caseworker reportedly had a phone bill totaling several hundred dollars for which she was not reimbursed.
- Damages to privately owned vehicles caused by aggressive and/or non-compliant children.
- Cleaning and servicing privately owned vehicles caused by accidents involving body fluids, food, drink, and pest infestation.

## **JUDICIAL / LEGISLATIVE ISSUES**

Relationships with law enforcement, judiciary and district attorneys are excellent in some areas, satisfactory in some areas and nonexistent in others. Rural areas and outlying offices receive less support than do metropolitan offices. The following issues contribute to the problematic relationships:

- Inexperienced and younger caseworkers fail to exercise good judgment in what they wear to and how they behave in a courtroom. Judges are openly critical about their lack of courtroom decorum and attire.
- While many judges, attorneys and law enforcement understand the nature of CPS, many fail to understand what CPS does, what the policies and procedures require and what limitations they have.
- Judges require evidence of a demonstrated event that caused harm to a child. Sometimes CPS intervenes before a child is physically abused. In those situations, caseworkers do a risk assessment based on many factors to determine if the child is likely to be abused if left in the situation. This information is then presented in court and judges frequently discount it in the absence of an “event”. The child is then returned to the unsafe environment, which is not in the best interest of the child. Caseworkers refer to this as “event vs. risk”.
- Judges return children to their homes against CPS recommendation. There are numerous examples where a child was subsequently killed or re-injured.
- Specific caseworkers and/or CPS in general are blamed when there is an incident of re-injury or death. District attorneys and judges are not held accountable for the decisions they made in the process. A caseworker never returns a child to the home without a court order.
- Prosecuting attorneys refuse to prosecute criminal offenses or offer plea bargains with reduced charges and light sentences.
- Peace officers in some departments are very responsive to caseworkers’ request for assistance; however, too often they refuse to accompany caseworkers. This jeopardizes the caseworker’s safety as well as the child’s safety. The peace officer’s responsibilities and limitations while rendering assistance to CPS should be clarified to caseworkers and peace officers alike.



- Three geographic areas were identified with extremely poor working relationships with CPS. The problems included law enforcement, judges and district attorneys in Wise, Navarro and Kaufman counties.
- Attorneys ad-litem and guardians ad-litem fail to visit children as required and fail to fully review cases prior to court appearances. Children have been returned home against CPS recommendations because the inexperienced attorney representing CPS either did not know what questions to ask or failed to ask questions prepared by the caseworker.
- Attorneys with little or no experience are assigned CPS cases.
- Indian Child Welfare Act requires CPS to notify tribal authorities prior to any intervention with an Indian tribe. CPS cannot act without input from the tribal authorities. This law needs to be addressed giving CPS authority to provide services in these types of situations. Other states have similar legislation that provides for a 90-day service period.
- Re-evaluate the family code and consider the following changes:
  - Remove CPS from investigating allegations of abuse occurring in schools by teachers. Make TEA responsible for investigating this type of allegation since it appears to be an “internal affairs” issue.
  - Reconsider the definitions of neglect and abuse. Caseworkers investigate families for issues related to poverty such as a lack of toilet facilities. Different living standards do not necessarily equate to an abusive or neglectful situation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

### *INTAKE*

- Do not accept referrals from anonymous sources to reduce time wasted investigating false allegations with insufficient information.
- Return inaccurate and incomplete referrals to Statewide Intake for completion.
- Authorize administrative closures at the Statewide Intake level.
- Eliminate referrals from school systems involving allegations of abuse by a school employee.
- Eliminate or redirect referrals involving juvenile delinquents unless other CPS criteria are present.

### *CASE MANAGEMENT*

- Do not assign cases to new caseworkers until they have worked in the field for two months.
- Establish units designed to fill shortages caused by vacancies, sickness, vacation, etc. These units could be staffed with light duty personnel, part-time employees, on-call employees or employees requiring mental health breaks.

- Do not assign investigations outside investigations units or to non-investigators in the generic units.
- Instead of sending caseworkers to assist those offices that are behind because of poor supervision, address the managerial issues.
- In child death cases, include caseworkers and other employees who worked on case in reviews by an outside agency.
- Purge, archive, organize and properly store old case files in accordance with state policies.
- Reevaluate the practice of caseworkers authorizing medication for children in residential treatment facilities. Co-ordinate this activity with treatment professionals who override a caseworker's refusal to sign and dispense medication PRN.
- As cases progress through the system, permit supervisors to return those with incomplete information, or are missing required documents, etc.
- Consider reducing services to families when the needs of foster/adopted children have been met and the only thing lacking is the final court hearing.
- Stop taking children into conservatorship for the sole purpose of getting them residential treatment.
- Design and implement a database for foster/adoptive homes.

#### *MANAGEMENT / RETENTION*

- Hire only applicants with a college degree in the social services.
- Task eligibility units with obtaining birth records, social security documents, benefits, citizenship, etc. for the adoption prep units.
- Task clerical personnel with transcribing reports, merging cases, purging and maintaining hard copies of case files.
- Develop a specialized unit to perform some functions of casework such as monitoring visitations, family conferencing, telephone duty, etc. and staff with employees requiring light duty or a break from stress.
- Reevaluate all stages of services to determine what functions can be outsourced or performed by non-professional workers.
- Reestablish a "floating" unit to draw upon during personnel shortages and emergencies.
- Consider implementing the following incentives:
  - Authorize more pay to those in investigations units and generic units to promote tenure in those critical areas.

- Authorize pay for all bi-lingual employees and not just a few. Give incentives to learn Spanish to provide better services.
- Authorize shift differential for night workers.
- Establish a sliding pay scale based upon education levels.
- Widen the salary gap between program director, supervisor and caseworker. There is currently little difference.
- Do not permit those who voluntarily demote to keep supervisor pay.
- Hire supervisors based upon minimum acceptable tenure and experience.
- Streamline and speed up the home study process.

### *TRAINING*

- Revise training academy curriculum to include the following:
  - Reduce/remove topics related to social work theories. This should have been learned in college.
  - Add/increase topics specifically designed to address daily practical skills.
  - Implement mentoring program similar to on-job-training without assigning cases to new caseworkers.
  - Establish stages of training where a new caseworker returns after having worked in the field. Many topics are better understood after having worked in the field first.
  - Videotape actual caseworkers on the job and present this during academy training.
- Train all employees on infectious disease control.
- Develop cooperative training for law enforcement, caseworkers and the judiciary.
- Develop community awareness training for the public to educate about the role of CPS.

### *EQUIPMENT / RESOURCES*

- Fund vehicle fleets for transporting clients.
- Hire and train professional transporters.
- Purchase laptops and audio recording equipment for caseworkers to better utilize idle time.

### *JUDICIAL / LEGISLATIVE*

- Authorize funding for relatives who foster children, also known as “kinship” funding, to reduce the number of children placed with strangers in foster homes. Currently, financial assistance is not available for relatives unless they adopt a child but is allowed for foster homes that sometimes keep children for years.

- Authorize mileage reimbursements for foster parents to reduce time demands on caseworkers and transport personnel.

## Region 4 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 80 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

<b>Question</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>%No</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>82.5%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>79.17%</b>	<b>20.83%</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>70.37%</b>	<b>29.63%</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>57.5%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>36.25%</b>	<b>63.75%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>34.62%</b>	<b>65.38%</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>70.45%</b>	<b>29.55%</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>21.88%</b>	<b>78.12%</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>63.64%</b>	<b>36.36%</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>3.23%</b>	<b>96.77%</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>6.25%</b>	<b>93.75%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>9.59%</b>	<b>90.41%</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>8.75%</b>	<b>91.25%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>15.15%</b>	<b>84.85%</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>6</b>

<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>83.33%</b>	<b>16.67%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>83.33%</b>	<b>16.67%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>18.75%</b>	<b>81.25%</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>80</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 79.17% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.41 cases with 28% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 8% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 70.37% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.38 cases with 9% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 18% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions. Please see Appendix E for validation methodology.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>95% validation rate</b>

<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. The Judge of the Smith County 321st District Court was also surveyed. Four respondents requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 6.00. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	4	66.67%	2	33.33%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (1-800 number)	6	100%	0	0%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	5	83.33%	1	16.67%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	4	66.67%	2	33.33%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	0	0%	6	100%

**Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:**

#### **Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:.**

- Excessively large caseload for caseworkers.
- System in place is cumbersome. The chain of command is too long and slow to react. All controls are centralized in Austin.
- CPS is not responsive to the needs of older children. Relatively more responsive to the needs of younger children.
- Lack of understanding of the role of law enforcement.
- Difficulty in contacting CPS after hours.
- Time limit imposed on caseworkers to close cases to restrictive.

- Placement of a child in a different region.
- In a few cases, CPS workers were neglectful and angry towards clients.

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Problems are on the part of caseworkers, management, agency philosophy and a lack of resources.
- CPS management has not set up accountability for each position.
- Agency philosophy is not to delegate authority and responsibility to local CPS.
- Upper management’s lack of regard for local concerns.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Increase the number of staff caseworkers.
- Reduce the caseload per caseworker.
- Decentralize and relinquish CPS’s authority centrally – delegate authority and responsibility to local CPS offices.
- Adequate funding is needed for CPS services.
- Increases services for older children.
- Improve the spirit of cooperation with other agencies.
- Introduce monetary incentives to attract and retain good employees.
- Increase (contract) the number of foster homes.
- Provide more support to extended families for placing children with them.
- Educate caseworkers of the role of law enforcement in CPS cases.

**Staff Allocation**

*Management/Administrative*

Program Administrator:	1	
Program Directors:	7 (5 C.P.S. P.D.’s, 1 Permanency P.D., 1 Risk P.D.)	
Supervisors:	26 (C.P.S. Supervisors)	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		34

*Caseworkers*

Investigations:	42	
Family Based Safety Services:	12	
Substitute Care:	53	
Generic:	32	
Foster Care/Adoptions:	17	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		156

*Clerical/Support*

Administrative Assistants:	22	
Clerks:	7	
Human Services Technicians:	1	
Switchboard Operator:	1	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		31



Other Staff

Contracts:	(4)	Worker V's:	(3)
Eligibility Specialists:	(3)	Program Specialists:	(3)
Faith-Based Workers:	(2)	Case Analysts:	(2)
Permanency Planning Team Convenors:	(2)	District Trainer:	(1)
Legal Liaison:	(1)	Volunteer Coordinator:	(1)
Accountant:	(1)	Program Improvement Leader:	(1)
Public Information Officer:	(1)	Family Group Conferencing:	(1)
Subtotal:		26	

*TOTAL REGION 4 (Tyler):* 247

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	3	27.3%
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	2	18.2%
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	4	36.4%
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	1	09%
Employed: 10 + Years	1	09%

Number of first line supervisors since you first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	5
2	0
3	2
4	2
5 +	2

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bachelor's	3	0	2	2	3	10

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

1	7
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

13% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

87% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Incorrect address or address omitted from report.

Incorrect telephone number or telephone information omitted from report.

The name of the school that the child attends was omitted.

Missing collateral information.

Caseworker not informed of a "Priority 1" case for several hours after the reporter calls.

SWI does not ask the reporter enough questions to realize that the complaint does not qualify as a CPS issue, causing caseworkers to waste their time on non CPS related issues.

Information on family members and relationships.

Unclear what type of accusations are being reported.

Conversations with intake workers are difficult to understand because of their heavy accents.

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

8	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

100% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Five employees agreed that too much time is wasted, trying to locate the child and family, which cause delays on all assigned cases.

Two employees said sometimes intake reports are sent to the wrong regions.

One employee said unclear accusations take extra time for caseworkers to determine what the reporter was attempting to report.

**CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 3.

One investigator answered is 4-5.

One investigator answered 4-8.

Two investigators answered 5.

One investigator answered 5-6.

Two investigators answered 6.

One investigator answered 5-8.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week to FBSS/Sub-care employees is approximately 2 cases/families per week.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week to investigators is approximately 6 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 3-4.

Two investigators answered 2.

Two investigators answered 3.

Two investigators answered 3-4.

One investigator answered 4.

One investigator answered 5.

The employees suggested that the average amount of cases considered reasonable per week for FBSS/Sub-care workers should be approximately 1 case/family per week.

Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 3 cases per week.

3. What is your average caseload?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 13 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 28 families per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 54 per month.

One investigator answered 12-14 per month.

One investigator answered 20 per month.

One investigator answered 20-40 per month.

One investigator answered 35 per month.

One investigator answered 35-43 cases per month.

One investigator answered 40 cases per month.

One investigator answered 48-60 cases per month.

One investigator answered 50-70 per month.

All employees said they were unaware of what their average caseload is per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers answered, approximately 32 cases/families per month.

Investigators answered, approximately 36 cases per month.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 8 cases per month.

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested 10 cases per month.

Two investigators suggested 11-12 cases per month.

Two investigators suggested 12-13 per month.

One investigator and one program administrator suggested 12-15 cases per month.

One investigator suggested 20 cases per month.

One investigator suggested 20-25 cases per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that in order to take care of children and families, a reasonable caseload per month should be approximately 9 cases per month.

Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 16 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

All eleven employees said that a caseworker attempts to get caught up on cases before taking a vacation, and then cases sit idle. Another caseworker will take care of any emergency issues, depending on which caseworker is available and willing to take care of the emergency. One of the investigators said that additional cases are often assigned to a caseworker when that caseworker is on vacation.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

8	3
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

73% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

27% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

One employee said that on many occasions, statewide intake does not obtain enough information from a reporter. An example is when statewide intake does not list an address or lists an incorrect address; not listing a telephone number is a problem; not listing the name of a school for the potential victim is a problem. These things cause caseworkers to spend a lot of time looking for a family on one case, which delays work done on other priority cases.

One employee said that at times, law enforcement request caseworkers to not make contact, because of an on-going criminal investigation.

One employee said the workload is unmanageable.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

4	4
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

50% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

50% of employees interviewed said they have not experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

One employee said that periodically, 10 days will pass before a supervisor assigns a case, so if the case is a "Priority 2" case, the caseworker only has two days in which to conduct a face-to-face interview.

One employee said that 5% – 10% of the time, a case is assigned that is not CPS related.

One program administrator answered that sometimes; supervisors might be so busy that there is a backlog of cases that have not been assigned.

One employee said that sometimes, statewide intake sends cases to the wrong region, which delays receiving case assignments.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

2	9
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18% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

82% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

10	1
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer.

91% of the investigators interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9% of the investigators interviewed said there is not an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

Three employees said closing cases is all about money, because CPS receives money for all closed cases.

Three employees said the “60-day” rule requires all cases to be closed within 60 days.

One employee said caseworkers are told to close cases within 30 days and have the case documented within 45 days. The employee said the reason is unknown.

Three employees said the agency is more interested in time frame issues than risk assessments and family needs.

## **WORK PROCESS:**

One generic worker said he/she has to contact reporters for more details, and then make contact with the child, preferably at school, and then makes contact with the parents. Next, obtain collateral information from parents and make contact with collaterals. Next, staff with the supervisor, with recommendations to close or refer for services.

Two FBSS workers explained that when a case comes from investigations, FBSS would study the case, staff the case with an FBSS supervisor and determine a basic service plan for the child and family. Within 14 days, a judge will conduct a hearing on the case and FBSS will attempt to contact the child before the hearing, but sometimes, due to case workload, contact is not made with the child until after the hearing. FBSS gets an authorization signed by the parents, in order to obtain legal and medical information on the family. FBSS will also interview relatives, friends and neighbors, in case FBSS places the child with relatives or friends. Conduct monthly face-to-face contacts with the child.

Two investigators said that “Priority 1” cases take a lot of time, so caseworkers will work on several cases in the same location of town/county. On “Priority 1” cases, a caseworker will attempt to conduct a face-to-face interview with the victim. If unable to locate the victim/family, the employee will attempt to call and talk on the telephone. If unable to contact them by telephone, then the employee will send a letter, advising a person to contact the employee. The employee will establish appointments in the evenings or weekends.

Two investigators said that he/she conducts a face-to-face interview on one case, then will work on another case and conduct a face-to-face interview on that case. Next is to conduct interviews with collaterals, which sometimes only consists of asking a neighbor if he/she has seen the family. Every person that lives in the victim family’s house must be interviewed. Although the employee is considered an investigator, he/she believes investigators are only assessors, because they conduct assessments of cases.

Two investigators said they have to contact the reporter for more details and locates the address, which can be time consuming in rural areas. Then, the worker locates the correct school, interviews child and school personnel, then interviews family. The worker determines if drug testing should be required and if a safety plan

is needed. The worker makes contact with collaterals, staffs with supervisor and makes recommendation to close case or open for services.

One investigator said he/she investigates a lot of “Priority 2” cases. The employee said that cases have to be prioritized. Several cases in the same general area can be investigated at the same time. On those cases, criminal history information must be obtained and employees will usually interview children at their school. An employee must determine if danger exists.

One program administrator said that she compares statistical information, such as the number of cases compared to the number of caseworkers and look at the trends of increases in complaints. She attempts to determine what services CPS can provide to families and what services are needed. She said that CPS is lacking in services for drug testing and drug treatment programs. She said CPS is not able to keep up with the current drug trends.

## INVESTIGATIONS:

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

7	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

88% of the employees interviewed said that they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

12% of the employees interviewed said that they were not aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

One employee said law enforcement is required to assist on every case, but it does not happen.

Two employees said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual abuse and physical abuse cases. On physical neglect, law enforcement will make a determination.

One employee said the policy is unrealistic, because it says law enforcement is to be called on “Priority 1” cases, but law enforcement is not responsive.

Two employees said law enforcement should assist on all sexual abuse and physical abuse cases.

One employee said on all Priority 1 cases and/or for worker safety.

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

6	2
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

75% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

25% of the investigators interviewed said they were not aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

Five employees said that law enforcement is required to assist on all “Priority 1” cases.

One employee said that law enforcement is required to assist on sexual assaults, illegal activities and child deaths.

3. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

10	1
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90% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the community.  
10% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the community.

3A. Explain:

One employee said the news media has hurt relationships.

4. Does CPS have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

7	4
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64% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.  
36% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

One employee said law enforcement in some areas refuses to run criminal history checks for CPS, which is a huge impact on "Priority 1" cases. Therefore, CPS has to complete a form located on the CPS Impact System and send the request to CPS in Austin. By the time a caseworker receives the criminal history information, 2 or 3 days have lapsed and sometimes, it takes a week or longer to receive the information.

One employee said it varies from county to county and is greatly influenced by prosecutors of each county.

Two employees said law enforcement officers do not have a high regard for CPS.

5. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

8	3
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73% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.  
27% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

One employee said some prosecutors do not like to prosecute sexual abuse or physical abuse cases.

One employee said it varies from county to county and the relationship depends on the attitude of individual prosecutors.

One employee said one county has a cluster court system, with visiting judges who are very inconsistent with decisions.

## **TRAINING BARRIERS**

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

6	5
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55% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.  
45% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

1	10
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9% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.

91% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

Three employees said on-the-job training is needed, where a new caseworker has an opportunity to work with an experienced caseworker for several weeks or months. Classes are OK, but classes do not prepare you for the real world.

One employee said the information is enough to give a caseworker a heads up, but not enough information to prepare the caseworker for actual events.

Five employees said the bulk of the training was for investigators and not FBSS issues.

One employee said the information was too much to learn in a short period of time.

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

4	7
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36% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

64% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

Three employees said the training barely touches the surface on legal issues and protocol issues.

One employee said the time frames are good, but nothing else is good.

Two employees said every case is different, so it is impossible to provide enough training in a short period of time.

One employee said it doesn't make sense, until the caseworker begins working in the field.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

10	1
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91% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

9% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for CPS Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

10	1
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91% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

9% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.



6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

8	3
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73% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

27% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

3	8
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27% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are available to them.

73% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

10	1
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91% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

9% of the employees interviewed said there are not obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

8A. If so, what are they?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

9. Are CPS policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

5	6
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45% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.

55% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

9A. If no, why?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

5	6
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45% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.

65% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are not adequate to perform their jobs.

10A. If no, why?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

### SERVICE DELIVERY:

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES NO

3	0
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES NO

1	2
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33% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

67% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) do not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

One worker said the time frame is a way to measure success or failure of the parents on drug rehab, attending classes, etc.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES NO

3	0
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100% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

3A. Explain:

One worker said it establishes a guideline to either give parents a chance to change or the worker will recommend termination.

One worker said the time frame acts as a "ruler" to measure success or failure.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

1	2
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33% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

67% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe CPS was able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:

Two workers said there are not enough services available. The services that are available are full and cannot handle additional cases.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

0	3
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

One worker said Texas is primarily a rural area and resources are spread too far from needy families.

Two workers said there are very few resources in small communities.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

10	1
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91% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

9% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

One employee said he/she does not remember the date of his/her last evaluation.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

Two employees answered 6.

One employee answered 6 or 7.

Three employees answered 7.

One employee answered 7-10.

One employee answered 8.

One employee answered 8-10.

One employee answered 9.

One employee answered 10.

Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 8 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

11	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

Two employees said that on priority cases, the caseworker should call the supervisor.

Four employees said the case should be staffed with the supervisor or program director.

Five employees said the supervisor should be called every time a caseworker goes out on a case.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

7	4
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64% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

36% of the employees interviewed said they do not believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

Two employees said more training is needed on establishing a system that works because supervisors are not always available. The employee said it is because everyone is busy due to the workload.

One employee said staffing is required regarding the removal of children. The employee explained that after staffing within the investigative unit the next step is for FBSS to meet and accept or reject the decision of the investigative unit. The employee believes the current system is a waste of time but did not have any recommendations on how to change the process.

One employee said children's rights are overlooked due to restricted laws.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

10	1
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91% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

9% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

One employee said the supervisor does not seem to trust the decisions of workers and requires staffing for all actions, which hinders efficient case management.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

11	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meets with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

Three employees said their manager meets with them daily.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee every other day.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee two times each day.

Two employees said their manager meets with them weekly.

Three employees said his/her manager meets with the employee monthly.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee bi-monthly.

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee on each case.

Four employees said their manager should meet with them as needed.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee two times each day.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee constantly.

Two employees said his/her manager should meet with the employee daily.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee weekly.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee monthly.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

2	6
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

25% of the employees interviewed said policy requires employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

75% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

One employee said that employees are supposed to staff within 24 hours all high-profile cases involving child deaths and when critical criteria are involved.

One employee said that employees are supposed to staff within 24 hours on all Priority 1 cases and within 30 days on Priority 2 cases.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

8	3
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64% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

36% of the employees interviewed said they have not noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

Five employees said inconsistent practices are a constant issue with supervisors. Some supervisors have totally opposite practices compared to other supervisors.

One employee said some supervisors don't handle stress as well as others and that seems to be one of the reasons for inconsistent practices.

One employee said some supervisors have a strong opinion about how things should be done, so they enforce their opinions.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

3	8
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27% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures. 73% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

Six employees said they were unaware if there was a policy for staffing cases.

One employee said that employees are supposed to staff within 24 hours, all high-profile cases, involving child deaths and when critical criteria are involved.

One employee said that employees are supposed to staff within 24 hours on all Priority 1 cases and within 30 days on Priority 2 cases.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

1	10
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9% of the employees interviewed said they feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

91% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

One employee said assistant district attorneys do not like to prosecute CPS cases.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Four employees said he/she discusses the issues further with the supervisor.

One employee said he/she talks to the Program Director.

Four employees said he/she complies with directives of the supervisor.

One employee said he/she never had a problem with this issue.

One employee said that he/she documents in case file that action taken was a directive of the supervisor.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

5	6
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45% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

55% of the employees interviewed said they do not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

Three employees said they believe CPS did not remove children from a potentially dangerous environment. One employee said that FBSS/Sub-care positions were cut which caused families to not obtain needed services. One employee said that due to shortages in caseworkers, Child-care Licensing units have to conduct regular investigation cases without proper training.

16. Are you able to make a decision of “Rule-out” or “Unable to Determine” a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES	NO
8	0

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked these questions.

100% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of “Rule-out or “Unable to Determine” a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES	NO
1	10

9% of the employees interviewed said they had been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases. 91% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

17A. Explain:

One employee said the only time he/she was instructed to make a change was after the supervisor explained how the outcome was incorrect. After the supervisor explained the reasons, the employee was in complete agreement and made necessary changes to the case report.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES	NO
0	11

100% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES	NO
9	2

82% of the employees interviewed said they have information for the OIG. 18% of the employees interviewed said they do not have information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

1	10
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9% of the employees interviewed said they were afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure. 91% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

20A. If so, who and why?

One employee said he/she was afraid of his/her supervisor because a complaint has been filed against him/her.

### **EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Provide additional caseworkers and incentives to keep them.
- Increase caseworker salaries.
- Provide better training for State Wide Intake (SWI) on gathering correct information, such as addresses or directions to the home, the name of the school attended by the child, and the name of the apartment complex.
- New caseworkers need on-the-job training with an experienced caseworker for several weeks or months. A few days of classes are good for basics but classes do not prepare caseworkers for the real world.
- Provide training in conversational Spanish for caseworkers that do not speak Spanish.
- Provide law enforcement courses on how to handle dangerous situations involving perpetrators and people on drugs.
- Provide law enforcement courses on investigative report writing.
- Provide laptop computers to caseworkers because work must be done at home in order to complete cases within the allotted time.
- Provide state provided cell phones or enough money to cover all CPS calls made on caseworkers personal cell phones. \$50 per month does not cover the monthly charges for CPS calls.
- There is a need for state provided cars or additional money for driving personal cars for several reasons. There are great risks involving liability issues, in case of accidents, when transporting CPS children and CPS families in caseworkers personal cars; the wear and tear on personal cars takes its toll because of the voluminous amount of miles driven each month; \$.35 per mile for gas is not enough to cover such things as the costs of tires being replaced, brakes being repaired, oil changes, and various other normal repairs.
- Provide car seats for children of various ages.
- Provide offices located in a safer environment or provide a security guard. It is not safe for caseworkers in certain areas to work at the office at night or on weekends.
- Risk assessment policies are outdated so the risk assessment issues on the Impact System should be re-evaluated and shortened.
- Changes must be made in order to ensure that statewide policies and procedures are the same throughout the state. Currently, each region decides which policies and procedures will be used and which ones will be ignored. In many instances, supervisors will decide which policies and procedures they will use and which ones they will ignore. Every time a negative incident occurs, there is a change in policies and procedures. Statewide policies and procedures are too voluminous to remember, so they need to be revamped.
- Provide better training for new caseworkers, on cases when a child should be removed and/or when a child should not be removed.



- Civil and criminal laws need to be changed, so the laws coincide with each other regarding 17 year olds. CPS receives calls regarding runaway children, which does not fall under the civil laws. Runaway children issues fall under criminal laws.
- Provide more caseworkers and fewer managers. Some caseworkers believe it is unnecessary to have a Program Director and a Program Administrator.
- Provide more offices, so there are caseworkers in every county. This system would ease the issue of caseworkers being required to travel long distances every day.
- Upper management must establish cooperation among CPS offices in different regions. Currently, most offices will not assist other CPS offices on courtesy interviews. For instance, if clients from one region are transferred to a hospital in another region, caseworkers in other regions sometimes refuse to conduct courtesy interviews of the client. If caseworkers in each region would conduct courtesy interviews for other regions, it would save time and money for the state. Currently, if caseworkers refuse to assist other regions, caseworkers have to drive long distances in order to conduct face-to-face interviews.
- Provide additional training on the Impact System.
- Provide more CPS legal staff to assist caseworkers in preparing affidavits and to represent caseworkers in court hearings.
- Provide facilities with interview rooms for child interviews outside CPS offices, because currently caseworkers have to beg school officials, etc. for a room to use for child interviews.
- Provide enough money, so children can be provided with such things as: Food, clothing, school supplies, diapers, birthday gifts and Christmas gifts. Currently, caseworkers provide money for these items out of their own pockets. Some communities have resources for these items, but many communities do not have resources.
- Provide cameras and tapes for audiocassette recorders.
- Caseworkers need fewer cases and less time constraints.
- Legislature needs to change the law so parents cannot prohibit CPS caseworkers from entering the parents home to check on the welfare of their child. By the time a court order is obtained, the swelling and bruising is gone and the parents have had ample time to clean the house and hide drugs.

## Region 5 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 59 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

Question	%Yes	%No	Total
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>86.44%</b>	<b>13.56%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>62.71%</b>	<b>37.29%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>93.33%</b>	<b>6.67%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>47.46%</b>	<b>52.54%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>27.12%</b>	<b>72.88%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>25.42%</b>	<b>74.58%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>5.56%</b>	<b>94.44%</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>23.73%</b>	<b>76.27%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>11.76%</b>	<b>88.24%</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>5.08%</b>	<b>94.92%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>23.64%</b>	<b>76.36%</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>8.47%</b>	<b>91.53%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>27.45%</b>	<b>72.55%</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>6</b>

<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>25.42%</b>	<b>74.58%</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>10.17%</b>	<b>89.83%</b>	<b>59</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 93.33% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.69 cases with 44% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 15% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 75% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.41 cases with 7% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 25% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. HHSC-OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file, that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions. Please see Appendix E for validation methodology.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>91% validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?	
8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?	100% validation rate
9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?	100% validation rate
10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?	100% validation rate
25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?	100% validation rate
27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?	100% validation rate
29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?	100% validation rate
30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?	100% validation rate

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. A County District Court Judge was also surveyed. Two respondents requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 7.25. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

### **Results**

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	2	50%	2	50%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (1-800 number)	4	100%	0	0%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	3	75%	1	25%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	4	100%	0	0%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	0	0%	4	100%

Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:

### **Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:.**

- Need adequate funding for CPS services.
- Lack of resources for the welfare of children.

- Childrens' stays (placement) in the foster are not positive in nature.
- Caseworkers' personality and philosophy.
- Caseworkers have provided incorrect information to children.
- Time limit imposed on caseworkers to close cases.
- Judges are sending the children back home too soon.
- Volunteers' phone calls are not returned in a timely manner.
- Caseworkers are insensitive to cases.

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Problems are on the part of caseworkers, management, agency philosophy and a lack of resources.
- Inadequate number of investigators to investigate cases.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Allocate adequate funding and resources for CPS services.
- Reduce the caseload per caseworker.
- Increase the level of salaries for CPS employees.
- Increase (hire) the number of qualified supervisors.
- Establish effective communication and a good working relationship with the agencies that are taking care of the children.
- Provide additional funding for the home study program of the children.
- Employ dedicated employees and provide adequate training to caseworkers.
- Re-evaluate the licensing standard and the level of care for children.
- CPS Texas is way behind in a number of areas from other states. As or example – funding for services and providing adequate training to workers.

**Staff Allocation**

*Management/Administrative*

District Director:	1	
Program Administrators:	2 (1 P.A. III, 1 P.A. V)	
Program Directors:	4 (3 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 1 Risk P.D.)	
Supervisors:	15 (C.P.S. Supervisors)	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		22

*Caseworkers*

Investigations:	21	
Family Based Safety Services:	6	
Substitute Care:	17	
Generic:	29	
Foster Care/Adoptions:	11	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		84

*Clerical/Support*

Administrative Assistants:	12	
Clerks:	3	
Human Services Technicians:	3	

Switchboard Operator: 1

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Subtotal: 19

Other Staff

Worker V's:	(4)	Program Specialists;	(3)
Contracts:	(3)	Accountants:	(2)
Case Analysts:	(2)	Human Services Specialists:	(2)
Budget Analyst:	(1)	Faith-Based Worker:	(1)
Public Information Officer:	(1)	PRIDE (Foster Parent) Trainer	(1)
Permanency Planning Team Convenor:	(1)	Residential Treatment Specialist:	(1)

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Subtotal: 22

**TOTAL REGION 5 (Beaumont): 147**

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	1	11.1%
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	0	0
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	4	44.5%
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	1	11.1%
Employed: 10 + Years	3	33.3%

Number of first line supervisors since you first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	2
2	1
3	3
4	0
5 +	3

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bachelor's	4	0	2	2	1	9

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

1	5
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

16.7% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

83.3% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Incorrect address or address omitted from report.

Incorrect telephone number or telephone information omitted from report.

The name of the school that the child attends was omitted.

Missing collateral information.

Caseworker not informed of a "Priority 1" case for several hours after the reporter calls.

SWI does not ask the reporter enough questions to realize that the complaint does not qualify as a CPS issue, causing caseworkers to waste their time on non CPS related issues.

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

6	
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

100% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Three employees agreed that too much time is wasted, trying to locate the child and family, which cause delays on all assigned cases.

Two employees said sometimes intake reports are sent to the wrong regions.

One employee said the worker has to re-interview the reporter, in order to know how to proceed with the investigation.

**CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1-2.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 4-5.

Three investigators answered 4.

Two investigators answered 5.

One investigator answered 7.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week for FBSS/Sub-care workers is approximately 3 cases/families per week.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week for investigators is approximately 5 cases per week.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

Two FBSS/Sib-care workers answered 0-1.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 1-2.

Two investigators answered 2-3.

Three investigators answered 3.

One investigator answered 3-4.

FBSS/Sub-care employees suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable should be approximately 1 case/family per week.

Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable should be approximately 3 cases per week.

3. What is your average caseload?

Two FBSS workers answered 16 per month.

One FBSS worker answered 18-23 per month.

One investigator answered 25-30 per month.

One investigator answered 35 per month.

One investigator answered 36 per month.

One investigator answered 40-43 per month.

One investigator answered 60 per month.

One investigator answered 65 per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers said they were unaware of what their average caseload is per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month, which are approximately 17.5 cases/families per month.

Investigators said they were unaware of what their average caseload is per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month, which are approximately 44 cases per month.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 8 cases per month.

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested 9-10 cases per month.

Two investigators suggested 12-15 cases per month.

One investigator suggested 20 cases per month.

Two investigators suggested 20-25 cases per month.

One investigator suggested 25-28 cases per month.

FBSS workers suggested that in order to take care of children and families, a reasonable caseload per month should be approximately 9 cases/families per month.

Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 20cases per month.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

All nine employees that were interviewed said a caseworker attempts to get caught up on cases before taking a vacation, and then cases sit idle. Another caseworker will take care of any emergency issues, depending on which caseworker is available and willing to take care of the emergency. One of the investigators said that additional cases are often assigned to a caseworker when that caseworker is on vacation.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

4	2
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.



66.7% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

33.3% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

Two employees said high caseloads cause problems of meeting policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

4	2
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

66.7% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

33.3% of employees interviewed said they have not experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

One employee said not often, believed to be an oversight of the supervisor not assigning cases within a reasonable time.

Two employees said priority cases are not assigned until several days have passed.

One employee said cases are sent to the wrong office, so by the time a priority is sent to the correct office, several days have passed.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

1	8
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11.1% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

88.9% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

9	
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer.

100% of the investigators interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing cases within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

Nine employees said closing cases is all about money, because CPS receives federal money for all closed cases.

## WORK PROCESS:

Two generic workers said that he/she conducts a face-to-face interview on one case, then will work on another case and conduct a face-to-face interview on that case. Next is to conduct interviews with collaterals, which sometimes only consists of asking a neighbor if he/she has seen the family. Every person that lives in the victim family's house must be interviewed. Although the employee is considered an investigator, he/she believes investigators are only assessors, because they conduct assessments of cases.

Three substitute care workers explained that when a case comes from investigations, the caseworker studies the case, staffs the case with the supervisor and determines a basic service plan for the child and family. Within 14 days, a judge will conduct a hearing on the case and the caseworker will attempt to contact the child before the hearing. Due to case workload, the worker is sometimes unable to make contact with the child until after the hearing. The caseworker obtains an authorization form signed by the parents in order to gather legal and medical information on the family. The caseworker also interviews relatives, friends and neighbors, in the event a decision is made to place the child with relatives or friends. The caseworker conducts monthly face-to-face contacts with the child.

Four investigators said that "Priority 1" cases take a lot of time, so caseworkers will work on several cases in the same location of town/county. On "Priority 1" cases, a caseworker will attempt to conduct a face-to-face interview with the victim. If unable to locate the victim/family, the employee will attempt to call and talk on the telephone. If unable to contact them by telephone, then the employee will send a letter, advising a person to contact the employee. The employee will establish appointments in the evenings or weekends.

## INVESTIGATIONS:

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

6	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said that they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

Six employees said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual abuse and physical abuse cases.

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

5	1
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

83.3% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

16.7% of the investigators interviewed said they were not aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

Four employees said that law enforcement is required to assist on all "Priority 1" cases.

One employee said on serious physical abuse and any sexual abuse cases.

3. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

8	1
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89% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the community.  
11% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the community.

3A. Explain:

One employee said adverse media releases hinder working relationships and that people in low educational and low socio-economic classes do not understand how CPS functions and view CPS as baby snatchers.

4. Does CPS have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

7	2
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77.8% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.  
22.2% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

One employee said law enforcement does not respond to priority 1 cases, until CPS arrives at the location and makes an assessment of the situation.

One employee said law enforcement has a lack of training regarding child abuse and neglect issues.

5. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

7	2
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77.8% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.  
22.2% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

One employee said the working relationship is inconsistent. Judges do not seem to understand the need for cooperation.

One employee said judges do not understand the high demands for workers with high caseloads.

## TRAINING BARRIERS

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

4	5
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44.4% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.  
55.6% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

2	7
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22.2% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.

77.8% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

One employee said it depends on whether the experienced supervisor has time to invest in showing new workers the steps taken on investigations.

Two employees said the information is enough to give a caseworker a heads up on investigations, but not enough information for FBSS issues.

Four employees said the training was too short and on-the-job training with experienced workers is needed.

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

3	6
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33.3% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

66.7% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

Three employees said the training barely touches the surface on legal issues and protocol issues.

One employee said CPS attorneys need to train workers on what to expect in court proceedings.

One employee said caseworkers need to be walked through the process of removing a child, before going to the field.

One employee said the training is overwhelming, because it does not make sense until the worker has field experience.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

5	4
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55.6% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

44.4% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for CPS Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

7	2
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77.8% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

22.2% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

7	2
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77.8% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.  
22.2% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

2	7
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22.2% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are available to them.

77.8% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

8	1
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88.9% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

11.1% of the employees interviewed said there are no obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

8A. If so, what are they?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

9. Are CPS policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

9	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

7	2
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77.8% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.

22.2% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are not adequate to perform their jobs.

10A. If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

**SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES	NO
3	0

100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES	NO
1	2

33.3% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

66.7% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) did not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

One worker said it is not enough time to see a pattern, in order to determine if someone will stay off drugs/alcohol and to determine if they can keep a job.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES	NO
2	1

66.7% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

33.3% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

3A. Explain:

One worker said each case is unique and some cases need approximately 2 years in order to turn an addict’s life around.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES	NO
1	2

33.3% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

66.7% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe CPS was able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:

One worker said rural areas have very limited resources such as counseling classes, transportation to classes and parenting classes.

One worker said there are not enough service providers. There is not enough emphasis on providing money for providers and transportation for clients to attend provider appointments.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

0	3
---	---

100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

One worker said a lack of housing is a problem.

One worker said there is a need for additional providers for anger management classes.

One worker said service providers do not exist in very poor communities.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

9	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

One employee answered 3.

One employee answered 5.

Three employees answered 5-7.

Two employees answered 6.

One employee answered 6-8.

One employee answered 7-8.

Employees interviewed said that the average number of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 6 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

8	1
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88.9% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

11.1% of the employees interviewed said there are no systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

Eight employees said call the supervisor and if necessary, the supervisor will call the Program Director and if necessary, the Program Director will call the Program Administrator.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

7	2
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77.8% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

22.2% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

One employee said if the supervisor is not available, the caseworker has to talk to another supervisor and the other supervisor is not familiar with the case, which makes decision making more difficult.

One employee said there is no uniformity among supervisors on removals.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

8	1
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88.9% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

11.1% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

The supervisor is not receiving support and the supervisor does not give support. It starts at the top.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

7	2
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77.8% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

22.2% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

One employee said their manager meets with them as often as needed.

One employee said their manager meets with them daily.

One employee said their manager meets with them weekly.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee every two weeks.

Three employees said his/her manager meets with the employee monthly.

Two employees said his/her manager meets with the employee every two months.



8. How often should your manager meet with you?  
Six employees said their manager should meet with them as much as is needed.  
One employee said his/her manager should meet with him/her daily.  
Two employees said their manager should meet with them weekly.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

1	5
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

One employee said high-risk cases or those involving children with special needs must be staffed in person.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

7	2
---	---

78% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

22% of the employees interviewed said they have not noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

One employee said some supervisors are strict and some are not strict.

Three employees said some supervisors have their own way of doing things.

Two employees said there is not an open door policy and supervisors do their own thing.

One employee said supervisors are very inconsistent when assessing risk issues.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

1	6
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11.1% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures.

88.9% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

Four employees said they were unaware if there was a policy for staffing cases.

One employee said there is not a policy for staffing cases face-to-face.

One employee said high-risk cases or those involving children with special needs must be staffed in person.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

1	8
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11.1% of the employees interviewed said they feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

88.9% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

Most of CPS attorneys are not knowledgeable in CPS policies and procedures and they do not seem to know how to deal with people.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with? Six employees said they discuss the issues further with the supervisor, then follow the instructions of the supervisor.

Three employees said they would go to the Program Director.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

6	3
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66.7% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

33.3% of the employees interviewed said they do not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

Four employees said they believe there are cases where CPS did not remove children from dangerous environments.

Two employees said they believe judges have returned children to dangerous environments.

16. Are you able to make a decision of "Rule-out" or "Unable to Determine" a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

6	0
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked these questions.

100% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of "Rule-out or "Unable to Determine" a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

0	9
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100% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

0	9
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100% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

8	1
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88.9% of the employees interviewed said they had information for the OIG.

11.1% of the employees interviewed said they did not have information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

1	8
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11.1% of the employees interviewed said they were afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

88.9% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

20A. If so, who and why?

A supervisor is not approachable for discussions.

### **EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Provide additional caseworkers and incentives to keep them.
- Increase caseworker salaries.
- Provide better training for State Wide Intake (SWI) on gathering correct information, such as addresses or directions to the home, the name of the school attended by the child, and the name of the apartment complex.
- New caseworkers need on-the-job training with an experienced caseworker for several weeks or months. A few days of classes are good for basics, but classes do not prepare caseworkers for the real world.
- Provide state provided cell phones or enough money to cover all CPS calls made on caseworkers personal cell phones. \$50 per month does not cover the monthly charges for CPS calls.
- Provide car seats for children of various ages.
- Provide offices that would be located in a safer environment or provide a security guard. It is not safe for caseworkers in certain areas to work at the office at night or on weekends.

- Risk assessment policies are outdated, so the risk assessment issues on the Impact System should be re-evaluated and shortened.
- Changes must be made in order to ensure that statewide policies and procedures are the same throughout the state. Currently, each region decides which policies and procedures will be used and which will be ignored. In many instances, supervisors will decide which policies and procedures they will use and which they will ignore. Every time a negative incident occurs, there is a change in policies and procedures. Statewide policies and procedures are too voluminous to remember, so they need to be revamped.
- Provide better training for new caseworkers, on cases when a child should be removed and/or when a child should not be removed.
- Provide more caseworkers and fewer managers. Some caseworkers believe it is unnecessary to have a Program Director and a Program Administrator.
- Provide more CPS legal staff to assist caseworkers in preparing affidavits and to represent caseworkers in court hearings.
- Provide cameras and tapes for audiocassette recorders.
- Caseworkers need fewer cases and less time constraints.

## Region 6 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 299 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

Question	%Yes	%No	Total
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>76.59%</b>	<b>23.41%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>63.21%</b>	<b>36.79%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>75.68%</b>	<b>24.32%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>63.74%</b>	<b>36.26%</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>56.19%</b>	<b>43.81%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>27.42%</b>	<b>72.58%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>29.82%</b>	<b>70.18%</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>58.75%</b>	<b>41.25%</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>25.08%</b>	<b>74.92%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>19.78%</b>	<b>80.22%</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>70.97%</b>	<b>29.03%</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>84.95%</b>	<b>15.05%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>91.3%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>12.64%</b>	<b>87.36%</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>13.71%</b>	<b>86.29%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>15.19%</b>	<b>84.81%</b>	<b>237</b>

<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>41.86%</b>	<b>58.14%</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>79.49%</b>	<b>20.51%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>81.58%</b>	<b>18.42%</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>6.25%</b>	<b>93.75%</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>45.45%</b>	<b>54.55%</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>29.43%</b>	<b>70.57%</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>11.41%</b>	<b>88.59%</b>	<b>298</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 75.68% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.01 cases with 23% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 11% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 63.74% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.27 cases with 5% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 38% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file, that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions. Please see Appendix E for validation methodology.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>98% validation rate</b>

<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>98% validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>98% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. One respondent requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 6.19. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	5	63%	3	38%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (800 number)	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	8	100%	0	0%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	7	87.5%	1	12.5%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	1	12.5%	7	87.5%

**Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:**

#### **Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:**

- Duplicating services that can be provided by the private sector.
- Excessive caseload.
- Lack of resources.
- High staff turnover.
- Work environment is not positive, low moral.

- Response time on medical needs of children.
- Lack of continuity on cases, due to high staff turnover.
- Caseload management size and caseworker contact with children.
- Insufficient resources and support to train new staff.
- Train staff not considered essential during hiring freezes.

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Lack of resources.
- Agency philosophy.
- Management.
- Caseworkers.
- Salaries.
- Excessive caseload.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Overhaul of senior and middle management.
- Decentralization of management, allowing district directors to foster business relationships (control and decision making in terms of daily administration).
- Increase salaries to reduce staff turnover.
- Reduce territorial attitudes during agency changes and that of a status quo.
- Reduction of excessive caseload of staff.
- Look to the private sector for providing services required by law (i.e. licensing, investigation and monitoring)

**Staff Allocation**

*Management/Administrative*

District Director:	1	
Program Administrators:	8 (5 C.P.S. P.A.'s, 2 P.A. I's, 1 P.A. III, 1 P.A. IV, 1 P.A. V)	
Program Directors:	20 (15 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 2 Permanency P.D.'s, 3 Risk P.D.)	
Supervisors:	81 (C.P.S. Supervisors)	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		110

*Caseworkers*

Investigations:	208	
Family Based Safety Services:	116	
Substitute Care:	188	
Generic:	33	
Foster Care/Adoptions:	23	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		568

*Clerical/Support*

Administrative Assistants:	92
Clerks:	31
Human Services Technicians:	49



Switchboard Operator: 2

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Subtotal: 174

Other Staff

Point of Entry (POE)	(23)	Program Specialists:	(20)
Worker V's:	(13)	Human Services Specialists:	(12)
Legal Liaisons:	(11)	District Trainers:	(3)
Contracts:	(5)	Accountants:	(4)
Family Group Conference Specialist:	(4)	Foster Care/Adoption Recruiters:	(3)
Public Information Officer	(2)	Case Analysts:	(2)
Developmental/Disability Specialist:	(1)	Budget Analyst:	(1)
Legal Secretary:	(1)	Manager II:	(1)
SSI Coordinator:	(1)	Volunteer Coordinator:	(1)
District Training Supervisor:	(1)		

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Subtotal: 109

**TOTAL REGION 6 (Houston): 961**

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	2	8%
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	2	8%
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	12	50%
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	5	21%
Employed: 10 + Years	3	13%

Number of first line supervisors since you first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	8
2	5
3	5
4	2
5 +	4

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total

Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	2	0	0	0	1	3
Bachelor's	8	3	0	6	4	21

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

0	9
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

100% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Address and location information.

Incorrect or incomplete address and no directions to the residences in rural areas.

Incorrect spellings of addresses and names.

No telephone numbers.

School information.

Some cases are not related to CPS issues.

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

8	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

89% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

11% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it does not cause undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Six employees said that time spent trying to locate the child and family takes time away from actually working with the family and delays action on other cases; also time may be critical in a "Priority 1" case.

One employee said if the information is not correct, the case might be assigned the wrong priority. It takes additional investigation time to hunt down the missing information.

One employee said a new investigator might not pursue an investigative issue that is missed at intake. It takes up valuable investigative time to obtain information.

**CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

Five FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.

Seven FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1-2.

Three FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 2.

Five investigators answered 5.  
Two investigators answered 4-5.  
One investigator answered 4.  
One investigator answered 26.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week for FBSS/Sub-care workers is approximately 1 case/family.  
Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week for investigators are approximately 6 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?  
Eight FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1-2.  
Seven FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.  
Six investigators answered 3-4.  
Two investigators answered 2-3.  
One investigator answered 13-18.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 1 case/family.  
Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 5 cases.

3. What is your average caseload?  
Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 6-8 families per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 8-10 per month.  
Three FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 12 per month.  
Four FBSS-Sub-care workers answered 10-12 per month.  
Three FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 15 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 40-42 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 50-55 per month.  
One investigator answered 18-23 cases per month.  
Two investigators answered 20-25 cases per month.  
Two investigators answered 40 cases per month.  
Two investigators answered 30-35 cases per month.  
One investigator answered 40-50 cases per month.  
One investigator answered 60 cases per month.

All employees said they were unaware of what their average caseload is per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month. On average, FBSS/Sub-care workers said their average caseload per month is approximately 16 cases. On average, Investigators said their average caseload per month is approximately 35 cases.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 1-2 per month.  
Four FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 10 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 12 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 27-28 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 31 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 32-35 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 35 per month.  
Three FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 35-40 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 45 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 32 per month.

Three investigators suggested 10 per month.

One investigator suggested 22 per month.

One investigator suggested 30-35 per month.

One investigator suggested 20 per month.

One investigator suggested 25 per month.

Two investigators suggested 10-15 per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that in order to take care of children and families, a reasonable caseload should be approximately 25 cases/families per month.

Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 17 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

Seven employees said the supervisor would handle any emergency issues or crises that may arise. Caseworker attempts to get caught up on cases before taking a vacation. Assigned cases will sit idle and the supervisor will handle only emergencies.

Six employees said other unit workers handle emergencies. Employees see the families before leaving on vacation and arrangements are made for others in the unit to visit the families while on vacation. Some cases sit idle and another worker handles only emergencies.

Three employees said cases are reassigned to another worker for extended time off. Workers must work to get all cases contacts done prior to leaving. Supervisor will staff cases and reassign.

Four employees said no one works on their cases while they are on vacation and they get calls at home during vacation.

Two employees said they would not be able to take a vacation until cases are current.

Two employees they have not taken a vacation in several years, because of the heavy workload.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

7	2
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

78% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

22% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

One employee said some contacts not made because clients can't be located, usually because incorrect information is provided by intake. One employee said that policy requirements are met on "Priority 2" cases 90-95% of the time; attempts are made, but sometimes family is avoiding the worker.

One employee said cases are often delayed in being assigned, which causes additional stress. In addition, too many priority cases are assigned and court hearings also interfere with response time.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

5	4
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

56% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

44% of employees interviewed said they have not experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

One employee said sometimes the supervisor does not assign cases timely or it goes to the router's desk to locate the correct office to receive the case.

Two employees said the supervisor is overloaded and with few caseworkers, it is difficult for a supervisor to decide whom to assign new cases.

One employee said sometimes cases are not assigned until 8 days after being reported, which allows two days to make contact on Priority 2 cases. Sometimes cases are not assigned until 4-5 days after being reported.

One employee said he/she has not experienced this, but co-workers have received them on the 9<sup>th</sup> day. Also, Statewide Intake may delay calling on Priority 1's for several hours.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

3	21
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12.5% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

87.5% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

23	1
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96% of the employees interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

4% of the employees interviewed said there is not an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

Twenty employees said closing cases is about money. For example, if a case goes beyond 59 days, CPS does not get federal money. It is that 60-day rule.

One employee said they thought the emphasis was a case management tool to prevent workers from getting too far behind in their work.

One employee said they thought the emphasis was because of state statutes.

One employee said, "so we can close it and go on with other cases".

## **WORK PROCESS:**

One generic worker explained that upon case assignment, he/she must assess the risk. The caseworker will set up services and monitor the families through visits. A generic worker is assigned Priority 1 cases and contact must be made within 24 hours. On Priority 2 cases, contact must be made within 10 days, then determine action to be taken for disposition of the case.

One family adoption explained that upon case assignment, it is necessary to determine if there is a family identified for adoption. If so, then the process will begin. If there is not a family available, it is necessary to search for a family. A family background is done and a home study is done. Classes are scheduled for the family and during all of this time the worker makes regular visits with the child. Placement is done in court.

One legal liaison explained that he/she organizes and researches locations and conducts home visits.

One family conferencing specialist explained that he/she is responsible for meeting with the family, friends of the family and relatives of the family, in order to attempt to get children out of foster care sooner. The primary purpose of a family conferencing specialist is to keep families together. The specialist visits with the family on a weekly basis in order to assess progress of the family members attending parenting classes, drug rehabilitation classes, etc.

Four FBSS worker agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker meets with the family and conducts a family assessment. The caseworker must interview the children, check for injuries, and develop a family plan based upon the need for services. The caseworker must schedule the services for the family and it is necessary to check on the family once a month to monitor services. The caseworker receives feedback from service providers and makes a final decision with the supervisor to close the case or to remove the children.

Five substitute care workers agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker must initiate any services for the family that were not set up by the investigator. The caseworker attends a PPT (permanency planning team) meeting, arranges monthly visits with the parents and children, and completes the service plans within 45 days. The caseworker attends the status hearing to present the service plan to the judge. It is necessary to maintain monthly contacts with the parents and children. Contact with the children must be face to face. The worker documents a monthly summary on each case and the child's service plan needs to be updated every 6 months. If there are relatives to be considered within the first three months, a worker must do a home study, background checks, family history, and criminal history checks, prior to any placement with relatives of the child. The caseworker makes a decision regarding reunification of the children with the family or termination of parental rights.

One substitute care worker explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker attends PPT (permanency planning team) meetings with the investigator, supervisors, family and contract facilitators. Services are based on needs and recommendations by the facilitator. The caseworker makes referrals for services, although there are often funding issues for services. The worker ensures that psychological exams and counseling/therapy are paid for, and arranges for any drug counseling and parenting classes to be paid for by the parents. The caseworker ensures that services are adequate enough to address the problems within each family. In four months, there is another PPT meeting and the worker informs the judge if there is a change in the plan for reunification or termination. A final disposition is determined on whether to send the child home, place the child with a relative or whether the child should be adopted.

Seven investigators agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker must check prior CPS history, locate children and make contact at school or home. The worker will meet with the family and discuss/investigate the allegations. The caseworker staffs the case with the investigation supervisor, makes a recommendation for disposition of the case, and ultimately closes the case or recommends continued services.

One investigator explained that on "Priority 1" cases, the caseworker conducts a face-to-face interview with the victim, then with parents and everyone in the house. The worker then follows up by interviewing collaterals (neighbors, etc.). If the child appears to have been sexually assaulted or injured, the caseworker will call law enforcement. If it appears the child should be removed from the house, the caseworker will staff with a supervisor and Program Director. Some school officials will not allow CPS to take custody of a child without a court order. On Priority 2 cases, a caseworker has to prioritize and attempt to conduct a face-to-face interview with the victim, then with the family within 10 days.

One investigator explained that upon case assignment, he/she calls the reporter to validate information. Then, schedules dates to do contacts with the child and locate the child. Staffing is done with a supervisor and then the worker contacts the forensic interviewer. Caseworkers need to locate law enforcement, in order to do joint interviews/investigation. Next, contact the parents and establish whether relative placement or custody of the child is required. Caseworkers must determine what services are needed. If relative placement is done, the caseworker must conduct a home-check for placement. Caseworkers will need to return the next day and talk to reporter. Criminal background checks are done and all of the information is entered into IMPACT.

One program director explained that he/she supervises six supervisors, one secretary, one worker V, and one program specialist that oversees family group counseling. A program director responds to program reports to

review, responds to district attorneys, responds to commissioner's courts, responds to three child welfare boards, and handles other special projects such as revising handbooks.

## INVESTIGATIONS:

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

9	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said that they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

Three employees said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual assault allegations, serious physical abuse or child death and when worker's safety is in jeopardy.

Three employees said on all Priority 1 cases.

One employee said any severe physical abuse, sexual abuse, or any victims under age of 5, or if there is a possible criminal case.

One employee said "Imminent danger issues".

One employee said "Dealing with violent parents".

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

7	2
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

78% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

22% of the investigators interviewed said they were not aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

Five employees said law enforcement is required to assist on sexual assault allegations, serious physical abuse or child death and when worker's safety is in jeopardy, but they added, this is not always happening because law enforcement lacks the manpower to follow this requirement.

One employee said, when there are injuries to a child.

One employee said, on all Priority 1 cases.

3. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

17	7
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71% of the employees interviewed described the CPS working relationship with the community as good.

29% of the employees interviewed described the CPS working relationship with the community as fair.

3A. Explain:

Eight employees said misconceptions by the community result in a skewed view of CPS, and that the public needs to be better educated about what CPS does. Employees said the community is not aware of the purpose

of CPS. Sometimes, parents will use CPS, in order to gain custody of children during custody battles. A large portion of the community believes the only thing CPS does is remove children from their homes. There is a misconception in the community, because nobody with CPS is attending functions, talking to media or visiting schools to educate people about what CPS is all about.

Five employees said the negative media attention contributes to the community's poor perception of CPS. One employee said, it depends on individuals, because some believe we are baby snatchers and intrude into their private lives.

One employee said people do not have a positive attitude towards CPS.

One employee said CPS has affected many people indirectly and they are frustrated, because they do not feel that CPS is doing enough.

One employee said, the community knows what we do and how limited we are. They know our short time frames and lack of resources, and they know we're going to get involved then get out, leaving them hanging.

4. Does CPS have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

15	9
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62.5% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.

37.5% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

One employee said the law enforcement working relationship is almost nonexistent; very it is difficult to get assistance and workers have to wait long periods of time for law enforcement to arrive

One employee said law enforcement complains of the high turnover rate within CPS.

One employee said CPS cooperates with law enforcement, but it is not reciprocated.

One employee said the police departments are easier to work with than the Sheriff's Departments.

One employee said some law enforcement get upset about how CPS handled a specific case and then carry a grudge against CPS.

One employee said law enforcement does not put as much emphasis on incest as they do sexual assault by a stranger.

One employee said there aren't enough of us or enough of them to have a good result. They can't send an officer with you on Priority 2's, which is where we need the enforcement figure to accomplish what we need.

Two employees said some departments would not assist CPS when called. Law enforcement is overworked and CPS regional directors do not meet with law enforcement officials to help improve relations. There is not enough dialogue between CPS and law enforcement

5. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

13	11
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54% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.

46% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

Two employees said judges are not clear in what they want and have an unrealistic expectation of what the caseworkers can do, such as, finding homes for hard to place and older children. The Courts have an unrealistic expectation of what CPS can accomplish in our time frames.

Two employees said judges don't respect CPS caseworkers or agency decisions; judges are condescending and do not give caseworker's opinions any credibility. Courts attempt to do their own social work by ordering CPS to do certain things; the assessments and services should be left to CPS.



One employee said some judges are not consistent with decisions.

One employee said there is not enough pressure placed on parents by the courts to complete services.

One employee said new judges are not familiar enough with CPS cases to be effective

One employee said the prosecutors assigned to the Family Law Center do not fight hard enough for the children, don't prepare well and leave the legal questions to the caseworkers. The employee also said the court-appointed attorneys don't fight hard enough for the families. They appear that they are trying to get by with the minimum amount of effort. Assistant district attorneys believe that CPS caseworkers do not do their job very well, so they have a negative attitude about CPS.

One employee said, he/she does not believe the courts really care what happens to these kids or the families. Most ad-litem never go out and meet with the child. However, judges get frustrated with case workers because they have not done everything that should have been done on cases, like providing parenting classes. The judges don't realize it, but the reason is because the caseworkers have too many cases to be able to conduct complete investigations.

One employee said younger caseworkers do not always dress appropriately for court, which irritates the judge.

One employee said that on many occasions, caseworkers are late for court and they are not able to answer a lot of the basic questions by the judge.

## TRAINING BARRIERS

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

10	14
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42% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

58% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

5	19
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21% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.

79% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

Ten employees said the initial training should include more practical on-the-job training; students are given the paperwork without a good, practical understanding of how to apply the information and the training only has a general overview of social work or how to write a narrative. Employees need more time on mock cases, so they can learn how to work cases. More time should be spent on training employees how to do the job. Nothing is covered on how to get all the proper forms or how to use the Impact System. Until field experience is acquired, employees cannot adequately assess the needs and make the critical decisions and understand why things are done certain ways. The training does not indicate what really happens in the real world.

Five employees said the academy focuses on investigations, and not on FBSS and conservatorship caseworkers. One employee said the academy was a waste of time and resources, and that it was inadequate in preparing new workers, especially for outlying counties.

One employee said the training should include more application of all the information received in theories and legal issues.

Two employees said the training does not prepare caseworkers for the overwhelming amount of cases.

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

11	13
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46% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

64% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

Four employees said there was too much information to comprehend in such a short time. Too confusing to hear about all the time frames and the large amount of information we received. It did not make sense until workers had been in the field.

Two employees said there is not enough time spent on legal training (2 days), and that only familiarization is provided. More training time is needed in this area.

Two employees said the training did not prepare workers for realities of court and how judges handle things differently. The academy did not train workers regarding the legal information that goes into the Impact System.

Two employees said the training did not prepare them for the different legal aspects in the outlying counties.

One employee said there was no legal preparation for Sub-Care or FBSS cases.

One employee said there is no training regarding court preparation or courtroom testimony.

One employee said that CPS legal staff should be more involved with the training and teach caseworkers how to prepare cases.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

19	5
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79% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

21% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for CPS Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

17	7
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71% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

29% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

16	8
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67% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

33% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

10	14
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37.5% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are available to them.

62.5% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

20	4
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83% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

17% of the employees interviewed said there are not obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

If so, what are they?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

9. Are CPS policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

16	8
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67% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.

33% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

18	6
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75% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.

25% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are not adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

**SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care employees were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES	NO
15	0

100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES	NO
8	7

57% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) did have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

43% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) did not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

Four employees said services are limited and it takes time to get the family to cooperate. Management is not patient and will rush to close the case; one year to fix a dysfunctional family’s lifetime of problems is not sufficient.

Two employees said that for cases with substance abuse, the treatment is rushed and there is a high incidence of relapse.

One employee said some families are in denial of the need for help and it takes awhile to get them working the services effectively.

One employee said how the investigation is handled affects the level of cooperation of the family with sub care; domino effect; people get overwhelmed.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES	NO
8	7

53% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

47% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

3A. Explain:

Two employees said for cases with substance abuse, the treatment is rushed and there is a high incidence of relapse.

Two workers said it depends on how cooperative the family is and if court/legal action is taken, the family is forced to cooperate.

One worker said there are limited services and one year to fix a dysfunctional family's lifetime of problems is not sufficient.

One employee said 24 months are needed to determine if the family has adapted to counseling.

One employee said there are not enough resources to take care of the children in this area, such as shelters for children

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

6	9
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40% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

60% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe CPS was able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:

One employee said there is a lack of sufficient contracts for services. There is a lack of services in the rural areas and families without transportation cannot complete services. Funding for parenting classes is very short. One worker said the agency is too understaffed to be able to provide adequate services; too much emphasis is placed on repetitive paperwork; not enough time to spend with the families.

One employee said the long waiting list for services and the lack of bilingual services stalls the process.

One employee said he/she believes service providers are false billing and overcharging when they think they can get by with it.

One employee said that many families have deep-rooted issues and the limited involvement CPS provides is a band-aid remedy.

One employee said CPS takes the cheap way out and the quality of services is affected by this decision.

One employee said many FBSS workers are incompetent to handle FBSS cases, because they do not have proper training.

One employee said it depends if the family understands the services provided.

One employee said, if they are fully staffed, CPS is able to provide the services.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

3	12
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20% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

80% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

One employee said the long waiting list for services and the lack of bilingual services stalls the process.

One employee said he/she has Vietnamese clients; need resources that speak their language and are culturally aware of their needs.

One employee said there is a need for more/better counseling for children who are sexual abuse victims.  
 One employee said there is a need for effective counseling for youth perpetrator services.  
 One employee said funding for families who cannot afford the services is not available.  
 One employee said there are not enough providers in the community and there is a definite lack of funding to pay for the services.  
 One employee said there is not enough money to pay for quality services.  
 One employee said there are not enough services in the rural areas.  
 One employee said it is difficult and time consuming in trying to find all resources available in the community.  
 One employee said there is a long waiting list for classes, which prevents progress with the case.  
 One employee said parenting classes are needed.  
 One employee said financial assistance is needed because families live in poverty.

**MANAGEMENT**

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

19	5
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79% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.  
 21% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

Two employees had not been employed with the agency for a full year.  
 Two employees could not remember when they had their last performance evaluation.  
 One employee had not had a performance evaluation in two years.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

Five employees answered 6.  
 One employee answered 5-6.  
 One employee answered 4-6.  
 Two employees answered 6-7.  
 Four employees answered 7.  
 Six employees answered 8.  
 One employee answered 9.  
 One employee answered 9-15.  
 One employee answered 10.  
 One employee answered 11.  
 One employee answered 15.  
 Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 7 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

24	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

All twenty-four employees said they are able to staff cases with their supervisor, Program Director, and with the Risk Director if necessary. Communication with CPS legal was also mentioned.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

22	2
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92% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

8% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

Two employees said although there is a process in place, supervisors are never available because they keep their door closed and always making personal telephone calls”.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

22	2
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92% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

8% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

One employee said the supervisor was constantly conferencing with workers and writing them up; threatening them with their jobs; providing no guidance, was inaccessible and constantly showed favoritism.

One employee said the supervisor “always has her door closed or she is gone and unable to be contacted”.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

21	3
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87.5% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meets with them face-to-face on their cases.

12.5% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

Sixteen employees said their manager meets with the employee once a month for conferencing on all cases and anytime on critical issues and immediately on “Priority 1” cases.

Six employees said their manager meets with the employee anytime they need to staff a case.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee once a week.

One employee said they do not meet often with management because he/she is a sub-care worker.

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

Fifteen employees said their manager should meet with them weekly or as needed.

Five employees said their manager should meet with them on each case.

Three employees said their manager should meet with them each day.

One employee said his/her manager should meet twice per month.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

2	7
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FBSS and Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

22% of the employees interviewed said policy requires employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

78% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

Two employees said policy requires they staff a case in person with their supervisor immediately on Priority 1 cases and monthly on other cases.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

15	9
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62.5% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

37.5% of the employees interviewed said they have not noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

One employee said the program director treats units differently. Some units transfer cases within their program, but his/her unit transfers cases outside their program, which results in more work for employees not in her unit.

One employee said each supervisor follows his/her own set of rules.

One employee said it depends on which supervisors and program directors are feeling the heat. Some are very reactive; others are not reactive enough.

One employee said there is an unbelievable amount of favoritism shown by supervisors in this agency, which is detrimental to the morale of the workers.

One employee said there is a very noticeable inconsistency in the discipline of workers; some workers are fired for the same actions that others are not disciplined for.

One FBSS worker said their cases are different because they are transferred to them from different investigation units; the unit supervisors decisions are reflected in how the case is handled, each very differently, which makes the FBSS workers cases more difficult

One employee was an investigator, but assigned to an FBSS unit and had to answer to two different supervisors and was in constant conflict.

One employee said supervisors are very inconsistent in their decisions relating to cases that involve drug use.

One employee said a more cautious policy has been adopted, which appears to be a result of the scrutiny that CPS is facing and there is less emphasis on reunification because management is afraid to not remove children.

One employee said supervisors change directives constantly and procedures change daily, which is an additional burden for workers to determine whether they are following the correct policies and procedures.

One employee said many supervisors are inept. Several have been promoted to an investigative unit, although they have little or no experience conducting investigations. They were promoted because they have a master's degree. Many people with a bachelors degree and lots of investigative experience are not being promoted

One employee said different personalities are a reason for inconsistent practices

One employee said young supervisors are insecure in their positions and constantly make inappropriate decisions.



One employee said it depends on the work ethics of each supervisor.

One employee said some supervisors do not take time to assess cases in order to help caseworkers know what information is lacking on cases.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

7	8
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47% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures.

53% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

Two employees said it is immediately on “Priority 1” cases; monthly on other cases.

Seven employees said they did not know, or did not believe there was a policy requirement to staff cases with supervisor.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

3	21
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12.5% of the employees interviewed said they feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

87.5% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

One employee suggested they are discouraged from seeking legal intervention because workers are stretched too thin and legal work requires a lot more of the worker’s time.

One employee said he/she is not discouraged from seeking legal intervention by supervisors, but sometimes by judges.

One employee said that caseworkers are allowed to contact the district attorneys office only for removal issues. Any other issue, the supervisor will contact the district attorneys office.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Seven employees said they discuss the issues further with the supervisor.

Five employees said he/she discusses the issue with the supervisor and then the program director and follows the recommendation of the program director.

Three employees said he/she had not had this problem with their supervisor.

Two employees said he/she would discuss with supervisor, document it, then follow the chain of command.

One employee said I haven’t had this to happen, but when my supervisor isn’t available, I can go to other supervisors or a worker V.

One employee said, “re-staff or go to the next person who can staff it with you”.

One employee said, “Talk to the Program Director or perhaps staff with another supervisor”.

One employee said discuss with another supervisor

One employee said, “My supervisor is a dictator and will not debate any issues”.

One employee said supervisor does not give good directives.

One employee said caseworkers are not permitted to go to another supervisor or program director.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

14	10
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58% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

42% of the employees interviewed said they do not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

One employee said investigators use FBSS as a dumping ground instead of taking custody of a child when it is necessary.

One employee said some cases assigned to FBSS for services should have been custody cases because the children were left at too much risk.

One employee said there are cases of sex offenders on probation who are being allowed to see the children.

Three employees said they believe there are cases where CPS did not remove children from dangerous environments.

One employee said, "My time bombs of cases that are not getting effectively involved with services and not getting adequate attention because of high caseload and short time frames".

One employee said some workers who recently left had cases that were incomplete and needed re-assigned and there were some things in those cases that needed to be re-looked.

Four employees said they believe there are cases where CPS removed children and they should not have been removed.

One employee said CPS removed children because the mother tested positive for drugs. CPS should not have removed the children. CPS should simply monitor the mother for six months.

One employee said that over the years, cases have been closed when they should not have been closed. This practice has been done, because of heavy caseloads.

16. Are you able to make a decision of "Rule-out" or "Unable to Determine" a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

8	1
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

89% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of "Rule-out or "Unable to Determine" on a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

11% of the employees interviewed said they were not able to make a decision of "Rule-out or "Unable to Determine" on a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

0	24
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100% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

0	24
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100% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

18A. If so, by who and what was said?

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

20	4
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83% of the employees interviewed said they had additional information for the OIG.

17% of the employees interviewed said they did not have additional information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

4	20
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17% of the employees interviewed said they were afraid or intimidated by someone in their management structure.

83% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

20A. If so, who and why?

Four employees said management, in general, does not like anyone who speaks up. To keep your job, you just accept most everything that goes on in the agency.

#### **EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Provide time management classes.
- Provide training for hands-on documenting of cases in the database.
- Provide basic self-defense and safety for employees.
- Provide training regarding people skills on how to deal with hostile/difficult people.
- Provide ethics training.
- Provide training on clinical topics.
- Provide additional legal training, including courtroom procedures.
- Peer training program should be reinstated
- Provide a separate section of the academy regarding FBSS and Sub-care issues.
- Although training is offered, workers need time to attend classes.

- Provide additional Impact training.
- Provide legal updates, such as local legal requirements in each county.
- Provide drug training.
- Provide training on how to tell parents that their child has accused the father of committing sexual abuse, etc.
- Provide training and authorization to carry pepper spray for protection against dogs.
- A sense of reality and knowledge of expectations in the realistic issues.
- Training on how to handle our caseloads without working overtime.
- Advanced training on how to deal with a family that is agitated and possibly high on drugs.
- On-the-job training is needed for all new workers.
- There is a need for more community resources and service providers.
- Provide funding to pay for client services.
- Provide CPS aides and agency vehicles to transport families to classes.
- The process must be streamlined! Drug and alcohol testing and treatment is unavailable; contracts were not renewed with some of the treatment facilities and the agency must rely on TCADA's self-assessment test, which workers do not think is an effective tool. Workers state it takes 60 days to get a drug analysis test; nothing is timely; a large portion of clients are in need of these services and it creates a major breakdown in the process.
- TCADA cut funding for their drug and alcohol treatment and clients must have Medicaid to see a therapist, so the legislature needs to make some changes.
- Some workers believe an investigation needs to be conducted on foster care homes, because there are too many foster care homes that do not provide a good environment for children. Workers believe some foster families have children over-medicated. Workers explained that, if a family can get a doctor to raise the level of care required for the child, which is sometimes determined by the type of drugs the prescribed by the doctor, the foster family receives more money.
- Changes need to be made, for relatives who are willing to take children. Currently, relatives are not provided the same financial assistance that a foster home receives. Many relatives would be more willing to take the children, which would be less traumatic for the children than being placed in a foster home, if they could afford to raise another child.
- Home studies on relatives' homes may reveal a prior drug charge from 20 years prior, which automatically eliminates the home as an option in placing a child. Workers suggest considering criminal history only within the past ten years, with exceptions for serious offenses.
- Workers said they recently received training on the Fourth Amendment, which was interpreted in a way that prevents CPS workers from having the authority to make parents allow them to see a child and confirm the child is not in danger or injured. Workers want the legislature to make changes/amendments that would give CPS the legal authority to confirm the safety of the child.
- Workers want the agency to do away with the new program, in which a "placement specialist" must be utilized in locating a placement facility for a child. Workers feel this is not in the best interest of the child, as the worker knows the child and understands the child's needs more than someone whose job it is to just find a "slot" for a child somewhere.
- More resources are needed for our families. There is such a long waiting list it can take over a year to get families into services.
- Remove the blocks to the Internet, so workers can load clerical programs on their computers that would assist them with documentation.
- Each worker should have his/her own Digital camera.
- Provide state cars or additional money for driving personal cars, because of liability issues when transporting children and their families in workers personal cars. The wear and tear on personal cars is expensive, because of the voluminous amount of miles driven each month. The cost of tires, brakes, oil

changes, various repairs and \$.35 for gas is not enough, due to gas prices. There is also a risk of exposing caseworkers families to diseases and parasites left by transporting CPS children in their personal cars.

- Provide additional clerical staff to assist caseworkers with various tasks.
- Provide additional caseworkers to assist in alleviating heavy caseloads. Many times, you drive an hour or more and the family is not home. The next day, you do the same thing and they are not home, so then you have to work nights and weekends, so you can meet with the family.
- Discontinue constant changing of policies, procedures.
- Change the time constraints, so there will be enough time to document cases.
- Supervisor changes need to take place in order to professionalize the agency.
- Changes need to be made to allow caseworkers to work overtime. The agency's overtime policy discourages workers. They are told no overtime is allowed but they are assigned workloads that cannot be managed in a normal workweek.
- Some areas are dangerous. Either two workers should go together to those areas or workers that don't feel intimidated in those particular areas should be assigned to work those cases.
- Provide state cell phones or enough money to cover all CPS calls made on caseworkers personal cell phones. \$50 per month does not cover the monthly charges for CPS calls.
- The agency should establish a better support system for staff.
- Provide video cameras.
- Tenured workers should conduct extended on-the-job training for all new employees.
- Workers suggest more effort be spent on developing a better relationship with school officials and better educating them about CPS's role and limit of authority.
- Workers suggest laws be established to give workers an appeal or review process in dealing with cases in which judges and prosecutors decisions contradict the recommendations of caseworkers.
- Management changes need to be made, because current management focuses on quantity and not quality work. The children are the ones that suffer, because of that mindset.
- Management changes need to be made, because the morale of an office is sometimes dictated by the "favoritism" shown by management. It is evident in the promotion of individuals over more-qualified and experienced workers.
- Workers said management is out of touch with the realities of fieldwork, sometimes focusing on theory and not seeing the practical solutions. This must be changed.
- Workers suggest that micro-management decreased the amount of time workers spend on investigations and providing client services; workers should be trusted to do the job they were hired to do.
- Workers suggest that individuals selected for management positions should have good people skills, not just a knowledge of policies and procedures.
- Changes need to be done on the Impact System, because the database is duplicative, which results in excessive time spent documenting casework.
- Deadlines for completion of cases need to be redefined to take into consideration the caseload of the workers today.
- Workers suggest the agency's policies and procedures should be more clearly defined; at this time they are confusing and too subjective. Policies and procedures setting the time frames in which cases must be completed does not work with the high caseload carried by the workers today. Statewide policies and procedures are not used at regional levels and some supervisors establish their own policies and procedures. Statewide policies and procedures are too voluminous to keep clear, so they need to be revamped. Policies and procedures are unrealistic. There is not enough time to work all the cases and caseworkers are not allowed to work overtime.
- CPS should not be working Priority 1 cases when a father hits his teenage boy. That scenario should be Priority 2 cases. Priority 1 cases should be for small children.

- The legislature needs to change the law, so caseworkers can be allowed to enter a home and conduct interviews of a child when a child is believed to be in imminent danger. Currently, caseworkers cannot enter the house without permission from the parents or without a court order.
- Caseworkers should be allowed to take pictures of a child without being required to ask permission from the child and parents.
- Caseworkers should be able to take pictures of the inside of the house without asking permission of parents. They would like to see laws to force parents to take parenting classes, therapy, etc.
- The agency needs to pay their workers well and focus on hiring quality individuals.
- A psychological exam and a criminal history report should be required before employment with the agency.
- Random drug testing should be implemented for CPS workers.
- The agency needs to be aware there are a large number of workers who are experiencing serious health problems resulting from the level of stress they work with on an every day basis.
- Experienced, tenured workers said they do not feel they are valued. They said management surrounds themselves with like-minded people; requests for information on promotions are ignored and they feel there is no chance of advancement for individuals who are not “yes” people.
- Provide tape recorders and pagers for caseworkers.
- There are not enough Spanish speaking caseworkers. Some cases can’t get worked for lack of interpreters.
- Some workers believe bonuses should be offered across-the-board to all workers. Recently, some workers felt the \$3,000 bonus offered to investigators is insulting to FBSS and CVS workers.
- Changes need to be made in philosophy. Currently, in a child death case, the worker is fired, regardless of the fact that the worker may have followed all policies and procedures and had received supervisor approval for all actions taken.
- We work with agencies that want to be involved with children and families such as CASA, who make demands and carry no accountability for things that go wrong. A new pilot program was recently started to assign investigators to monitor a residential treatment center. Workers are too understaffed to handle a regular caseload and to be assigned to private facilities on a permanent basis.
- Caseworkers need increases in salaries. They are paid too low for all that is expected.
- Caseworkers are discouraged from working overtime, but expected to complete the voluminous amount of work. Overtime has to be requested by caseworker and if overtime is authorized, the caseworker is expected to do a flex schedule the following day in order to not have overtime on the books. All of this needs to be addressed.
- CPS needs someone to conduct background searches on each case, to alleviate some of the work caseworkers are currently doing.
- Something needs to be done about the promotional process. Workers are being promoted according to whom they know, not according to abilities.
- Something needs to be changed about CPS being hard on a caseworker when a child dies. A child death review is conducted, which is necessary, but due to the voluminous amount of cases, it is impossible to document your cases as well as you should, which makes the caseworker look bad during reviews.
- Bad supervisors cannot keep good workers, so something needs to be done to retain good employees.
- An investigation needs to look into cases being closed prematurely. Some caseworkers are believed to be falsifying case narratives, showing that a family moved, etc., so they can close cases.
- Caseworkers need access to the software program used for the Food Stamp Program, which could assist in locating people. The program has lots of contact information, such as addresses and history on clients
- Caseworkers need better training. They are not trained to handle CPS work. Some cases are very complex and with heavy caseloads, it is difficult to conduct thorough investigations
- Pay increases should be based on merit, not tenure.

## Region 7 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 187 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

<b>Question</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>%No</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>81.82%</b>	<b>18.18%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>68.98%</b>	<b>31.02%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>73.91%</b>	<b>26.09%</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>59.7%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>41.18%</b>	<b>58.82%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>32.62%</b>	<b>67.38%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>42.64%</b>	<b>57.36%</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>64.86%</b>	<b>35.14%</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>27.81%</b>	<b>72.19%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>32.26%</b>	<b>67.74%</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>76.47%</b>	<b>23.53%</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>26.74%</b>	<b>73.26%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>8.61%</b>	<b>91.39%</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>3.74%</b>	<b>96.26%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>18.54%</b>	<b>81.46%</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>11.23%</b>	<b>88.77%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>16.99%</b>	<b>83.01%</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>20</b>

<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>80.95%</b>	<b>19.05%</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>6.25%</b>	<b>93.75%</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>22.22%</b>	<b>77.78%</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>72.22%</b>	<b>27.78%</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>22.46%</b>	<b>77.54%</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>9.63%</b>	<b>90.37%</b>	<b>187</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 73.91% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.56 cases with 28% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 11% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 59.7% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.28 cases with 4% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 28% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. HHSC-OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file, that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions. Please see Appendix E for validation methodology.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>98% validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>



substitute care?	
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>98% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. The 98<sup>th</sup> State District Court Judge was also surveyed. One respondent requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 6.33. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	1	17%	5	83%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (800 number)	6	100%	0	0%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	6	100%	0	0%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	5	83%	1	17%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	0	0%	6	100%

**Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:**

#### **Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:**

- 48<sup>th</sup> in the United States in agency funding.
- Time/Implementation and monitoring of contractual mandates for placement (i.e. therapy).
- Ability to place children in a timely fashion.

- Overall backlog of services for families and children.
- Occasionally has tunnel vision (hardened position taken with evidence not being sufficient).

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Problems are on the part of management and a lack of resources.
- Naturally occurring Institutional mindset.
- Highest Caseload in the country.
- Extremely heavy caseload.
- CPS doesn't adhere to the Child Welfare league of America's standards.
- Lack of staff training.
- Removal of Law Enforcement from the training of staff, due to budget cuts.
- Extremely high staff turnover.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Increase funding.
- Reduce caseworker caseload.
- Streamline administration and decentralize management.
- Increase staff salaries.
- Decrease staff turnover.
- Increase agency funding.
- Increase number of caseworkers.
- Provide law enforcement training from a certified local police officer.

**Staff Allocation**

Management/Administrative

District Director:	1	
Program Administrators:	5 (2 CPS P.A.'s, 2 P.A. I, 1 P.A. III)	
Program Directors:	13 (10 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 2 Risk P.D.'s, 1 Permanency P.D.)	
Supervisors:	65 (C.P.S. Supervisors)	
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Subtotal:		84

Caseworkers

Investigations:	108	
Family Based Safety Services:	49	
Substitute Care:	141	
Generic:	-	
Foster Care/Adoptions:	51	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		349

Clerical/Support

Administrative Assistants:	62	
Clerks:	12	
Human Services Technicians:	31	

Switchboard Operators: 4

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Subtotal: 109

Other Staff

Worker V's:	(16)	Contracts:	(8)
Human Services Specialists:	(6)	Legal Secretaries:	(5)
Accountants:	(4)	Program Specialists:	(4)
Permanency Planning Team Convenors:	(3)	District Trainers:	(3)
Volunteer Coordinators:	(2)	Case Analysts:	(2)
Public Information Officer:	(1)	Kinship Care Specialist:	(1)
Residential Treatment Specialist:	(1)	SSI Coordinator	(1)
Training Supervisor:	(1)		

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Subtotal: 58

**TOTAL REGION 7 (Austin): 600**

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	0	
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	4	
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	12	
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	2	
Employed: 10 + Years	1	

Number of first line supervisors since you first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	7
2	7
3	3
4	1
5 +	1

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	4	0	0	0	0	4

Bachelor's	5	2	2	2	4	15
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**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

5	5
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked intake questions.

50% of employees interviewed said statewide intake is collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

50% of employees interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Four employees said locating and personal information is typically incomplete. Previous CPS history, names, dates of birth, phone numbers, addresses, etc., are often mixed up or incorrect.

One employee said "Priority 1 cases not evaluated correctly".

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

7	3
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked intake questions.

70% of employees interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

30% of employees interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it does not cause undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Four employees said too much time is wasted trying to locate the child and family, which place other cases behind schedule.

One employee said that when information is incorrect, it can place the caseworker at risk when they respond.

One employee said cases that are not categorized correctly can hinder cooperation with the family, because they become upset when CPS responds.

One employee said it is more difficult to initiate and investigation when the caseworker is "dependent on other people to contact you".

**CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

Four FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0. (service coordinator).

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1-4.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-2.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-3.

Two investigators answered 7.

One investigator answered 2.  
One investigator answered 4-5.  
One investigator answered 5-8.  
One investigator answered 5-10.  
One investigator answered 7-8.  
One investigator answered 8.  
Two investigator answered 10.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week for FBSS/Sub-care workers is approximately 1 case/family.

Based on answers of employees, the average for new investigations assigned each week for investigators are approximately 7 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1.  
Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 1.  
Four FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.  
Two investigators answered 2.  
Two investigators answered 3-4.  
One investigator answered 2-3.  
Three investigators answered 3.  
One investigator answered 4.  
One investigator answered 5.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week is approximately 1 case/family.

Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 4 cases.

3. What is your average caseload?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 8 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 16 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 17 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care answered 18-29 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 19 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care answered 20 per month.  
One FBSS/Sub-care answered 22 per month.  
Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 25 per month.  
Two investigators answered 70 per month.  
One investigator answered 124 per month.  
One investigator answered 35 per month.  
One investigator answered 50 per month.  
One investigator answered 40-50 per month.  
Two investigators answered 20 – 25 per month.  
One investigator answered 30 per month.  
One investigator answered 55 to 60 per month.

All employees said they were unaware of what their average caseload is per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers said their average caseload per month is approximately 20 cases/families.

Investigators said their average caseload per month is approximately 53 cases.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

- One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 0 cases per month.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 9-10 cases per month.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 12 cases per month.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 12-13 cases per month.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 12-15 cases per month.
- Two FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested 16 cases per month.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 18 cases per month.
- One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 25 cases per month.
- One investigator suggested 10-12 cases per month.
- One investigator suggested 11-12 cases per month.
- One investigator suggested 12 cases per month.
- One investigator suggested 12-15 cases per month.
- One investigator suggested 15 cases per month.
- One investigator suggested 15-20 cases per month.
- One investigator suggested 20 cases per month.
- One investigator suggested 20 cases per month.
- Two investigators suggested 30 cases per month.
- FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that in order to take care of children and families, a reasonable caseload per month should be approximately 14 cases/families.
- Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 18 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

- Fourteen employees said they make necessary contacts on their cases before leaving on vacation, and either their co-workers or supervisor handle emergencies in their absence.
- Four employees said that cases sit idle during vacation.
- One employee said new investigations would be re-assigned to another worker.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES	NO
6	4

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

60% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

40% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

One employee said that the inability to locate the family prevented the worker from meeting Priority 2 time frame.

One employee said that policy requirements were met in 90% of cases. However, it is not feasible to make contact on every Priority 2 case due to the overwhelming workload. The worker states there are multiple children on many cases and a high volume of Priority 1 assignments that also affect the ability to meet policy.

One employee said that it is often difficult to locate families because of incorrect address information provided by intake.

One employee said there are too many cases assigned to do the job.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

8	2
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

80% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

20% of employees interviewed said they have not experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

Two employees said some Priority 2 cases been received on the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9th day, which puts an additional burden on the worker to respond within 24 to 36 hours.

Three employees said cases from the router might be assigned 3 to 4 days late, which puts additional burden of managing cases within a tighter time frame.

One employee said the "Pilot" screening program and Worker V case screener are helping get the cases read and assigned, but this often results in delays of getting Priority 2 cases assigned to the investigator.

Two employees said that supervisors often do not have time to screen and assign cases, which delays assignment for several days.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

3	16
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16% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

84% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

16	3
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer.

84% of the employees interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

16% of the employees interviewed said there is not an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

Eleven employees said that the emphasis has to do with federal funding. Funding and staffing for the agency is based on case closures/completions.

Two employees said the emphasis was to keep staff from getting behind on documentation.

One employee said that cases cannot be allowed to sit idle or something else will happen on them.

One employee said it is a numbers game.

One employee said after 60 days, a case is placed into a backlog category and the supervisor writes up the caseworker.

## WORK PROCESS:

One generic caseworker explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker assess the family's needs, provides a report and then staffs the case with the supervisor. The family is referred for services. The caseworker maintains contact with the family and monitors (face-to-face). The case is closed or monitoring continues.

One generic employee explained that upon case assignment, a staffing is held with the investigator and Program Director. The caseworker sets up transfer visits, meets with the family to let them know their case is being opened for services and to explain how they need to cooperate. The caseworker also explains the consequences of not cooperating, which could include court-ordered services. The caseworker then develops a Service Plan, staffs routinely with the supervisor, and monitors the family to make sure they are involved. The caseworker visits the children at school once monthly, and makes weekly visits to the home to see the family. If the parents fail to stay in services, court orders may be sought. Some cases require removal of children. The caseworker is responsible for preparing legal documentation. The worker must also transport the children for placement, contact the child's Ad- Litem, and coordinate with the court in order to find a judge. The caseworker must also maintain contact with children at the shelter, complete services authorizations for all service providers and family members. Once the case becomes a conservatorship case, the caseworker must coordinate service, prepare court reports for hearings every 60 or 90 days, attend school meetings, transport family's to/from doctor's appointments, and attend family/child visits. Finally, the caseworker also conducts courtesy investigations and courtesy monitoring for other workers who have families in Hayes/Caldwell Counties.

Two substitute care (SUB) workers agreed that upon case assignment, the following steps are followed. The caseworker meets with the children and parents. A family plan and child plan are devised. The caseworker establishes long-term goals and makes decisions about the child's permanency. The caseworker is also responsible for transporting clients to services, attending status hearing within 60 days, and attending permanency-planning meetings. The worker must also verify that a CASA representative and attorney are appointed. In addition, the worker initiates home studies, psychological studies, evaluates the family and child progress toward goals on a monthly basis, attends court about every 4 months, and finalize the permanency plan within one year (or eighteen months with one-time extension). A child could remain in the permanent managing conservatorship (PMC) of CPS until majority reached.

One substitute care (SUB) worker explained that upon case assignment, he/she has to make arrangements for children when they are removed from a family by a CPS investigator. There is a lot of paperwork involved in placement of children, and legal proceedings. A conservatorship worker must monitor children routinely to determine their well-being. Many children remain under CPS care for long term commitments. Sometimes children are placed in a location that parents are not happy with, so a conservatorship worker is constantly working with parents in order to place the child in a different environment or closer to the parents. Some foster parents are taking children, only for the money.

One Foster Care and Adoptions (FAD) worker explained that upon case assignment, he/she must determine what must be done to get the family licensed. The caseworker meets with children in his/her assigned foster homes and meets with the foster parents. Once a home is licensed, the caseworker helps to obtain placements for the family. When a child is placed into a foster home assigned to him/her, he/she must visit the child within 10 days, and monthly thereafter. Most children are eventually adopted.

One FBSS Service Coordinator is assigned to a new pilot program position. He/she explained that when a new case is assigned to an FBSS worker, the Service Coordinator contacts the family, sets an appointment and meets with them for assessment. A fifty-question form is used to obtain a social history of the family. The conservatorship process is explained to the family and appointments are set for services. If necessary, a psychological evaluation is ordered. The worker documents the case and refers to it to a conservatorship unit as necessary.

One FBSS worker explained that upon case assignment, he/she meets with supervisor, investigator, the investigative supervisor, and the Program Director to staff the case. The caseworker then meets with the family, completes service authorization forms for services (there is no administrative help with this) and monitors the family. This is normally for three to six months, but could be up to a year. The caseworker will either recommend closure of the case, or recommend removal of the child. When a removal occurs, the caseworker



completes all legal documentation for the removal, attends court hearings, and transfers the case to a conservatorship unit.

One FBSS worker explained that upon case assignment, a staffing is held with the supervisor and Program Director. The investigator gets reports to the FBSS worker. The caseworker meets with clients, works with the family and refers for services. The caseworker meets with providers and staffs the case for closure with the supervisor.

Four investigators agreed that upon case assignment, the initial steps are to review the intake report and contact the reporter for additional information. The caseworker then contacts the child and interviews, and proceeds to contact and interview the parents. The caseworker then contacts and interview collateral contacts such as teachers, doctors, family members, or neighbors. The case is then reviewed with the supervisor. A risk finding is made and appropriate services for the family are determined. The caseworker completes the investigation report and submits it to the supervisor for approval.

One investigator explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker contacts the reporter for additional information. The caseworker then initiates contact with the child, preferably at school, and initiates contact with the parents. The caseworker identifies services the family may need and confirms that they have started those services before transferring to FBSS. The worker may at times have to monitor the family and services because FBSS has a cap on their workload, and do not always accept every case referred. The assigned FBSS worker does not handle new referrals on active FBSS cases. An investigator handles them. The investigator informs the FBSS worker of the results of the investigation, thereby taking the time of two caseworkers for one family. If no services are needed for family, the case is staffed with a supervisor and closed.

One investigator explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker makes contact with the reporter for additional information. Contact is then initiated with the child, preferably at school. The caseworker takes photographs of injuries as necessary. Contact is then made with the parents (home visits are mandatory). The caseworker follows up with any collateral contacts and obtains medical records as needed. The caseworker staffs with the supervisor and makes recommendations regarding disposition of the case. The worker documents the case. The first two hours of the day are protected time for documenting cases, but this does not always work. If a caseworker misses a phone call from a hard to reach client, it takes more of their time to locate the client later.

One investigator explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker makes contact with child within 24 hours, unless it is a sexual abuse in which case the response is immediate. The caseworker documents the case immediately. Contact is initiated with the parents. A visit is made to the home to assess, or an interview is scheduled at the CPS offices. On cases involving removal of a child, the child is placed in shelter. When a removal occurs, the caseworker prepares the legal affidavit for the court hearing. The caseworker must attend the court hearing on the following day. The caseworker documents and completes reports to the Court. Finally, the worker participates in a "Removal staffing" with the supervisor.

One investigator explained that upon case assignment, the case file is received and prepared On Priority 1 cases, law enforcement is contacted. The caseworker initiates contact with reporters and collaterals for more information. The caseworker then determines where the children attend school and sets up interviews. Contact is then initiated with the parents for interview. Additional collateral contacts are made as necessary. If necessary, an interview is arranged at the Child Advocacy Center. An assessment is made as to whether or not the parents are protective. Medical exams are obtained as needed. As necessary, contact is made with legal staff to initiate the legal process and obtain court orders. The case is staffed with supervisors to determine the need for removal and/or placement.

One investigator explained that on priority 1 cases, a caseworker conducts a face-to-face interview with the victim, then with parents and everyone in the house. Follow-up with interviewing collaterals (neighbors, etc.). If the child appears to have been sexually assaulted or injured, we call law enforcement. If it appears the child should be removed from the house, the caseworker will staff with a supervisor and Program Director. Some school officials will not allow CPS to take custody of a child without a court order. On priority II cases, a caseworker has to prioritize and attempt to conduct a face-to-face interview with the victim, then with the family within 10 days.

One District Director described the workflow process as follows. He/she supervises four Program Administrators, two Best Practices Specialists, and one Special Projects worker. Duties consist of interfacing with and disseminating information from State office. He/she is involved in planning practices and policies for the agency. Program Administrators are supervised, but no direct case supervision. Employees routinely staff high-profile cases and personnel matters. In addition, he/she plans for the District, staffs on special needs projects to assist on current problems, conferences with Program Administrators to identify problems and discuss legal issues, serves on a licensing standards administrative committee, communicates with various legislative committees to provide information for new concerns being handled in legislation, and sits on a committee to discuss policy waivers for personnel. He/she also handles other personnel issues, worker advisory committees, and attends advanced management training. He/she work with CASA, Community Partners, Court Task Force, Texas Foster Families Executive Board, and has helped to implement new programs such as Family Group Conferencing. Finally, she attends Program Director meetings to help with advice on their concerns.

## INVESTIGATIONS:

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

7	3
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

70% of the employees interviewed said that they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

30% of the employees interviewed said that they were not aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

Three employees said on Priority 1 cases, serious injury or sexual abuse.

Two employees said on Priority 1 cases.

One employee said on any Priority 1 cases, physical abuse and sexual abuse. I also call when a Priority 2 makes me uncomfortable regarding my safety, drugs, and weapons.

One employee said when drugs are involved, or if parents have weapons. Also when the parents have a history of violence, serious injuries, and sometimes on sexual assault cases.

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

3	7
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

30% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

70% of the investigators interviewed said they were not aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

One employee said on Priority 1 cases or joint investigations.

One employee said on Priority 1 cases, when you go out to investigate.

One employee said on sexual or physical abuse cases.

3. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

15	4
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79% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the community.  
21% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the community.

3A. Explain:

Two employees felt that negative publicity in the media has hurt CPS's credibility in the community.  
One employee explained that some schools have a negative view of CPS because of the nature of their work. Some schools have a policy that a teacher must get the principal's approval before contacting CPS, which could put the teacher in violation of state law.  
One employee felt the community thinks we just remove kids and ask questions later. The community believes we have a quota of kids that have to be removed.

4. Does CPS have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

14	5
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74% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.  
26% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

One employee felt that the relationship depends on the case, the agency, and the individual officer. Some agencies do not want to work with CPS. Some agencies will not call CPS on abuse cases and by the time CPS gets involved, there is not evidence (bruises, etc).  
Two employees said it depends on the area. Most rural areas have a good relationship. Some agencies never develop a good relationship because of individual personalities.  
One employee said, "We really don't see them (law enforcement)".  
One employee said some rural areas are good, but others will not assist CPS because they say that they do not have the time to assist.

5. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

16	3
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84% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.  
16% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

One employee said a particular judge treats CPS workers badly in court.  
One employee said there are cases where a child needed to be removed and the judges did not agree. They sometimes take the side of defense attorneys.  
One employee said a judge is not consistent in his decisions and he does not appear to like CPS cases.

## TRAINING BARRIERS

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

9	10
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47% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.  
53% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

6	13
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32% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.

68% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

Four employees felt that the initial training contained too much classroom and manual training, and not enough on-the-job training.

Three employees felt the training needed to include more field training with experienced workers.

Two employees felt the training was focused on investigations and did not adequately address issues that would affect FBSS/Sub-care workers.

One employee said there was no training on how to deal with the stress and emotion of the job.

One employee said the training is now reduced to a very short time and is inadequate for all aspects of investigations, FBSS/Sub-care, and others.

One employee said the training was very inadequate. More training is needed in attachment and the long-term effects on children being in the system.

One employee felt it would have been helpful to decrease the time constraints and to provide more legal training (in rural areas).

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

6	13
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32% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

68% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

Five employees felt that one to two days of legal training is not adequate to prepare a new worker.

Two employees felt that new workers need a mentor to walk them through their first legal cases.

One employee felt the training concentrated on definitions and not on protocol.

One employee felt that enough couldn't be learned through the training academy because counties differ on procedures.

One employee felt that legal must actually learn it in the field.

One employee felt the training was inadequate for workers in rural areas because they have to do much of their own legal paperwork.

One employee felt the training did not prepare workers for the real world issues.

One employee felt the training did not provide enough legal information and suggested that on-the-job training would be more beneficial.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

16	3
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84% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

16% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for CPS Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

17	2
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89% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

11% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

12	7
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63% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

37% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

12	7
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63% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are available to them.

37% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

17	2
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89% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

11% of the employees interviewed said there are not obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

If so, what are they?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

9. Are CPS policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

14	5
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74% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.  
26% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

11	8
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58% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.  
42% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are no adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

### **SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES NO

8	1
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89% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

11% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were not familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES NO

2	7
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22% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) did have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

78% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) did not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

One employee said that if therapists have no openings, workers couldn't get the parents in to therapy. This delays them getting into the time frame for closure by 12-18 months.

One employee said that sometimes, families couldn't get it together within 12 months. There are too many cases to complete in 12 months.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES NO

7	2
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78% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

22% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

3A. Explain:

One employee said that CPS does not have enough service providers. Some clients do not have money to pay for services, do not have transportation to get to and from services, and have to take time off from work to go to services.

One employee said that not every issue could be resolved within one year.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

1	8
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11% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

88% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:

One employee said that CPS does not have the funding for services and there is a lack of service facilities. There is no funding for medication, which many of the clients need. There is no transport aide to assist the clients to their meetings.

One employee said there is a lack of funding to assist clients with some of their bills. There is no administrative tech to assist caseworkers in scheduling of appointments, visits for clients.

One employee said CPS does not have the funding for services and there is a lack of service facilities. Also, daycare for special needs children is not available.

One employee said there is not enough funding or resources.

One employee said more providers are needed. The agency has trouble obtaining services due to budget constraints.

One employee said that agency staff does not have a sufficient therapeutic background.

Two employees said that rural areas do not have resources. Caseworkers do not have time to assist parents, because of heavy caseloads.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

2	7
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22% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

78% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

One employee said drug assessment, testing and treatment facilities are especially needed and are not available. When workers call for assistance from TCADA (Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse) and MHMR (Mental Health and Mental Retardation), they get inconsistent information and guidance. There are not enough mental health providers, and there is a definite lack of child-care and housing.

Two employees said that sufficient resources are not available in the rural areas.

One employee said there is more need than current providers can provide.

One employee said that resources and funding are lacking, and few therapists accept Medicaid.

One employee said it is difficult to get people out from Austin to the rural areas. There are budget cuts, and cutbacks on drug rehabilitation services.

One employee said there is a need for financial assistance because families live in poverty. There is also a need for transportation to resources, a need for therapy providers and parenting classes. Some community resources are no longer in existence.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

16	3
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84% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

16% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

One employee did not believe he/she had ever had an evaluation.

One employee did not remember when the last evaluation was received.

One employee has only been with the agency for one year.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

Four employees answered 5-6.

Four employees answered 6.

Three employees answered 7.

Three employees answered 6-7.

Two employees answered 5-6.

One employee answered 4.

One employee answered 6-9.



One employee answered 7-10.

Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 7 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

19	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

All nineteen employees said they are able to staff cases with their supervisor, Program Director, and with the Risk Director if necessary. Communication with legal (attorney's office was also mentioned).

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

18	1
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95% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

5% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

One employee said he/she has a new supervisor in training that is hard to reach.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

14	5
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74% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

26% of the employees interviewed said they did not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

One employee explained that a worker resigned after being in the hospital from ulcers and vomiting because of nerves; two workers ordered by their doctor to take time off, but can't because of workload; many workers on anxiety medication. The supervisor of unit only works from 8-5, takes 1 hour for lunch and 2 smoke breaks. She never helps caseworkers out if they are in a bind, if it cuts into her normal schedule; example: worker is left to travel long distances from one county to another to deliver children and go to court and, if an emergency arises, they have to return to their office to handle the matter and arrive home very late because supervisor will never assist.

One employee said his/her supervisor is never there. When she is there, she does not have time for you.

One employee said that if you complain that the workload is too much, you wouldn't find any sympathy. There is nothing the supervisor can do.

One employee said the supervisor is not supportive and it is probably because she is inept in her position. The supervisor is not always available.

One employee said supervisors should be selected by leadership abilities, with business sense.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

17	2
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89% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meets with them face-to-face on their cases.

11% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

One employee answered 2 – 3 times a day.

One employee answered almost daily contact on at least one case. A minimum of monthly.

One employee answered 3 times per week

Three employees answered weekly.

Two employees answered once or twice a month.

Ten employees answered monthly.

One employee answered once every 2-3 months.

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

One employee answered 2 – 3 times a day.

Nine employees answered weekly.

One employee answered 2-3 times per week.

Three employees answered monthly.

Five employees answered as needed.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

3	7
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

30% of the employees interviewed said policy requires employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

70% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

Three employees said policy requires employees to staff cases in person with their supervisor, but none knew when policy requires the staffing.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

11	8
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58% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

42% of the employees interviewed said they have not noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

One employee said decisions on actions to be taken on a case are very inconsistent. It always depending on which supervisor staffs the case.

One employee said some supervisors do not use common sense and improperly downgrade Priority 1 complaints, thereby creating more time management problems for workers.

One employee said some supervisors are staffing a lot more often because of the scrutiny that CPS is facing.

One employee said removal of children has increased because of a concern by management not to make headlines with the loss of a child. Because of this, the foster homes are full and workers have to drive out of region to place and visit children.

One employee said the supervisor just established that FBSS workers must see their children once a month at school, in addition to seeing the family twice a month, without evaluating the need for the additional visit.

Workload does not allow time to do this.

One employee said every supervisor has their own way of doing things.

One employee said inconsistencies exist with the way different people view things.

One employee said all supervisors are consistent.

One employee said that his/her new supervisor handles caseloads differently.

One employee said some supervisors are wrapped up in the numbers game (not quality) and some supervisors are not consistent in making decisions.

One employee said some supervisors want complete investigations and others do not care. The supervisors that don't seem to care cause families to be investigated again and again. The latest caseworker has to do what should have been done by a previous caseworker.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

4	7
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36% of employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures.

64% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

Seven FBSS/Sub-care workers said they did not know if policy requires staffing in person with the supervisor.

Three employees said policy requires employees to staff cases in person with their supervisor, but none knew when policy requires the staffing.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

5	14
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26% of the employees interviewed said they feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

72% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

One employee said he/she feels there are some supervisors who know there are no grounds for removal and would not seek legal counsel.

One employee said there seems to be an attitude of just letting things go, rather than allowing a case to get bogged down in the legal system.

One employee discussed a case involving a diabetic child that he/she felt was in danger, and it took forever to remove her because the Program Director didn't think the worker had enough.

One employee said there is a lot of work involved to take a case to legal. Considering the workload, some workers will close cases by minimizing factors on case notes to avoid having to go to legal.

One employee said the district attorneys office would not accept many cases from CPS, which is not encouraging for CPS workers.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Nine employees said they felt comfortable talking to the Program Director if a supervisor did not agree.

Four employees said they would re-discuss the case with the supervisor.

Two employees said this has not happened.

Two employees said they would follow the supervisor's instructions.

One employee said he/she would staff with her or Risk Director

One employee said he/she would try to get more info to help my argument

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

11	8
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58% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

42% of the employees interviewed said they did not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

Three employees believe judges have returned children to dangerous environments.

One employee said some prosecutors are not concerned about marijuana being used in a home.

Two employees said workers get overwhelmed and start closing cases with invalid information or false documentation.

Two employees believe CPS has left children in dangerous environments.

One employee believes children were removed and should not have been removed from their homes.

One employee said that another CPS Investigator received a "reviewed" case from 2001, which had to be re-investigated.

One employee said the supervisor got upset when caseworker responded to a call from law enforcement instead of completing a report.

16. Are you able to make a decision of "Rule-out" or "Unable to Determine" a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

8	2
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

80% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of "Rule-out or "Unable to Determine" on a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

20% of the employees interviewed said they were not able to make a decision of “Rule-out” or “Unable to Determine” on a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

1	18
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5% of the employees interviewed said they had been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.  
95% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

Explain:

One employee said only to more fully document the case investigation. Never to lie or change anything to falsify work.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

2	17
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11% of the employees interviewed said they had been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

89% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

18A. If so, by who and what was said?

One employee said his/her supervisor said to not get her (supervisor) into trouble.

One employee said she was advised to tell the truth and not hold back.

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

16	3
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84% of the employees interviewed said they additional information for the OIG.

16% of the employees interviewed said they did not have additional information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

2	17
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11% of the employees interviewed said they were afraid or intimidated by someone in their management structure.

89% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

20A. If so, who and why?

One employee said he/she could not say for fear of retaliation.

One employee mentioned a person in management that is not approachable and will not tolerate questioning about his/her decisions.

#### **EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Provide training on drug identification and identification of articles used in meth-amphetamine laboratories.
- Provide training on domestic violence.
- Provide cultural diversity training.
- Provide training on how to deal with the emotional aspect of this job and the stress level.
- A new e-mail that suggests if we have a non-verbal child, we should assess physical attributes, (scalp, eyes, pupils, capillary response) but we have had no medical assessment training.
- Provide Ethics training.
- Provide training on law enforcement aspects of investigations.
- Provide training on medical aspects of how to identify physical and sexual abuse.
- Provide training on child custody issues.
- Provided training on de-escalating violent situations.
- Provide legal training.
- Provide training on child development.
- Provide training in FBSS.
- Provide training on how to Work With Hostile Clients.
- Effective communication & Interview techniques.
- Provide training on legal document preparation and courtroom testimony.
- Provide more training locally & not in Austin.
- Provide training regarding the DSM (Diagnostic manual), training on how to read psychiatric reports.
- Provide training regarding the use of psychotropic medication.
- Provide developmental training for handling toddlers and small children.
- Provide more training on how to recognize abuse and neglect.
- Training on how to manage caseloads.
- Provide training on how to abbreviate cases that should not take so much time.
- Provide training on how to recognize when a child is malnourished.
- Provide training for parents on how to deal with teenagers.
- New cameras' cards don't fit the printer and cannot download pictures onto computers.
- Only one fax machine for an office of over 30 people. A lot of time is wasted waiting for faxes.
- Administrative techs and transport aides are needed.
- More funding for substance abuse assessment, testing and treatment and drug testing kits. The 35 cents per mile reimbursement for vehicle use is insufficient.
- A better phone system is needed, as well as computer printers (in Round Rock). More help with our cell phone allowance.
- More legal advisors, clerical case aids; newer, more progressive technology to assist; funds for drug testing/treatment.
- Basic needs supplies for families are needed. Additional daycare for children and car seats to transport small children. We only have one visitation room.
- More training regarding computers.

- More funding for laptop computers. Workspace is too limited. Office supplies often not available. More funding for copiers and fax machines.
- The \$50 per month does not cover the monthly charges for CPS calls. Funding for state provided cell phones or enough money to cover all CPS calls made on caseworkers personal cell phones.
- State provided cars or additional money for driving personal cars. There are liability issues when transporting children and families in personal cars, wear and tear on personal cars due to the amount of miles each month, tires, brakes, oil changes, and various other repairs. The 35 cents per mile is not enough, due to gas prices.
- Additional clerical support staff is needed.
- More child seats are needed.
- More color printers are needed.
- More copy machines are needed.
- Additional caseworkers are needed.
- More funds for needy families.
- Additional services for families, such as parenting classes and anger management classes are needed.
- More shelters for children are needed.
- Additional office supplies are needed, because we have to provide our own pens, notebooks, etc.
- An easier way to type information into reports is needed (pull-down screens).
- More time to complete cases is needed.
- Additional funding to pay for drug testing is needed.
- Additional funding for home studies is needed.
- Unmanageable caseloads are a major obstacle in providing services to clients.
- More drug treatment facilities are needed.
- Time needed to complete documentation is unreal.
- Overtime is not given despite overwork.
- The IMPACT system is cumbersome.
- Workers have long distances for workers to travel. Juvenile Probation wants us to take kids in for services that don't qualify.
- We are unable to take law enforcement with us on high-risk (safety) families.
- There is not enough staff to adequately investigate cases.
- There is not enough time to do what is expected of you.
- There is too much pressure to complete cases, forcing staff to work from home.
- There is a lack of community resources in the rural areas.
- There are too many cases and not enough time to complete the work.
- Staff cannot take sick leave because of heavy caseloads.
- Employees are quitting, which causes more cases to be assigned to current workers.
- There is inadequate supervision due to inconsistent decisions and supervisors not being available.
- There is a lack of leadership by the supervisor, program director, program administrator and district director.
- There is a lack of communication by leadership.
- Policies and procedures need to be adjusted. Time frames are set for ideal workloads, but no one works with an ideal workload.
- Caseworkers have 45 days to provide a family with a family plan. That is 1-½ months into the case and, ideally, management wants the case closed within 3-6 months.
- Procedures are too confining for the workload. There is too much time spent looking for absent fathers and families that worker is unable to locate.

- Policy requires that pictures be taken of everyone in the home before closing a case, even when all work is done. This prevents worker from meeting the 60-day time frame.
- There are too many cases to meet all of the requirements of policy. There are too many demands on worker's time to comply with all the policies.
- Policies regarding runaways need to be clarified.
- Policies and procedures are changing constantly.
- New training on interpretation of 4<sup>th</sup> amendment right prevents a worker from having access to a child if parents don't comply with request. The caseworker cannot determine if child has been harmed or not.
- There is no prosecution of mothers who give birth to drug-addicted babies.
- The "Baby Moses" law needs to be clarified. Medical personnel do not seem to know how to handle.
- Fourth Amendment issues prevent me going into a home when the family refuses to let me in.
- CPS workers are not allowed in homes without the consent of family or court order, so it is difficult to check on the welfare of the child immediately
- Supervisor Samantha Woods and PD Robert Brown make workers close cases that are not completed to keep case numbers down. Six good workers have left under her supervision.
- Human Resources needs to stop hiring just anyone for this job because, if they are not committed to this work, they will quit, leaving everyone with their caseload. This continues to add to an unmanageable workload.
- New employees should be required to have a psychological examination before employment.
- When workers work overtime, sometimes they receive pay for it and sometimes they don't and there is no explanation as to why they don't.
- A caseworker quit and left 70 cases that had to be reassigned to the rest of the workers. Rhonda Kissinger was the worker's supervisor. Some of the cases were 2-3 months old. Some Priority 1 cases were never seen. When newly assigned workers attempted to contact the families, they were gone.
- Program Director Wanda Moore is addressing caseworkers – one employee to be fired for falsification of facts in a case. Two other workers for closing cases by stating family had moved, when other caseworkers located them at the address listed in the case files.
- All the negativity in the work environment eliminates the desire to stay, even for dedicated social workers. A pat on the back could go a long way, but all workers get is a slap in the face.
- Workers are paid very little for having college degrees.
- There is no Hispanic/bi-lingual pay for the extra work they do.
- We don't have enough people. We can't hire people who want to stay. Even with our new position afforded to Taylor, we can't keep people on long enough because of the high stress & high demands.
- High turnover. People leaving the agency more quickly than before. Caseloads are too high, creating pressure and stress. The pay is low. There are not enough safety measures in place for the hazards we encounter and the diseases we're exposed to. We are not able to protect ourselves. We cannot carry any type of personal protection devices. Our own personal vehicles are destroyed and not reimbursed by the State (my car was vandalized at the office).
- Staff are overworked and underpaid. New employees are paid almost the same as tenured staff
- There have been no pay raises in 3 years, despite the cost of living going up.
- In one unit all workers are quitting because the supervisor is not doing her job.
- The expectations are too much.
- We are required to see priority cases on same day as assigned and we are given new cases at 4 or 5 pm.
- We cannot keep workers because there is too much work
- There is a lack of support because supervisors do not help with overwhelming caseloads.
- In the Burnet office, there are two FBSS workers. One has been out for 6 months on workers compensation. We need three workers, I am overwhelmed.
- We need a separate FBSS unit, we are overwhelmed



- The emphasis is on hiring more investigators and we need more FBSS workers.
- We need shelters in our area. We transport kids hundreds of miles away.
- We need more information on CPS & computers, too much copies & paperwork
- Case staffing times should be set, not sporadic. Workers have to beg for staffing
- Caller ID is needed in the office.
- Too much time is wasted on timesheets.
- Too much time is wasted on doing travel vouchers.
- The Burnet Child-Welfare Board has become stingy, not helpful.
- There is not enough transportation in the rural areas.
- A dentist is needed in the rural areas.
- In court hearings, workers sit all day waiting for the hearing. Why can't they schedule better?
- Would like to see more male workers and more workers of color.
- The Legal department in Austin is very helpful
- The new leadership training program is very good
- There is a visitation room in Burnet, but not in the office.
- Supervisors are sometimes allowed to work from home. They get paged.
- Evening counseling and therapy sessions are needed. We pull kids out of school for therapy
- There are inadequate supplies for drug & alcohol testing.
- It seems like bad workers cannot be fired.
- Money for future raises (incentive pay) would be better used to hire additional investigators.
- The privatization of foster care /adoptions (FAD) is very concerning.
- There needs to be a policy that people who are staff members of residential treatment centers and group homes or therapeutic outdoor camps cannot take children home.
- Frequently, caseworkers don't get progress notes that indicate specifically what the provider worked on. There should be a standard requirement for all providers.
- Management encourages workers to spend only 20 minutes on face-to-face interviews with the child. The feeling is do the minimum and move on to the next one.
- For travel, workers are expected to spend \$400- \$700 out of your own salary, must pay up front. Workers are also expected to feed children. If workers are too busy to do their travel voucher, they lose their money in 90 days. Workers are forced to use personal time to meet imposed deadlines, and they cannot claim overtime.
- There needs to be more monitoring of changes in medication for kids. This information should be given to the caseworkers prior to the change. This should be a policy.
- There are problems with Youth For Tomorrow, which is contracted to set levels of care for CPS children. There used to be six levels, now only four. The system really doesn't meet the children's needs. There are major problems in getting care. Youth for Tomorrow is outside of the loop, there is no urgency. Many cases are lower than what is needed.
- Physical locations of building should be accessible. This is important because poverty dictates travel and visits with child are considered in decisions on cases.
- There are fax problems in faxing information to Youth for Tomorrow. The documents are up to 27 pages long. Can YFT have access to IMPACT?
- Family Group counseling should be offered everywhere.
- Staff salaries need to be elevated; there have been no pay raises since 2001.
- Worker retention is needed.
- CPS needs to hire consultants to study our jobs and suggest better ways to do our jobs.
- Supervisors need business training, because they are unable to motivate employees for retention.

- Additional offices are needed in various areas in order to keep traveling time to a minimum for caseworkers.
- Workloads must be reduced.
- There is no incentive to stay, because CPS does not encourage tenured workers to stay.
- Documentation needs to be changed, so it is less tedious. Specific questions should be programmed on a pull-down screen on the Impact System that would relate to specific allegations
- CPS investigators should not be married with children, because of the time away from home.
- CPS will not allow workers to be paid for overtime, but management expects workers to work a lot of overtime to complete cases
- There needs to be improvement in the amount of time it takes to receive reimbursement for travel expenses. It currently takes approximately 30 days.

## Region 8 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 156 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

<b>Question</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>%No</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>84.62%</b>	<b>15.38%</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>65.38%</b>	<b>34.62%</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>78.95%</b>	<b>21.05%</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>58.82%</b>	<b>41.18%</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>50.97%</b>	<b>49.03%</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>35.26%</b>	<b>64.74%</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>59.14%</b>	<b>40.86%</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>28.85%</b>	<b>71.15%</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>68.18%</b>	<b>31.82%</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>17.95%</b>	<b>82.05%</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>10.16%</b>	<b>89.84%</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>5.13%</b>	<b>94.87%</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>16.99%</b>	<b>83.01%</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>20.51%</b>	<b>79.49%</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it have been progressed?</b>	<b>11.71%</b>	<b>88.29%</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>32.26%</b>	<b>67.74%</b>	<b>31</b>

<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>63.64%</b>	<b>36.36%</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>63.64%</b>	<b>36.36%</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>59.52%</b>	<b>40.48%</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>4.55%</b>	<b>95.45%</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>42.31%</b>	<b>57.69%</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>28.85%</b>	<b>71.15%</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>16.03%</b>	<b>83.97%</b>	<b>156</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 78.95% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.46 cases with 28% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 12% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 58.82% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.25 cases with 4% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 26% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions. Please see Appendix E for validation methodology.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. A Bexar County Civil District Court Judge was also surveyed. Eight respondents requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 5.88. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	8	100%	0	0%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (1-800 number)	8	100%	0	0%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	6	75%	2	25%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	6	75%	2	25%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	2	25%	6	75%

**Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:**

#### **Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:**

- Caseworkers are not properly trained to deal with the complex CPS cases.
- Excessively large caseload for caseworkers.
- Poor compensation (salary) of CPS employees.

- CPS does not welcome input or suggestions from other parties (contractors) involved with the cases. As a result, the qualities of investigation are affected in a negative way.
- Cut back in funding for CPS has seriously affected the services to children.
- Agency culture resists change.
- Rigid administrative policies.
- Excessively defensive and secretive management.

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Problems are on the part of caseworkers, management, agency philosophy and a lack of resources.
- Some laws are not necessarily beneficial to the well being of children.
- CPS management is not setting the proper tone and providing the correct leadership.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Increase the length of training and introduce a multi disciplinary approach for the training of caseworkers.
- Increase the number of caseworkers.
- Decrease the caseload of caseworkers and put a cap of no more than 20 cases per caseworker.
- Increase the level of salaries for CPS employees.
- Allocate adequate funding for CPS services.
- Introduce realistic time frame to complete cases.
- Establish effective and efficient communications among people from law enforcement, judiciary and CPS.

**Staff Allocation**

*Management/Administrative*

Program Administrators:	3 (1 CPS P.A., 1 P.A. I, 1 P.A. V)	
Program Directors:	13 (8 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 3 Risk P.D.'s, 2 Lead P.D.,)	
Supervisors:	55 (C.P.S. Supervisors)	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		71

*Caseworkers*

Investigations:	73	
Family Based Safety Services:	56	
Substitute Care:	91	
Generic:	66	
Foster Care/Adoptions:	42	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		328

*Clerical/Support*

Administrative Assistants:	1	
Administrative Technicians:	66	
Clerks:	8	
Human Services Technicians:	30	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		105

Other Staff

Worker V's:	(7)	Contracts:	(7)
CREST Workers:	(7)	Human Services Specialists:	(5)
Program Specialists:	(5)	Legal Assistants:	(4)
Accountants:	(3)	Permanency Planning Team Convenors:	(3)
Legal Secretaries:	(3)	District Trainers:	(2)
Faith-Based Workers:	(2)	Volunteer Coordinators:	(2)
Best Practices Specialist:	(1)	Budget Analyst:	(1)
Civil Rights Specialist:	(1)	Residential Treatment Specialist:	(1)
Disability Specialist:	(1)	Education Specialist:	(1)
Eligibility Specialist:	(1)	FAD Recruiter:	(1)
Case Analyst:	(1)	Public Information Officer	(1)
Adoptions Coordinator:	(1)	Manager II:	(1)
Program Improvement Leader:	(1)	Intensive Adoption Coordinator:	(1)

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Subtotal: 64

*TOTAL REGION 8 (San Antonio): 568*

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	0	0
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	3	21%
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	7	50%
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	4	29%
Employed: 10 + Years	0	0

Number of first line supervisors since your first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	2
2	6
3	5
4	1
5 +	0

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal	Other	Total

	Work			Justice		
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bachelor's	4	3	3	3	1	14

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

2	6
---	---

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

25% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

75% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Intake sometimes gets the information incorrect.

Don't get school names or information. No locating information. Information that I've sent, Intake can't locate.

Phone #'s in IMPACT are incorrect. Screening for facts is not being done at Intake.

Missing addresses

Incomplete or inaccurate names

Missing telephone number for family

Incorrect or unclear information in narrative

Incorrect addresses

Incorrect names

Cases are sent to wrong county

Need more specific information

Names

Address or incorrect address

Telephone number or incorrect telephone number

No school information

No name for apartment complex

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

7	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

87.5% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

12.5% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

One employee said statewide intake misunderstands some information, but I don't consider it a burden.



One employee said workers do investigations on facts that are not valid that should be screened out. Four employees said too much time is wasted, trying to locate the child and family, which requires additional work for caseworker. This could be critical in a Priority 1 case. One employee said the reports need to be screened, due to bad information. Some cases do not pertain to CPS issues.

### **CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

- One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-1.
- Three FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1-2.
- Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 2.
- Two investigators answered 3-4 cases
- One investigator answered 5.
- Two investigators answered 5-6.
- Two investigators answered 7-8.
- One investigator answered 11.

Based on answers of FBSS/Sub-care workers, the average for new investigations assigned each week for FBSS/Sub-care workers are approximately 1.5 cases/families.

Based on answers of investigators, the average for new investigations assigned each week for investigators are approximately 6 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

- One FBSS worker answered 0-1.
- Two FBSS workers answered 1.
- Three FBSS workers answered 2.
- Two investigators answered 3.
- Two investigators answered 3-4.
- One investigator answered 4.
- One investigator answered 4-5.
- Two investigators answered 8-9.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 1.5 cases/families. Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 5 cases.

3. What is your average caseload?

- One FBSS worker answered 20 per month.
- One FBSS worker answered 20-25 per month.
- One FBSS worker answered 20-30 per month.
- One FBSS worker answered 45-50 per month.
- One FBSS worker answered 45 per month.
- One FBSS worker answered 50 per month.
- One investigator answered 25-30 per month.
- One investigator answered 30 per month.
- Two investigators answered 31 per month.
- One investigator answered 28-35 per month.
- One investigator answered 35 cases per month.
- One investigator answered 50-60 per month

One investigator answered 120 per month.

All employees said they were unaware of what their average caseload is per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month.

FBSS workers said their average caseload per month is approximately 26 cases/families. Investigators said their average caseload per month is approximately 45 cases.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 15-18 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 20 per month.

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 12 per month.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 12-13 per month.

Two investigators answered 12-15 per month.

One investigator answered 15 per month.

Two investigators answered 15-20 per month.

One investigator answered 19 per month.

One investigator answered 20-25 per month.

One investigator answered 30 per month.

FBSS workers suggested that in order to take care of children and families, a reasonable caseload per month should be approximately 15 cases per month.

Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 18.5 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

All fourteen employees said cases sit idle, unless an emergency arises, then a co-worker will handle the emergency. Sometimes the caseworker is called during vacation by a supervisor.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

1	7
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

36% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

64% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

Six employees said the heavy caseloads make it difficult to meet policy requirements.

One employee said the severity of a case sometimes requires additional time to investigate.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

5	3
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

63% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

37% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

One employee said some cases are not assigned until the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> day.

One employee said supervisors do not always assign cases in a timely manner, which puts additional burden of managing cases within a tighter time frame.

One employee said cases are on the supervisor's workload for about 3 days. The caseworker receives it around the 5<sup>th</sup> day and then has 5 days to follow up. This happens on a weekly basis.

One employee said the secretary is busy and not prioritizing her work, so cases are sitting on her desk.

One employee said cases are screened by a screener, which causes cases to be assigned a few days late

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

4	10
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29% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

71% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

11	3
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer.

79% of the employees interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

21% of the employees interviewed said there is not an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

Ten employees said it is about money, because CPS receives money on closed cases.

One employee said the reason is to get workers to focus on effective case management.

## **WORK PROCESS:**

One generic caseworker explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker assess the family's needs, provides a report and then staffs the case with the supervisor. The family is referred for services. The caseworker maintains contact with the family and monitors (face-to-face). The case is closed or monitoring continues.

Two substitute care (SUB) workers agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker meets with the children and parents. A family plan and child plan are completed. The caseworker establishes long-term goals and makes decisions about the child's permanency. The caseworker is also responsible for transporting clients to services, attending status hearing within 60 days, and attending permanency-planning meetings. The worker must also verify that a CASA representative and attorney are appointed. In addition, the worker initiates home studies, psychological studies, evaluates the family and child progress toward goals on a monthly basis, attends court about every 4 months, and finalize the permanency plan within one year (or eighteen months with one-time extension). A child could remain in the permanent managing conservatorship (PMC) of CPS until majority reached.

Three FBSS workers agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker meets with supervisor, investigator, the investigative supervisor, and sometimes with the Program Director to staff the case. The caseworker meets with the family, completes service authorization forms for services, and monitors the family. This is normally for

three to six months, but could be up to a year. The caseworker will either recommend closure of the case, or recommend removal of the child. When a removal occurs, the caseworker completes all legal documentation for the removal, attends court hearings, and transfers the case to a conservatorship unit.

Six investigators agreed that they prioritize cases and will work several cases in the same general area. On those cases, criminal history information must be obtained and employees will usually conduct a face-to-face interview with children at their school or take children to the CPS office and conduct interviews. Family and collaterals need to be interviewed. Sometimes it takes a couple of hours to drive to some of the locations. The employees said it is difficult to be able to document all cases because there are so many cases.

Two investigators agreed that upon case assignment, the case should be staffed with the supervisor. The caseworker interviews the victims, interviews collaterals (school officials), and interviews the parents (non-offending). The parents and children should be interviewed outside the presence of the others. Once contact is made with the collaterals (neighbors, police reports, relatives), the caseworker should be able to determine how to proceed. The case should be documented up to that point, then contact law enforcement and share information with them. The case should be staffed with district attorney's office. Depending on the case facts, but it might be necessary to do a safety plan and initiate a removal. Caseworkers have to determine whether there can be any visitation rights with the parents. It is possible that services will be needed, so the case must be documented and ready to transfer to the next unit.

One district director (also the district director for Region 11) explained that he/she meets with staff when possible. The district director will staff high-level cases that will end in adverse actions, such as dismissals and probation type cases with the program administrator. A district director reviews data in order to anticipate growth problems and determine how money should be spent in other needed areas. One district director has been mentoring a group of supervisors that meet in order to develop their leadership abilities, to locate weaknesses in making their decisions and to assist them with ways to handle stress. It is necessary to meet with judges, district attorneys, child welfare boards and review ombudsman complaints in order to see what is going on in communities. Status reports are completed on different issues and sent to Austin. One district director said workdays are usually 16-hour days.

## INVESTIGATIONS:

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

8	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

One employee said it is mandatory on physical abuse & sexual abuse or if you have a reason to believe violent circumstances exist.

One employee said, on physical abuse and sexual abuse or if a sexual offender is in the home.

Two employees said on serious injury, sexual abuse, and/or for worker safety.

One employee said on joint investigations with law enforcement.

One employee said on all Priority 1 cases.

One employee said on sexual abuse cases.

One employee said on physical abuse cases.

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

7	1
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

87.5% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

12.5% of the investigators interviewed said they were not aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

One employee said, whenever CPS receives a report of serious physical abuse or any sexual abuse.

One employee said he/she did not know.

Three employees said on Priority 1 cases, but it is not happening because law enforcement says they do not have the manpower to assist CPS.

One employee said, when the worker feels threatened or is in danger.

One employee said, when a child is injured.

3. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

7	7
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50% of the employees interviewed described the CPS working relationship with the community as good.

50% of the employees interviewed described the CPS working relationship with the community is not good.

3A. Explain:

Four employees said the relationship has deteriorated by recent poor media coverage of some problems. Many of the professionals in the community don't understand the method by which we open up new services.

One employee said it takes a long time to get a medical response. Professional communications are poor.

School contacts don't want to give any information without us being there in person. Families see us as too intrusive and have a negative concept of CPS.

One employee said it takes time to have good relationships with anyone, which is difficult with a constant flow of new caseworkers.

One new worker said he/she did not know.

4. Does CPS have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

8	6
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57% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.

43% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

Five employees said law enforcement does not want to assist CPS. They say they don't have time to assist CPS.

One employee said there is a miscommunication between agencies as to the roles and responsibilities. Law enforcement needs training on laws pertaining to children being abused and neglected.

5. Does CPS have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

12	2
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86% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.  
 14% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

Two employees said judges don't understand the caseworker's workload. Judges get irritated at caseworkers, because they have not done everything the judges want done. They have expectations to be met, but caseworkers are unable to comply with the expectations, such as weekly visits involving infants.

**TRAINING BARRIERS**

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

6	8
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43% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.  
 57% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

2	12
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14% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.  
 86% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

One employee said the training was a re-hash of information received in the social sciences classes in college.  
 One employee said it did not prepare employees for trying to do a job when there is a lack of resources available.

Three employees said most of the academy was based on investigations training and nothing relating to FBSS and CVS workers.

Three employees said employees need on-the-job training with experienced workers. They said more emphasis is needed on how to document cases and how to conduct interviews.

Three employees said the academy does not give an accurate depiction of what the worker will be dealing with on the streets. The academy attempted to soften how unpleasant the job actually is, which did not prepare workers for the real, on- the-job experiences they would be facing.

One employee said the family dynamics were not covered. Training was more about feelings than situations dealing with drug addicts. The training does not prepare caseworkers for seeing severely beaten children.

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

2	12
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14% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

86% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

Six employees said there was not enough training on proper preparation of legal documents. The training had little emphasis on real issues; it was a quick overview, with lots of general information. They said they needed more application.

One employee said the training was about the general legal time-lines and the legal issues pertaining to investigations.

One employee said new workers really need a mentor to walk them through their first legal cases, showing how to do the paperwork and how to testify in court.

One employee said the training was so general, that he/she had to learn on her own, especially the process of removal.

One employee said the court procedures were not addressed thoroughly in training.

Two employees said the training only skimmed the surface.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

10	4
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71% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

29% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for CPS Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

13	1
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93% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

7% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

13	1
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93% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

7% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

3	11
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21% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are available to them.

79% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

13	1
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93% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

7% of the employees interviewed said there are not obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

8A. If so, what are they?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

9. Are CPS policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

9	5
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64% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.

36% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

9A. If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

10	4
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71% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.

29% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are not adequate to perform their jobs.

10A. If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

### **SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.



1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES	NO
6	0

100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES	NO
4	2

67% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

33% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) do not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

Three employees said there are either no services available or not enough services, depending on the area. One employee said cases involving drugs can't affect a change in such a short period of time, but the time frame gives the kids a chance for permanency.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES	NO
5	1

83.3% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

16.7% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

3A. Explain:

One employee said it is not enough time to determine if a person can get off drugs, but the time frame helps children find a permanent home.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES	NO
0	6

100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:

Three employees said resources do not exist in a lot of areas, because of so many towns being so small and rural.

One employee said resources are so limited, that children are being placed into homes with minimum standards.

One employee said CPS does not have the funding for services and there is a lack of service facilities, including daycare for special needs children. Other resources needed are drug rehab and mental health services. One employee said there are a lot of gaps in community resources, such as parenting classes that include adolescents and teenagers. There is also a need for more drug treatment programs.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

0	6
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

Three employees said resources do not exist in a lot of areas, because of so many towns being so small and rural.

One employee said resources are so limited, that children are being placed into homes with minimum standards. Some services have long waiting lists.

One employee said there is a lack of service facilities, including daycare for special needs children. Other resources needed are drug rehab and mental health services.

One employee said parenting classes are needed to help parents to cope with adolescents and teenagers. There is also a need for more drug treatment programs.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

12	2
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86% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

14% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

Two employees said it was the early part of 2003.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

Two employees answered 5-6.

One employee answered 5-7.

Three employees answered 6-7.

Four employees answered 8.

Three employees answered 9.

One employee answered 10.

Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 7.5 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

14	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

One employee said a new pilot medical program is being tested. It requires staffing with a supervisors and the program director.

One employee said a new contact is in effect that goes through law enforcement to work joint investigations. Eleven employees said they staff their cases with a supervisor and if necessary, the supervisor will staff with the program director.

One employee said a process is in place, but he/she cannot reach his/her supervisor, because the supervisor is never available. The supervisor discourages employees from making contact outside the peer group.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

10	4
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71% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

29% of the employees interviewed said they do not believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

One employee does not believe the process works, because so there are so many loopholes, no matter what is decided.

Two employees said caseworkers are not allowed to contact other supervisors when ours is unavailable. This is a problem when children are at risk. Caseworkers should at least be allowed to contact the district attorney.

One employee said the supervisor is unavailable most of the time, so caseworkers should be allowed to call program director directly and by-pass the supervisor

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

12	2
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86% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

14% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

One employee said there is an emphasis placed on getting old cases current, but no real support or praise for the sheer number of cases employees carry.

One employee said his/her supervisor is unavailable most of the time.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

12	2
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86% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

14% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

Five employees said daily.  
Three employees said daily or as needed.  
Three employees said weekly.  
One employee said monthly.  
One employee said one time in nine months.  
One employee said every other month

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

Eight employees said as needed.  
Four employees said weekly.  
One employee said monthly.  
One employee said every two weeks.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

2	6
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FBSS and Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

13% of the employees interviewed said policy requires employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

87% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

One employee said he/she believes it is required at the beginning of a case.

One employee said when there is removal of a child.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

11	3
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79% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

21% of the employees interviewed said they have not noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

One employee said a new supervisor has priority on documentation and if the case is current. The supervisor has no concern for whether you have visited your children, visited families or provided services.

Four employees said each supervisor has different viewpoints.

Three employees said the decision of action to be taken on a case is very inconsistent, depending on which supervisor is making the decisions.

One employee said a recent decision has been made to ensure all parent/child visitations are done after school, which puts workers into the evening before returning the child.

One employee said a supervisor pushed to find justification of removal of a child because she did not like the mother.

One employee said some supervisors are more concerned about case documentation while others are more concerned with face-to-face contacts; some supervisors will ask for more information and others, based on our tenure, will accept your information and judgment.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

4	7
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36% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures.  
64% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

Six employees said they did not know.

One employee said at the beginning of the case.

One employee said when there is removal of a child.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

3	11
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15% of the employees interviewed said they feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

85% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

Three employees said CPS legal is too busy and employees are discouraged from bothering legal with questions.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Three employees said they would consult with other supervisors.

Seven employees said they would follow the supervisor's directives.

Four employees said they would discuss further with the supervisor and then go to the program director for advice.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

7	7
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50% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

50% of the employees interviewed said they did not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

Two employees believe children have been left in dangerous environments when they should have been removed.

Two employees believe children were removed when they should not have been removed.

One employee said supervisors are more focused on meeting time frames and deadlines then trying to the safety of children.

One employee said some cases are in a gray area as for as whether to remove a child or not, which makes it difficult to make decisions

One employee said if legal is busy, the removal of children will not happen.

16. Are you able to make a decision of “Rule-out” or “Unable to Determine” a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

5	3
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked these questions.

63% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of “Rule-out or “Unable to Determine” a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

37% of the employees interviewed said they were not able to make a decision of “Rule-out or “Unable to Determine” a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

3	11
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21% of the employees interviewed said they had been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

79% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

Explain:

Two employees said they were directed to make changes when the caseworker made errors in grammar, etc.

One employee said he/she was directed to make changes when the employee made errors in judgment and after the supervisor explained, I agreed with the supervisor.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

0	14
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100% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

18A. If so, by who and what was said?

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

6	8
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43% of the employees interviewed said they had other information for the OIG.

57% of the employees interviewed said they did not have other information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

3	11
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21% of the employees interviewed said they were afraid or intimidated by someone in their management structure.

79% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

20A. If so, who and why?

Three employees mentioned supervisors, due to personal demeanor.

**EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Training on new legislation.
- More advanced training to move up to a more advanced level.
- Legal procedures
- Drug training
- Court testimony – courtroom demeanor
- Increase caseworker salaries.
- Need the new “Cyber-Secretary” software they started a new pilot program here. It is great for narrating documentation
- Transportation for clients, Human Service Technicians, Admin. Techs., documentation aids
- Additional manpower; Human Services Technicians, Administrative Techs.
- Heavy caseload. Internet blocks
- Stress. High caseload is overwhelming in this type of caseload
- Distance, resources, caseload. I’m barely making the minimum contacts required. I cover 89,836 square miles. That is just my client base, but not my area where I send/drive my clients for services.
- They just don’t apply to current caseloads & demands
- Bureaucracy we have to go thru to get around a policy issue (day care). Poorly worded policy on HESGH waivers, (siblings)
- Currently, yes, but we will see after the new revamping of the organization if it continues.
- Far too many loopholes for attorneys to find to allow children to be returned to their parents
- All FBSS workers are not allowed to participate in the joint staffing anymore.
- We have caseworkers under so much stress they are taking drugs for the stress
- Our pay has us unable to make our cost-of-living expenses.
- We use our own cars all the time for .35 cents per mile
- As a legal unit, we are unable to decline cases and I’m currently having to do investigations in addition to my 50+ cases (kids)
- We’re having to place kids in foster placement so far away and take so much of our time to drive to them
- First aid and CPR
- Training in transporting special needs children
- Effect of substance abuse parents on the child
- Caseworker safety, self-defense training

- Interview skills
- Dealing with hostile people, how to defuse volatile situations
- Color printers for the new cameras
- Limited number of copiers and fax machines for the entire office
- Limited resources for placing children in their own regions
- 85% of clients need substance abuse assessment, testing and treatment, but there is very little funding
- Unmanageable caseload is a major obstacle in providing services to clients
- Need support staff; administrative techs and transport aides
- But, policies and procedures need to be adjusted. Time frames are set for ideal workloads, but no one works with an ideal workload.
- Workers are unable to take time off because of workload, but management tells them they need to get away from the job. The workload increases when the worker returns, but management does not want to pay overtime for the worker to catch up. Worker states that management attempts to “guilt-trip” caseworkers by telling them that paying overtime takes money away from any new position the unit may gain.
- Tenured caseworkers have been “black-balled” because they are not “yes” people. If you feel strongly about your position and are willing to voice it, you will never be promoted.
- Some excellent, tenured workers who are capable of working without tight supervision are to the point of quitting because of being micro-managed.
- Workers are not valued!
- First aid and CPR
- Training in transporting special needs children
- Effect of substance abuse parents on the child
- Caseworker safety, self-defense training
- Interview skills
- Dealing with hostile people, how to defuse volatile situations
- Advanced risk assessment; how to identify early stages of child starvation
- How to deal with clients who avoid you and are deceptive; how to deal with those issues
- Interview skills – forensic interview skills
- How to conduct the investigation
- New advances in the medical field relating to child abuse
- New laws; when laws change, workers receive an email, but there is no
- Background regarding the change of the law
- Color printers for the new cameras; no way to save picture on disks
- Workable tape recorders
- Community resources/services
- Laptops are being taken away; supervisor keeps theirs, but they do no field work
- Some workers still have no access to internet; worker is asked to use their personal pc which has access to the internet
- Administrative help is needed to allow more time to work cases
- More office space; have up to 3 workers sharing an office space, difficult for confidentiality
- Unmanageable caseload is a major obstacle in providing services to clients
- Need support staff; administrative techs and transport aides
- Lack of community resources
- Lengthy documentation limits time for investigation
- It is more difficult to meet all agency requirements when all equipment is not provided to workers
- Amount of time to spend with the client is impacted with the amount of documentation required



- Cases in which there is injury to a child and the parent will be in jail for only 3 days; then worker has to monitor to make sure the child is safe; protective orders don't always work because sometimes even warrants for arrest are not enforced.
- More caseworkers are needed
- Focus needs to be on delivery of services, to prevent repeat clients
- Management does not hold supervisors accountable
- Worker states that they are required to contact two collaterals in each case; no requirement that a professional opinion be obtained; collaterals can be anyone the family wants to provide.
- Workers are not allowed to work in pairs. Worker was written up because she took another caseworker to assist her in removing eleven children.
- Upper management is not involved with casework; have lost all working knowledge of what is going on in the field; worker does not feel they are a team – it's an "us" against "them" game.
- Pay increase is greatly needed.
- Need training on what to look for regarding types of injuries
- Need training on medical assessments on injuries
- Self-defense classes
- Need to be trained and authorized to carry pepper spray for protection against dogs
- We need a change on one of the instructors. CPS contracts with a female instructor to give classes on substance abuse and in the classes, she tells us that occasional use of illegal drugs is OK and it does not place children in danger
- Need classes on how to determine if a person is being deceptive
- Classes on how to deal with people on drugs, alcohol or people with psychological problems
- State provided cell phones or enough money to cover all CPS calls made on caseworkers personal cell phones. \$50 per month does not cover the monthly charges for CPS calls
- State provided cars or additional money for driving personal cars, because of liability issues when transporting children and their families in personal cars, wear and tear on personal cars such as voluminous amount of miles each month, tires, brakes, oil changes, various repairs and \$.35 for gas is not enough, due to gas prices
- Need more services for families, because FBSS is overwhelmed
- Improved salaries
- Not enough recognition from upper management
- Need additional shelters for families, so a child would not have to be removed from the family that needs financial assistance
- Too many cases
- Not able to document as well as possible because of time constraints
- Long distance driving takes a lot of time
- Trying to interview a child at school is difficult, due to lack of space
- Caseworkers are unable to keep up with policies and procedures, because they change constantly
- Program directors interpret the same policies and procedures, but different outcomes occur on the same case scenario
- All people in the household must be interviewed and it is difficult to catch all of them at home within the time limits
- Anytime a child dies, the caseworker is always fired, therefore caseworkers do not feel that management is supportive
- Media scrutinizes CPS and do not always get the facts straight
- The program director is a dictator. She recently changed the work schedules of all workers without an explanation and did not ask them if they wanted to change their schedules

- A pilot program has just started, where an Investigator IV will train four new caseworkers. However, management did not think about the additional FBSS workers that will be needed to handle the necessary cases from the pilot program
- Upper management does not try to keep tenured workers
- Upper management does not keep workers informed
- Caseworkers learn of child deaths through news releases instead of being told by management
- Upper management is out-of-touch with the real world today. Things have changed tremendously since they were working the streets
- Caseworker pay scale does not allow for long-term careers. This needs to be changed to at least, an annual pay raise as an incentive to keep workers
- There is only one router in San Antonio and there should be at least one more
- Need an entire unit of screeners (3-4) instead of one person

## Region 9 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 39 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

Question	%Yes	%No	Total
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>89.74%</b>	<b>10.26%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>69.23%</b>	<b>30.77%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>76.92%</b>	<b>23.08%</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>41.03%</b>	<b>58.97%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>38.46%</b>	<b>61.54%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>86.96%</b>	<b>13.04%</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>20.51%</b>	<b>79.49%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>44.44%</b>	<b>55.56%</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>6.45%</b>	<b>93.55%</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>7.69%</b>	<b>92.31%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>2.78%</b>	<b>97.22%</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>10.26%</b>	<b>89.74%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it</b>	<b>8.82%</b>	<b>91.18%</b>	<b>34</b>

have been progressed?			
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>10.26%</b>	<b>89.74%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>2.56%</b>	<b>97.44%</b>	<b>39</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 76.92% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.92 cases with 33% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 0% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 50% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.36 cases with 3% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 44% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions were judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. HHSC-OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file, that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
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<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

## **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. One respondent requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 8.00. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

### **Results**

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	1	20%	4	80%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (800 number)	4	80%	1	20%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	5	100%	0	0%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	5	100%	0	0%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	0	0%	5	100%

Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:

### **Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:**

- Extremely high staff turnover.

- Excessive caseload.
- Limitations of the law placed on caseworkers.
- Reassignment of caseworkers from one department to another within the agency.
- Lack of Continuity of caseworkers on cases.

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Lack of resources which includes employees.
- Inadequate funding.
- Agency management.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Increase number of caseworkers.
- Improve the method of state-wide reporting 800 number.
- Increase funding.
- Increase the number of employees to decrease the number of children per caseworker.
- Increase staff salaries.

**Staff Allocation**

*Management/Administrative*

Program Administrators:	1	
Program Directors:	4 (2 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 1 Permanency P.D., 1 Risk P.D.)	
Supervisors:	11 (C.P.S. Supervisors)	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		16

*Caseworkers*

Investigations:	24	
Family Based Safety Services:	6	
Substitute Care:	23	
Generic:	8	
Foster Care/Adoptions:	6	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		67

*Clerical/Support*

Administrative Assistants:	3	
Clerks:	1	
Human Services Technicians:	15	
Receptionists:	2	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		21

*Other Staff*

Community Partners:	(2)	Worker V's:	(2)
Case Analysts:	(2)	Education/Disability Specialist	(1)
Public Information Officer:	(1)	Program Improvement Leader	(1)
Permanency Planning Team Convenor:	(1)	Human Services Specialist:	(1)

Preparation for Adult Living (PAL):	(1)	Legal Secretary	(1)
Accountant:	(1)	Adoption Subsidy Specialist	(1)
Subtotal:			15

*TOTAL REGION 9 (Midland):* 119

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	1	
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	1	
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	3	
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	3	
Employed: 10 + Years	0	

Number of first line supervisors since your first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	4
2	1
3	1
4	0
5 +	2

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bachelor's	0	3	2	1	2	8

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

2	3
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

40% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

60% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

The name of the family is misspelled or incorrect, or only the child's first name is listed.

There is no address listed or the address is incomplete.

There is no telephone number listed for the family.

The name of the child's school is not listed.

The DOB for the parents or child is incorrect.

The narratives are vague and injuries not sufficiently described. Prompts on the intake sheet should be helpful enough for the intake employee to obtain more information.

Workers said that some of the employees in SWI use the new format, which they think is horrible. They described the report as a question and answer type format, which cannot be quickly read to determine what is happening in the case.

All members of the household are not listed on the report, only the alleged perpetrator and victim.

SWI does not ask the reporter enough questions to determine that the complaint does not qualify as a CPS issue, which causes caseworkers to waste their time on non-CPS related issues.

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

4	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

80% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

20% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it does not cause undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Three employees said that additional phone calls are made and more time is spent attempting to locate families, victims and collaterals. This increases the time spent on the investigation and slows the process.

One employee said this could be critical in Priority 1 cases; it could also allow time for the parents to be alerted to the case being reported and prompt the victims to not cooperate with the questioning; and it takes time away from working other cases.

### CASE LOAD:

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-1.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-4.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 1.

One investigator answered 3-4.

One investigator answered 3-9.

One investigator answered 5.

One investigator answered 6-7.

One investigator answered 15-18.



FBSS/Sub-care worker said that the average cases assigned each week are approximately 2 cases/families. Investigators said that the average of new investigations assigned each week is approximately 6 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-1

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 2.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-3.

One investigator answered 2-3.

One investigator answered 3-4.

Two investigators answered 4-5.

One investigator answered 7-8.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested their average amount of cases assigned each week should be approximately 2 cases/families.

Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 4 cases.

3. What is your average caseload?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 40.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 12.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 19-27.

One investigator answered 40.

One investigator answered 25-40.

One investigator answered 50-60.

One investigator answered 21.

One investigator answered 24.

All employees said they do not know their weekly average, but they were able to explain their monthly average caseload.

FBSS/Sub-care workers said the average caseload is approximately 25 cases/families.

Investigators said their monthly average is approximately 35 cases.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 6-8.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 12-15.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 20.

One investigator suggested 12-15.

One investigator suggested 15-16.

One investigator suggested 15-18.

Two investigators suggested 20.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested a reasonable average of 14 cases/families per month.

Investigators suggested a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 17 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

Seven employees said they attempt to get current on cases before taking a vacation, their active cases, then, sit idle. Another caseworker or supervisor will take care of any emergency issues while they are out of the office.

One employee has not had a vacation in 2 ½ years, because of workload.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

4	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

80% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

20% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

One employee said that, regularly, SWI does not provide sufficient information, which creates more work for the caseworker in locating the family, school and victim. This also delays the caseworker in working other priority cases.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

3	2
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

60% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

40% of employees interviewed said they have not experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

One employee said that, on a regular basis, "Priority 2" cases are assigned three to five days after the initial report was received into SWI. This creates additional time management problems with their existing workload in order to make contact with the family within the required ten-day time frame.

One employee said that, sometimes, SWI routes cases to the wrong town when a family moves and no allowance in the ten-day time frame is made to the worker assigned the case.

One employee said that some schools are failing to report the abuse timely.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

1	7
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13% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

87% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

6	2
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer.

75% of the investigators interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

25% of the investigators interviewed said there is not an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

Two employees said the requirement for all cases to be closed within sixty days is based on the federal funding guidelines. If the case is not closed within that time frame, federal funding is not received for that case. One employee estimated that 30% of workers' caseload does not meet this time frame requirement. One employee believed the emphasis on closing cases was because the formula used to determine the amount of new FTE positions awarded that office is based on the number of cases closed by the workers in that office. One employee thought the emphasis on closing cases originated from the state statute that allows CPS one year to achieve permanency for a child. One employee thought the emphasis on closing cases within a specific time frame was because of a shift in priorities within CPS management, in which, more importance is placed on the number of cases handled instead of the quality of the investigations conducted. One employee said they thought the emphasis was because, the quicker a case is worked by assessing risk, possibly removing a child and providing services, the safer it is for the children.

### **WORK PROCESS:**

One generic caseworker explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker assess the family's needs, provides a report and then staffs the case with the supervisor. The family is referred for services. If the family needs continued services, a generic worker will continue to work with the family. The case is staffed with the supervisor and a decision is made to close the case, continue monitoring, or to pursue legal action. One substitute care worker explained that cases assigned are families with children in foster care. It is ideal to see the child and parents before the hearing, but that is not happening because of workload. The caseworker staffs the case with the investigator to determine the services needed by the family and meets the family at the hearing. The Judge determines if there is evidence to remove the child. The caseworker schedules services for parents (children are already involved in services). Workload does not allow very much time for one on one with the family to help family come to a successful solution. The caseworker staffs the case with supervisor to make a decision to return children to parents, to place with family members, to remain in foster care, or to pursue adoption. One FBSS worker explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker would staff with the investigator on the case, the investigator's supervisor and the FBSS supervisor, in order to determine the issues of each case. A particular form will be completed that will have needed information that determines the steps to be taken for the child and family. An FBSS worker will then meet with the parents regarding ongoing issues, such as are one or both parents using drugs, does one or both of them have a violent temper, are either of them alcoholic, etc. An FBSS worker will then schedule needed classes for the parents, depending on their particular issues, such as anger management, etc. An FBSS worker will try to ensure that the child has food and clothing and a temporary place to stay that is agreeable with the parents, such as the grandparents, relatives or close friends. An FBSS worker will try to get food stamps for the family and will attempt to locate a job for one or both of the parents. Two investigators agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker reviews the case, contacts the reporter and collaterals, and researches for prior CPS history. The caseworker then makes contact with child at school and interviews parents in their home. The caseworker obtains additional collaterals from parents and makes contact. If a child has to be placed, the caseworker finds a relative, conducts a background check, makes a home visit, and completes a safety plan. The worker then refers the case to FBSS or to community resources. One investigator said on "Priority 1" cases, the caseworker conducts a face-to-face interview with victim and family. "Priority 2" cases must be prioritized according to severity of issues. On Mondays, he/she works in the office writing reports and returning telephone calls. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, he/she follows up on cases. On Fridays, the supervisor holds a staff meeting for caseworkers to discuss issues on their cases. Fridays is when workers staff their cases (in the meeting).

One investigator explained that investigations that need to be transferred to FBSS are staffed weekly. Contacts are made with clients to explain their service plans. Transitional visits are made. Services are set up and home visits are initiated. Service plans are completed and the cases are staffed regularly with supervisors. A determination is made regarding case progress. Pre-removal staffings are held on cases that are not progressing well. Services are set up with contract providers. Transportation is provided to clients who can't go to services. One investigator explained that upon case assignment, "Priority 2" cases are initiated within 3 to 4 days (ideally). Gathering all information may take 20 to 30 days. Cases are staffed with the supervisor for final disposition. On "Priority 1" cases", there can be some lag time on responding quickly because of the requirement to call in through Central Intake. Central Intake may not notify us for 3 to 4 hours. After the initial 30 days, the worker has 15 days to complete documentation. Supervisor reviews cases for accuracy. If the caseworker removes a child, he/she must complete an affidavit beforehand. This can take more time if there are multiple children in the home.

**INVESTIGATIONS:**

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES	NO
5	0

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said that they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

Five employees said law enforcement is required to assist on "Priority 1" cases involving sexual abuse or serious physical abuse

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES	NO
5	0

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

Five employees said law enforcement is required to assist on all "Priority 1" cases; cases with sexual abuse and serious physical abuse, but that is not happening because of a shortage of officers available.

3. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with the community?

YES	NO
4	4

50% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the community.

50% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the community.

3A. Explain:

One employee said the public is in denial that there is a need for CPS.

Two employees said the public needs to be better educated about CPS; they have a misconception that the only thing CPS does is remove children from homes; many people don't understand why a child is allowed to return home after a removal and many people don't believe in removing a child.  
One employee said the people in the community do not like calling SWI instead of calling a worker directly. The people in the community also have a problem with CPS telling them how to deal with their own families; they view CPS as too pushy & intrusive.

4. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

8	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

5. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

7	1
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88% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.  
12% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

One employee said the Attorney General's Office will not share data base information with CPS. The OAG handles child support issues, but they will not share the contact information with CPS.

## TRAINING BARRIERS

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

4	4
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50% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.  
50% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

3	5
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38% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.  
62% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

Four employees said on-the-job training is desperately needed; less focus on policies and procedures and more on hands-on training with an experienced worker

One employee said the training is too focused on investigations, leaving FBSS and CVS workers unprepared.

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

5	3
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63% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

37% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

Three employees said there is a need to be walked through the process in the field. They said the process does not make sense until the worker is in the field; a worker cannot do a removal until they have to do it in the field; they said they need a mentor.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

5	3
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63% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

37% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for C.P.S. Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

4	4
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50% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

50% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

7	1
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88% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

12% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

1	7
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12% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are available to them.

88% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

5	3
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63% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

37% of the employees interviewed said there are not obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

If so, what are they?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

9. Are C.P.S. policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

4	4
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50% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.

50% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

4	4
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50% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.

50% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are no adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

## **SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES NO

3	0
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100% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES NO

1	2
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33% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

67% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) did not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

One worker said it takes several months just to get the services scheduled and started, which does not give the family the full amount of time allocated within the 18-month time frame to actually be working the services. It also takes approximately 24 months to do a good job with the children.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES NO

2	1
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67% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

33% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

3A. Explain:

One employee said he/she believes it takes 24 months to determine if the family has adapted to counseling. One of the reasons for the longer time frame is the shortage of resources to take care of the children in this area, such as shelters for children.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

1	2
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33% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

67% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe CPS was able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:



One employee said there are not enough services in the community with which to contract services; TCADA cut funding for their drug and alcohol treatment; getting clients to the services is difficult; foster homes do not want to transport the children to services; funding for all types of services are not sufficient.  
One employee said it is especially difficult to obtain services in small communities in rural areas; many clients are resistant to the alcohol and drug counseling they need; it is difficult to provide services to people who deny their problems because they will not attend counseling and CPS has no authority to force these people to use needed resources

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES	NO
0	3

100% of the FBSS and Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

One employee said there is a shortage of therapist, psychologists, parenting classes, and substance abuse assessment, testing and counseling.

One employee said there is one 30-day drug and alcohol rehabilitation program in the Odessa area and they do not provide counseling for methamphetamine addictions.

One employee said there is a shortage of foster homes and a need for transportation assistance to the families.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES	NO
5	3

63% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.  
37% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

One employee said their last evaluation was over three years ago.

One employee said their last evaluation was over a year ago.

One employee could not recall when he/she had their last evaluation.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

Three employees answered 5-7.

One employee answered 5-6.

One employee answered 6-7.

Three employees answered 7.

Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 7 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES	NO
8	0

100% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

Eight employees said they staff the case with their supervisor and most of the time their supervisor will contact the Program Director.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

6	2
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75% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

25% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

One employee said the supervisor is not always accessible, which makes the process more difficult to follow.

One employee said supervisors should be able to make determinations of removal; calling additional management people in the middle of the night should not be necessary.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

8	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

7	1
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88% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meets with them face-to-face on their cases.

12% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

Three employees said his/her manager meets with the employee once a week.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee once a month.

Three employees said his/her manager meets with the employee whenever needed.

One employee said their supervisor is too busy to schedule regular meetings; they sometimes have to staff cases during lunch or other informal times

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

Three employees said his/her manager should meet with the employee on an as-needed basis.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee once or twice a month.

Two employees said his/her manager should meet with the employee once a week.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee twice a week.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee 3-4 times a week.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

3	2
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

40% of the employees interviewed said policy does require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

60% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

One employee said they are required to staff in person when there are pictures or documents to be reviewed.

Two employees said they are required to staff a case in person on all removals.

Two employees said they don't believe there is a policy on staffing in person.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

6	2
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75% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

25% of the employees interviewed said they have not noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

One employee said a new supervisor's fear of making a mistake in judgment prevents him/her from making decisions; example given, the supervisor could review complaints and eliminate them because they are clearly not a CPS situation, but, instead, he/she sends workers to the field on every complaint received, taking time away from legitimate cases.

One employee said some supervisors make themselves available to their workers while others are inaccessible, offer no guidance and do nothing to lessen the workload for caseworkers; they also can make or break a unit by their leadership, or lack thereof; some make everything a crisis, which increases the stress for workers.

One employee said some supervisors are too inexperienced for the position and unsure of their decision making, to the point of not making decisions.

One employee said the differences in supervisors is most evident when a worker is "on-call" and they are required to work with supervisors other than their own; receiving a different opinion from each on similar type cases.

Two employees said supervisors make different decisions on similar cases regarding removals and terminations, which leaves investigators unsure of how to make good, consistent decisions.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

2	4
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25% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures.

75% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

One employee said they are required to staff in person when there are pictures or documents to be reviewed.  
Two employees said they are required to staff a case in person on all removals.  
Two employees said they don't believe there is a policy on staffing in person.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

2	6
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25% of the employees interviewed said they do feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

75% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

One employee said they are discouraged by the County Attorney, who does not want to take a case to trial, unless it is absolutely an easy case to win.

One employee said the County Attorneys do not want to take non-emergency removal cases; if it is not an emergency situation, they are not interested.

What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Three employees said he/she discusses the issues further with the supervisor and they may go together to discuss with the Program Director.

One employee said he/she talks to the Program Administrator because there is an open-door policy in their office.

One employee said he/she would staff with another supervisor

One employee said he/she would express any concerns with their supervisor and, if not being told to do something that violates law or policy, would follow supervisor's direction and document why he/she proceeded in that manner.

Two employees said he/she has not had this situation, as he/she is able to discuss issues with supervisor.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

6	2
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75% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

25% of the employees interviewed said they did not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

Two workers said they did not have specific cases, but felt that, if a complaint is filed or there is a problem with the case, supervisors attack workers without hearing the caseworker's explanation/justification for the actions they took in the case.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker said workers identify too much with their clients and lose focus on their main objective, which is protecting the child.

One employee said a political figure called management, which resulted in the removal of a child, without a complete investigation. The decision turned out to be correct, but the caseworker believes the manner in which it was done was not proper.

Three employees said they believe CPS has left children in dangerous environments.

One employee believes CPS removes children when the children should not be removed.

16. Are you able to make a decision of “Rule-out” or “Unable to Determine” a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

4	1
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

80% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of “Rule-out or “Unable to Determine” a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

20% of the employees interviewed said they were not able to make a decision of “Rule-out or “Unable to Determine” a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

0	8
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100% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

17A. Explain:

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

0	8
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100% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

18A. If so, by who and what was said?

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

5	3
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63% of the employees interviewed said they had information for the OIG.

37% of the employees interviewed said they had information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

2	6
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25% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

75% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

20A. If so, who and why?

One employee said he/she felt intimidated because performance evaluations are based on an ideal caseload, which is not realistic. This situation adds stress to an already stressful work environment.

One employee said a person in management says he/she has an open-door policy, but in reality, it is not the case.

**EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Employees suggested that management place importance on training by allotting time for employees to attend training. Many employees interviewed said PSTI training is offered on a continuous basis, but employees' workload prevents them from attending.
- Provide training on how to deal with stress and depression.
- Provide law enforcement type training on child abuse issues.
- Provide training on how to assess burns and broken bones during an investigation.
- Provide Family Code training.
- Provide training from law enforcement on identifying new drug trends, identifying drug paraphernalia and recognizing the various drugs.
- Provide training on understanding the effects of various drugs and identifying the signs of drug use.
- Provide training on how to conduct a thorough investigation and write a comprehensive investigation report.
- Provide training on how to locate resources and services in each county.
- Provide training on how to evaluate psychological issues when dealing with people; recognize suicide and self-mutilation signs and how interact with individuals with psychological problems.
- Provide training on legal updates.
- Employees suggested workers be allowed to attend the Crimes Against Children Conference.
- Provide new cameras.
- Provide State vehicles for transporting children and families.
- Provide State issued cell phones, in lieu of the \$50 stipend for state use of their personal cell phones.
- Provide laptop computers.
- Provide access to the Internet search sites, in order to locate information on people.
- Employees said there is a lack of community services for families, such as drug assessment, testing and rehabilitation facilities, parenting classes, anger management classes and therapist.
- Employees said there is a lack of funds to pay for classes for client families.
- Employees said there is a lack of foster homes and facilities to place children within their own region, as, some children are placed in facilities 200-300 miles away, creating an additional burden on caseworkers in meeting with their children once a month.

- Employees said there is a lack of Children’s Advocacy Centers.
- Employees said there is a lack of Child Welfare Boards.
- Employees said they have difficulty receiving medical information on families when trying to conduct a risk assessment.
- Employees suggested the number of meetings required by management be minimized to allow more time for investigations.
- Employees suggested that morale in the office could improve if favoritism was not so evident in the way management treats workers on an every day basis and in the manner in which workers are promoted.
- Employees suggested that the assistance provided by additional support staff and transport aides would allow workers more time to conduct investigations and provide client services.
- Employees suggested that an unmanageable caseload is the origination of most all other problems they face each day because it reduces the amount of time to effectively investigate cases, provide services and assure the safety of children, thereby, leading to additional complaints on the same family and the possibility of children being left in an unsafe environment.
- Employees suggested that eliminating the FBSS contracts with outside counseling and drug treatment facilities may not have been the most cost-effective measure to be taken. Employees at the facilities handled the entire case, providing services and monitoring the case, the same as an FBSS worker. New positions were not allocated to take on the additional work that was returned to the FBSS workers. Employees said repeat and multiple referrals on the same families have quadrupled since the cancellations of the contracts.
- Employees suggested the night shift be reinstated instead of workers being placed “on call”. Workers who are out all night on a “Priority 1” removal must still be at work at 8 a.m. the following day.
- Employees suggest that the formula used as the basis for providing new full time employee, which considers the number of intake and closed cases handled by a unit, does not give a true picture of the workload, as it does not take into consideration the pending cases, which is always a much higher number.
- Employees suggest there be some way to reduce the amount of paperwork required for each case.
- Employees suggest SWI be better trained in identifying complaints that are not a CPS issue, to allow workers more time to investigate legitimate complaints.
- Employees said the law does not allow CPS to use the prior death of a child to remove a new child in the home. CPS is required to wait for another intake report of abuse and follow all the procedures of providing services, etc., thereby, leaving the new child in a dangerous situation.
- Employees said agency policies on removal of children are not geared to protect multi-child families; removing only one child (the victim) leaves remaining children in the home at risk.
- Employees said that providing services and counseling of children in abusive situations is an important part of helping the child become a healthy individual. They said the legal system should be mandated to prosecute in a timely manner to allow the child to heal; the more time goes by, the more detrimental it is on the child and the less likely the perpetrator will be prosecuted.
- Employees said the law should allow the Attorney General’s Office to share contact information from their child support database with CPS.
- Employees said the application and interpretation of agency policies and procedures are inconsistent, with statewide having their version, each region having their own version and each supervisor having their own version.
- Employees said the restrictions created by the interpretation of the Fourth Amendment creates a burden on workers trying to determine the safety of a child because, if the family does not want to allow them access to the child, there is no way they can confirm the child is not being abused.
- Employees suggest the time frame requirements that must be met, according to policies and procedures, be reevaluated to take into consideration the caseload carried by workers today.

- Employees suggested that all service plans for families be court-ordered to give workers leverage if families do not follow the plan. Employees said, without a court order, cases take longer because workers have no way of forcing families to abide by the plan.
- Employees said the low compensation for the job, the amount of cases they are required to carry in a workload, the probation action taken when they are not current on their cases and the lack of concern by management of the level of stress they carry from their concern that a child will be lost in the unmanageable caseload are all factors that contribute to workers feeling that they are not valued employees.
- Long-time employees said the morale is lower than they have ever witnessed in the past; many employees are on antidepressants, antacid medication and are riddled with numerous health issues stemming from the stress of the unmanageable workload.
- Employees suggest that a \$3,000 bonus to transfer to an investigation unit is insulting to other units who work just as hard. In addition, employees said they do not trust management to come through with the bonus because a stipulation was included stating that, to qualify for the bonus, the worker must be current with their caseload, which all employees know, is almost an impossibility.



## Region 10 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 40 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

Question	%Yes	%No	Total
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>84.21%</b>	<b>15.79%</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>16.67%</b>	<b>83.33%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>2.78%</b>	<b>97.22%</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>7.69%</b>	<b>92.31%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should</b>	<b>5.88%</b>	<b>94.12%</b>	<b>34</b>

it have been progressed?			
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>77.5%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>40</b>

### **Prior Cases**

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 84.21% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 0.75 cases with 20% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 13% of the time.

### **Subsequent Cases**

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 87.5% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.25 cases with 5% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 40% of the time.

### **Validation**

Due to the methodology used to select cases for validation no case readings were validated for Region 10 during the course of the validation of the Statewide case reading. The case readings for Region 10 were conducted with the Statewide case reading which had an overall validation rate of 99% to 100%.

## **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. Four respondents requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 6.75. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	4	50%	4	50%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (1-800 number)	7	88%	1	12%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	6	75%	2	25%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	5	63%	3	37%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	0	0%	8	100%

**Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:**

**Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:**

- Excessively large caseload for caseworkers.
- Unprofessional attitude of the caseworkers.
- Improperly conducted investigations leads to inappropriate services.
- Decisions are not made for the best interests of the children.
- Inadequate funding for CPS services.
- Due to high turnover of caseworkers, some units are in a chaotic situation. Request for documents (affidavits) are not sent in time and thus, adversely affecting the outcome of the cases.
- Inadequate interview skills of the caseworkers.

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Problems are on the part of caseworkers, management, agency philosophy and a lack of resources.
- Insufficient funding for CPS services.
- In the past, CPS management did not share information relating to cases with other parties involved with the cases.

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Increase the number of caseworkers.
- Reduce the caseload of caseworkers.
- Allocate adequate funding for CPS services.
- Provide adequate training for caseworkers and management.
- Change the agency philosophy of reunifying the child with the family contrary to the safety and benefit of the child.
- Hire a regional director in El Paso. The current regional director is in Midland.
- Introduce accountability and provide directions for CPS programs.
- Establish a good working relationship with the other agencies.
- Integration with the HHSC should be efficient and meaningful.
- Establish good solid business practices.
- Do not have to privatize to be efficient.
- Improve internally (within HHSC & CPS).
- Carefully evaluate the need to reunite children with their families. Due to agency philosophy, CPS is too eager to put the children back with their families.
- Increase the number of foster homes for the programs.

**Staff Allocation**

*Management/Administrative*

Program Administrators: 1  
 Program Directors: 3 (2 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 1 Risk P.D.)  
 Supervisors: 13 (C.P.S. Supervisors)

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Subtotal: 17

*Caseworkers*

Investigations: 23  
 Family Based Safety Services: 11  
 Substitute Care: 24  
 Generic: 5  
 Foster Care/Adoptions: 5

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Subtotal: 68

*Clerical/Support*

Administrative Assistants: 8  
 Clerks: 2  
 Human Services Technicians: 3

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Subtotal: 13

*Other Staff*

Contracts:	(4)	Worker V's:	(4)
Case Analysts:	(2)	Program Specialists:	(2)
Public Information Officer:	(1)	Network Specialist:	(1)
Permanency Planning Team Convenor:	(1)	Human Services Specialist:	(1)
SSI Coordinator:	(1)	System Support Specialist:	(1)
Volunteer Coordinator:	(1)	Best Practices Specialist:	(1)
Worker IV (Unit 00)	(1)		

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Subtotal: 21

*TOTAL REGION 10 (El Paso): 119*

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	1	10%
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	0	0
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	5	50%

Employed: 5 – 10 Years	1	10%
Employed: 10 + Years	3	30%

Number of first line supervisors since your first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	0
2	1
3	3
4	3
5 +	3

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	1	1
Master’s	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bachelor’s	4	1	1	1	1	8

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

2	4
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

33% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

67% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Incorrect address or address omitted from report.

No directions to residence in rural areas

Incorrect telephone number or telephone information omitted from report.

No telephone number for reporter

SWI does not ask the reporter enough questions to realize that the complaint does not qualify as a CPS issue, causing caseworkers to waste their time on non CPS related issues.

“Priority 1” cases are delayed a number of hours before being received in the caseworker’s office

SWI incorrectly identifies cases as “Priority 1” cases, causing unnecessary time burdens on the caseworkers

SWI send cases to the wrong CPS office

The name of the school that the child attends was omitted.

Missing collateral information

They do not include the case number from law enforcement when an officer is the reporter

They do not conduct a thorough research for prior CPS history

Conversations with intake workers are difficult to understand because of heavy accents. Caseworkers suggest intake be returned to local areas where workers are more familiar with the area for school information, directions, the spelling of names and prior CPS history.

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

5	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

100% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Five employees agreed that too much time is wasted trying to locate the child and family, which cause delays on all assigned cases.

### **CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-2.

One investigator answered 2-3.

One investigator answered 4-6.

One investigator answered 5.

One investigator answered 6.

One investigator answered 5-6.

One investigator answered 5-8.

FBSS/Sub-care workers said that the average number of new investigations assigned each week is approximately 1 case/family.

Investigators said that the average number of new investigations assigned each week is approximately 5 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-2.

Two investigators answered 2.

One investigator answered 3.

Two investigators answered 3-4.

One investigator answered 3-5.

FBSS/Sub-care workers said that the average number of new investigations assigned each week is approximately 2 cases.

Investigators suggested that the average number of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 3 cases.

3. What is your average caseload?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-1 per month

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 0-2 per month.

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 10-12 per month.

One investigator answered 8 per month.

One investigator answered 18 per month.  
 One investigator answered 25 per month.  
 One investigator answered 35-43 per month.  
 One investigator answered 40 per month.  
 One investigator answered 48-60 per month.  
 FBSS workers said that the average number of new investigations assigned each week is approximately 6 cases/families.  
 Investigators said they don't know their average number caseload per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month, which are approximately 31 cases.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested 6-8.  
 One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 10.  
 One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 12.  
 Two investigators suggested 12-15.  
 One investigator suggested 15.  
 Two investigators suggested 20.  
 One investigator suggested 20-25.  
 FBSS/Sub-care workers said that the average number of new investigations assigned each week is approximately 8 cases/families.  
 Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 17 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

Nine employees said that a caseworker attempts to get caught up on cases before taking a vacation, and then cases sit idle. Another caseworker will take care of any emergency issues, depending on which caseworker is available and willing to take care of the emergency.  
 One employee said that additional cases continue to be assigned to their workload while they are on vacation, which prevents the worker from meeting deadlines without working overtime, which is discouraged.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES	NO
2	4

FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.  
 33% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on "Priority 1" cases.  
 67% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on "Priority 2" cases.

6A. If no, why?

Three employees said the reason they were unable to meet face-to-face contact requirements on "Priority 2" cases was because of they carry a high workload and crisis cases take precedent.  
 One employee said intake does not obtain enough information from a reporter. An example is when statewide intake does not list an address, telephone number or the name of a school for the victim. This causes caseworkers to spend a lot of time looking for a family on a case, which delays work done on other priority cases.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

5	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

83% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

17% of employees interviewed said they have not experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

Two employees reported that on a regular basis, they do not receive “Priority 2” case assignments from their supervisor until 3-5 days after the report was taken. This puts an additional burden on them because they have fewer days to make contact within the required time frame.

Two employees said information is not clear, because intake does not gather enough information.

One employee said supervisors do not seem to understand the importance of assigning cases sooner.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

2	8
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20% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

80% of employees interviewed said they have not experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

9	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked to explain their answer.

90% of the investigators interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

10% of the investigators interviewed said there is not an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

Four employees said the “60-day” rule requires all cases to be closed within that time frame or the state does not receive the federal funding for the case.

Two employees said management is more concerned with numbers instead of quality investigations.

## WORK PROCESS:

One generic worker explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker becomes acquainted with family to find out what the family’s stance is on the case. The caseworker obtains a social history on the family and sometimes uses a genogram. The caseworker makes unannounced visits with the family during the first 5 weeks. A service plan is completed within 45 days and the caseworker conducts personal family sessions in order to view family interaction with children.

One substitute care worker explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker attends a team meeting to discuss family needs. The caseworker attends a removal (Chapter 262) hearing and if Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC) is granted, the worker prepares a service plan and will meet with the family and attorneys. The caseworker then sets up services such as therapy, early childhood intervention (E.C.I.) for the



children, psychiatric services, medical services, clothing needs, etc. A status hearing will occur after 45 days, then a permanency hearing after 120 days. The caseworker explores placement possibilities for the children. The caseworker then attends a 5 month, or 2<sup>nd</sup> service plan meeting to add or delete services. The caseworker must also transport and supervise family visits with the children, which takes 15 minutes one way just to get to my car in the parking lot downtown.

Two FBSS workers explained that upon case assignment, they have 10 days to make contact. They must interview the parents of the child, initiate a family assessment, and refer the family to services. The caseworker must also complete a family service plan and review it with family, conduct home visits, attend school meetings such as ARD's, maintain telephone contact with providers, document case narratives, and complete a three-month evaluation on the family service plan. The caseworker also updates service authorizations, continues to monitor the family's progress, maintains current medical, school, and therapy progress reports, and staffs cases monthly with the supervisor.

Two investigators agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker contacts the reporter for more details. The caseworker then makes contact with the child at school and interviews family and collateral contacts. The caseworker staffs the case with the supervisor and makes a recommendation to close the case or open for services. On priority 1 cases, a caseworker has to take pictures and staff with supervisor immediately. On priority 2 cases, the worker must initiate face-to-face contact with the family within 10 days.

One investigator explained that tenured workers are assigned more difficult cases. Upon case assignment, the caseworker researches prior CPS history, makes contact with the child, (preferably at school) and then makes contact with the parents. The caseworker contacts collaterals and then establishes a safety plan (if needed). The caseworker must find a foster home (if needed) and sometimes resorts to placing the child with someone who is no longer licensed because of lack of licensed foster homes. The caseworker requests that the family voluntarily attend family counseling. If they do not agree, they are referred to FBSS. If the family has multiple intake referrals, the case will be referred to FBSS.

One investigator explained that on "Priority 1" cases, caseworkers conduct face-to-face interviews with principals. The caseworker explains that it is impossible to keep up with "Priority 2" cases because of the workload. The caseworker meets with children at school, then talk to the parents within 24 hours. If removal is necessary, the caseworker staffs with the supervisor and program director. The caseworker will also place children in foster care and follow-up with progress of children.

One investigator explained that upon case assignment, the caseworker conducts background checks and researches prior CPS history. Cases are prioritized according to the age of the child. The caseworker makes contact with children at school, younger children at home without the presence of the parents. The caseworker makes contact with collaterals, reporters and professionals in the area involved in the case. There is a problem in El Paso with some teachers not reporting abuse. CPS previously had a public relations person with the schools, but that position was cut and one of the supervisors now will go to the school, but only when called. The caseworker staffs the case with supervisor and recommends closing the case or opening it for services.

One investigator explained that he/she works night shifts. His/her schedule is from 4 pm to 8 am, Monday through Friday or from 8 am Saturday until 8 am Sunday. The night worker responds only to "Priority 1" cases, and all cases must be staffed with supervisor before the end of the shift. There are four workers who handle night emergency duty on a rotation basis.

## INVESTIGATIONS:

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

6	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

Four employees said they are required to contact law enforcement on all “Priority 1” cases, sexual abuse and serious physical abuse cases.

One employee said on any serious injury, sexual assault, abandonment or endangerment to a child.

One employee said on any case where there is concern for a child, if the perpetrator is dangerous, or if the child is injured.

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

5	1
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

83% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

17% of the investigators interviewed said they were not aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

Three employees said that law enforcement is required to assist on all “Priority 1” cases.

One employee said law enforcement is not assisting when the law requires. Employee said law enforcement tells them, if the perpetrator is out of the home, they will follow up with the case at a later time.

One employee said law enforcement and CPS should work joint investigations on any case where CPS requests assistance.

3. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

7	3
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70% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the community.

30% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the community.

3A. Explain:

One employee said other agencies need to have a better understanding of CPS, their goals and their authority.

One employee said school officials want to conduct their own investigations. School officials want to know what CPS is doing on cases, but they do not want children to be interviewed without a school official present.

One employee said some community people believe CPS often leaves children at risk, instead of removing them. CPS has a bad reputation as being “baby snatchers”. The media only reports the worst cases, not the successes. The community does not look at the foundation of success we can offer and how we can help families in crisis.

4. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

8	2
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80% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.

20% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

One employee said the relationship with law enforcement on the street is good, but there is a problem working with the Crime Against Children Unit of the police department. The employee said they would not videotape or interview a child without a member of the police department present.

One employee said that although CPS calls law enforcement officers for assistance, many officers will not go on a call with CPS. The officers say they don't have time or they tell CPS to call again, if necessary after CPS assesses the situation.

5. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

8	2
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80% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.

20% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

One employee said the district judge does not agree with the laws regarding placement of children in foster care. Judge gave notice to CPS that CPS will not place children anywhere without his authorization.

One employee said a few assistant district attorneys do not have an open mind as to the real issues that "CPS deals with everyday.

## TRAINING BARRIERS

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

7	3
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70% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

30% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

2	8
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20% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.

80% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

Three employees said on-the-job training is desperately needed, where a new caseworker has an opportunity to work with an experienced caseworker for several weeks or months. Classes are OK, but classes do not prepare you for the real world.

One employee said the training is focused on investigations and does not cover the work of FBSS and CVS thoroughly.

One employee said that there was not enough training on how to conduct investigations. The academy should use law enforcement instructors or experience CPS investigators. Also, that the academy was an overview, but not enough information was covered to do a good job.

One employee said it was mostly reading but no application and it was so much in such a short time.

One employee said a lot of info was not applicable or well explained until I started working.

One employee said there was no real exposure to real-life problems.

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

1	9
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10% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

90% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

One employee said the trainer at the academy gave workers the impression that the supervisor would be handling the legal work, but that is not what happens.

Three employees said the legal process does not make sense until after several months of fieldwork.

Two employees said there was not enough coverage.

One employee believes CPS attorneys should instruct classes.

One employee said training is needed for testifying in court.

One employee said the training was adequate for meeting standards.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

3	7
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30% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

70% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for C.P.S. Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

2	8
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20% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

80% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

7	3
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70% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

30% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

0	10
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100% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

9	1
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90% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

10% of the employees interviewed said there are not obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

If so, what are they?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

9. Are C.P.S. policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

8	2
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80% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.

20% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

7	3
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70% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.

30% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are not adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

**SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES NO

4	0
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES NO

3	1
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75% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

25% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) does not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

A. If so, what?

One worker said 18 months is not enough time to do a good job with the children. Need 24 months instead of 18 months.

One worker said therapy issues might have a need for a longer period of time. Housing issues are about a 2-year wait so CPS can't re-unify families who cannot get a home within 18 months.

One worker said that when dealing with drug abuse or mental health disabilities the time frames are severely limited and allow for no slip-ups.

Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES NO

2	2
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50% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

50% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

Explain:

Two employees believe 24 months are needed to determine if the family has adapted to counseling. There are not enough resources to take care of the children in this area, such as shelters for children.

Do you believe that C.P.S. is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

0	4
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe CPS was able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

Explain:

One worker said many people are alcoholic or hooked on drugs and they deny it. It is very difficult to provide services to people who deny their problems, because they will not attend counseling and CPS has no authority to force these people to use needed resources.

One worker said services have been tremendously reduced. At times we cannot access services because of lack of funds, so families are left in limbo with no hope for improvement.

One worker said families need a lot of therapy. The time frame is reasonable if you can get the services.

Areas are severely limited in services available. There are very few community service providers willing or available to work with CPS children and families.

Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist C.P.S. in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

0	4
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

Explain:

One worker said more resources are needed, such as foster homes; Therapists are needed; Psychologists are needed; and Transportation is needed for many families.

One worker said funding was cut, resulting in a shutdown of services. The community service providers will assist as best as they can, but without funds service providers no longer want to assist CPS cases.

One worker said there are not enough psychiatrists or therapists. Housing is almost impossible to find for clients. Some professionals refuse CPS cases, because they don't want to be in Court a lot.

One worker said there are not enough faith-based services available in some areas of the State.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

5	5
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50% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

50% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

One employee said July 2003.

Two employees said two years ago.

One employee said he/she could not remember.

One employee said approximately 16 months.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

Two employees answered 5.

One employee answered 5-6.  
One employee answered 6.  
One employee answered 6-7.  
Four employees answered 7.  
One employee answered 9.

Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 7 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

7	3
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70% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

30% of the employees interviewed said there are not systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

Five employees said that on priority cases, the caseworker should call their supervisor and discuss the case with them. They said that in some cases, their supervisor will also contact the Program Director.

One employee said an employee should contact supervisor and explain situation, if a removal is necessary, the supervisor will staff with the program director and if necessary, contact a CPS attorney.

One employee said managers are accessible.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

7	3
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70% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

30% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

One employee said a list is not in place for the next in-line person to call if supervisor is unavailable.

One employee said there is no process in place. A lot of talk about getting it in place, but nothing has been done.

One employee said supervisors are not always available and when you need a "Plan B" to make an urgent decision, you have no one else to go to.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

5	5
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50% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

50% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?



One employee said supervisor cannot be reached for assistance when needed.

One employee said the unit approached the supervisor with suggestions on how better to spread the work responsibilities, but the supervisor was not supportive of the idea. Supervisor is not open to new ideas. The unit does not receive feedback on issues brought up to supervisor.

One employee said you could not disagree with one of the supervisors without retaliation. Employee states the supervisor cannot be trusted to keep conversations with workers confidential, thereby creating major problems within the units.

One employee said two supervisors are enrolled in graduate school and both of them disappear from work most of the day. Also, the Program Director is not in her office 60%-70% of the time, so it is difficult to get support. The employee believes there is too much emphasis in closing cases, not conducting quality cases. When the supervisor is available, she gives adequate support, but she is not available very often.

One employee said the supervisor is new and unsure on making decisions.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

7	3
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70% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

30% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

Two employees said his/her manager meets with the employee inconsistently.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee anytime needed.

Two employees said his/her manager meets with the employee each day.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee weekly.

Three employees said his/her manager meets with the employee once a month.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee every three months.

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

Three employees said his/her manager should meet with the employee whenever needed.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee daily.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee two times weekly.

Three employees said his/her manager should meet with the employee weekly.

Two employees said his/her manager should meet with the employee monthly.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO

2	4
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

33% of the employees interviewed said policy requires staffing of cases in person with their supervisor.

67% of the employees interviewed said they were unaware if a policy exists that requires employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. Four employees said they were unaware if there was a policy for staffing cases in person with their supervisor.

One employee said she thought the policy requires the face-to-face staffing when the case involves the removal of a child.

One employee said staffing is necessary for a child's death and serious injury. Program director or higher management will get involved in these type cases. On removals, staff with the program director and program administrator

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

8	2
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80% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

20% of the employees interviewed said they have not noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

Three employees said inconsistent practices of the supervisors are a constant issue among the workers because they cannot get a definite feel on normal procedures to follow in handling cases.

One employee said favoritism by supervisors creates additional work for some employees. Example: One supervisor downgrades Priority 1 cases to Priority 2 on night cases to prevent a particular caseworker, a close friend, from being assigned the Priority 1 case.

One employee said some supervisors concentrate on numbers and not quality work, therefore cases will be reopened again and again, because cases are not being investigated properly.

One employee said policies and procedures are different among supervisors, that some will give answers without determining if their answers are correct. Also, that some supervisors do not have a sense of direction to take on issues.

One employee said the current supervisor is constantly calling a former supervisor and the former supervisor is still giving directions, although he is no longer with CPS.

One employee said there are still inconsistencies, but the last two years have been better, because policies and procedures were revamped 2 years ago.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

6	2
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70% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures.

30% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

Four employees said they were unaware if there was a policy for staffing cases in person with their supervisor.

One employee said she thought the policy requires the face-to-face staffing when the case involves the removal of a child.

One employee said staffing is necessary for a child's death and serious injury. Program director or higher management will get involved in these type cases. On removals, staff with the program director and program administrator

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

2	8
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20% of the employees interviewed said they feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

80% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

One employee said the supervisor tries to “second guess” how the prosecutor will handle a case and discourages the worker from pursuing legal intervention, because it might be a waste of time.

One employee said it is the attitudes of the assistant district attorneys. No one with CPS discourages us from seeking legal assistance.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Three employees said they discuss the issues further with the supervisor.

Four employees said they talk to the Program Director.

Three employees said they comply with directives of the supervisor.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

4	6
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40% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

60% of the employees interviewed said they do not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

One employee believes cases were handled inappropriately in certain types of situations. Example:

“Reasonable efforts” to locate families is not always followed to the end because of time constraints.

One employee said he/she believes funding is provided for children who are removed from homes, so the money issue is involved in decisions to remove children.

One employee believes there are cases in which doctors will not provide medical information for the court or will not testify in court. This inappropriate behavior jeopardizes cases and the judge returns the child to a dangerous situation.

One employee said he/she believes children have been left in dangerous environments, because CPS did not take appropriate action to remove the children.

16. Are you able to make a decision of “Rule-out” or “Unable to Determine” a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

6	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of “Rule-out or “Unable to Determine” a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

2	8
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20% of the employees interviewed said they had been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.  
80% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

17A. Explain:

One employee said they had never been directed to alter case documentation but other caseworkers in another unit had a supervisor who frequently directed them to alter documentation. Employee stated that sixteen caseworkers resigned or were transferred from that unit before management demoted the supervisor to a caseworker.

One employee said a previous supervisor instructed the employee to re-word a case narrative about the way CPS had handled the case, which had not followed policy, and the supervisor had me to re-write it. That supervisor is no longer employed with CPS.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

0	10
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100% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

10	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said they had information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

1	9
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10% of the employees interviewed said they were afraid or intimidated by someone in their management structure.

90% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

If so, who and why?

One employee said his/her current supervisor, but did not provide details.

## **EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Provide increased salaries for employees.
- Hire additional staff, to alleviate high caseloads.
- Provide training to workers on how to protect themselves; caseworker safety
- Provide a variety of outside trainers with different techniques and viewpoints on subjects related to child abuse.
- Use child death cases as teaching tools. Management is too concerned about the confidentiality of the case to realize the lessons that could be learned in analyzing these cases in a classroom setting.
- Provide a camera and sufficient film to each investigator.
- SWI needs better training.
- Provide crisis intervention training.
- Provide training on Americans With Disabilities Act.
- Provide psychotropic drug training.
- Provide parenting skills training in dealing with children with special needs.
- Provide updated cultural diversity training.
- Provide and maintain good printers and copiers. Many are old and frequently out of service, which slows the worker from maintaining their paperwork.
- Provide tape recorders and tapes.
- Current cameras hold only four pictures per disk, so that needs to be changed.
- Units in one area received two quick pads for use in the field; one arrived broken and has never been repaired or replaced.
- Need administrative support and aides to transport clients, so caseworkers would have more time to devote to their investigations and/or client service.
- In some outlying area offices, there is limited access to copiers and no computer access, so that needs to be improved.
- Mileage reimbursement needs to be adjusted to reflect today's cost of operating vehicles.
- Provide cell phones that work, because currently, they do not work in all areas and \$50 a month allowance for long distance service is not adequate, so changes needed in those areas.
- Improve the unmanageable caseloads. Overloaded caseload is a major obstacle in providing services to clients; more workers must be hired.
- School personnel need better training in identifying what type of injuries or situations should be referred to CPS.
- Post Office personnel and law enforcement are not always cooperative in providing directions to residences when only a P.O. Box address was obtained by SWI. Law should dictate cooperation with CPS.
- Workers need help with law enforcement. Some police departments will not provide entire criminal histories on an alleged perpetrator; only violations pertaining to child abuse. A caseworker is not provided with information that a perpetrator also has violations of assault, drugs, DWI or unlawful weapons. This puts the caseworker's safety at risk and also hinders caseworker from identifying services needed by the perpetrator.
- Management should recognize the needs caseworkers have after being involved with a high stress or critical incident. Instead of mandatory counseling to assure the caseworker is handling the situation well, management is critical of the worker, looking to place blame. Caseworkers are not allowed to explain or present evidence to justify the decisions they made in handling their case.
- More consideration should be given to the amount of cases assigned to workers in which large areas of responsibility and distances are a time consuming issue.

- Workload is unmanageable and, because of a shortage of FBSS workers, if an investigator refers a case for services, many times the investigator must also provide those services.
- CPS is management heavy. New positions created should be new investigators and caseworkers.
- An Investigator Worker IV reaches the salary ceiling and, financially, has no incentive to stay in investigations, so they transfer to a less stressful unit. A \$3,000 salary increase would be incentive to stay in an investigation unit, but not a \$3,000 one-time bonus. In addition, the stipulation that you must sign a one-year contract and you must be current with your workload at the end of the year's contract to qualify for the bonus is not appealing. All workers and management know it is difficult to remain current with cases. Workers do not trust management and feel they would find some way to prevent them from qualifying for the bonus.
- Tenured caseworkers are designated as mentors to assist with field training of new investigators. Mentors remain on regular rotation for case assignments and their caseload is not reduced to compensate for the time spent while training. This needs to be improved.
- CPS continues to discontinue ignoring the health and well being of their workers. A heavy, unmanageable workload reduces the quality of care and services provided to clients. It also contributes to the worker's fear of losing a child; a worker's biggest fear. Many workers live daily on ulcer medications and anti-depressants.
- Provide bus tokens for clients.
- The family code needs to establish a way to recoup expenses and the cost of an investigation when the reports are bogus, retaliatory or custodial.
- Workers Advisory Committee has been suspended and should be revised. This was a committee made up of one person from each unit in the area who routinely met with the PA to discuss issues. Workers feel they no longer have a direct input.
- Localize intake. They know the people, how to spell the names, how to research past history and how to obtain directions to rural residences.
- Program Directors need to visit the field on a regular basis to assure supervisors are presenting a clear picture of the problems faced by the workers.
- There is no additional financial incentive for a worker to obtain a master's degree, so that should be improved.
- Funding for services are very limited. The agency's entire goal of creating better homes for children is jeopardized because they cannot pay for the services that are needed.
- Supervisors and Program Directors of some FBSS units limit the caseload of their workers to 3-5 cases each week dealing with younger children. The families who have been referred to FBSS for services, but are on hold, lose hope because cases services are not provided for over a month. This needs to improve.
- In July 2004, a firm was hired to conduct a survey, asking similar questions to those presented by the OIG. Employees have asked for feedback from that survey, but have received no response. Can workers receive information on the survey?

## Region 11 Report

### CASE READING QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 148 cases were reviewed as a result of using a statistically valid sample size determined by HHSC Internal Audit. Please review Sampling Methodology in Appendix C for further information. The number listed under **TOTAL** in the table below is the number of cases from the sample size that were applicable to the question and where there was sufficient information to make a determination and respond with either a “Yes” or “No.”

<b>Question</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>%No</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1. Was the investigation initiated within time frames required by CPS Policy?</b>	<b>87.16%</b>	<b>12.84%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>2. Based on the assigned priority was the face-to-face contact with the child/family within the required policy time frames?</b>	<b>64.86%</b>	<b>35.14%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>3. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a prior closed case?</b>	<b>85.54%</b>	<b>14.46%</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>4. Do the allegations in this case involve similar allegations as in a subsequent case?</b>	<b>72.09%</b>	<b>27.91%</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>56.08%</b>	<b>43.92%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>6. Did the caseworker RTB the allegations or find risk indicated(risk findings)?</b>	<b>25.68%</b>	<b>74.32%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>44.57%</b>	<b>55.43%</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>48.72%</b>	<b>51.28%</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>26.35%</b>	<b>73.65%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>11. If yes to question #10, was the decision to remove appropriate?</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>12. Did the caseworker staff the case with his/her supervisors?</b>	<b>58.78%</b>	<b>41.22%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>13. If legal intervention did not occur, do you believe there should have been?</b>	<b>4.51%</b>	<b>95.49%</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>15. Was the case staffed with other administrators above the supervisory level (Program Director, Risk Director)?</b>	<b>6.08%</b>	<b>93.92%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>15(a). If no, should this have occurred?</b>	<b>19.42%</b>	<b>80.58%</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>17. Was the case progressed to substitute care (SUB) or Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)?</b>	<b>10.81%</b>	<b>89.19%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>18. If the investigation was not progressed to FBSS or SUB, should it</b>	<b>16.53%</b>	<b>83.47%</b>	<b>121</b>

have been progressed?			
<b>19. Was a service plan developed in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>44.44%</b>	<b>55.56%</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>20. Did the service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>77.78%</b>	<b>22.22%</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>22. Where applicable (FBSS or SUB), did the family service plan address issues of abuse/neglect identified in the investigation?</b>	<b>72.22%</b>	<b>27.78%</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>63.64%</b>	<b>36.36%</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>26. Were other services needed but not available?</b>	<b>9.09%</b>	<b>90.91%</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>21.43%</b>	<b>78.57%</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>28. For SUB cases, was contact maintained with the child in accordance with CPS policy?</b>	<b>28.57%</b>	<b>71.43%</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>11.49%</b>	<b>88.51%</b>	<b>148</b>

### Prior Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had prior investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 85.54% of the time. The average number of prior investigations was 1.67 cases with 30% of the cases having two or more prior investigations. Where there were prior investigations the time between the closure of the most recent prior case and the case being reviewed was less than 30 days 12% of the time.

### Subsequent Cases

The applicable cases reviewed had subsequent investigations conducted with substantially the same issues 72.09% of the time. The average number of subsequent investigations was 0.38 cases with 7% of the cases having two or more subsequent investigations. Where there were subsequent cases the time from the closure of the case being reviewed to the first subsequent investigation was less than 30 days 41% of the time.

### Validation

A sample of questions was judgmentally selected, so as to verify documentation that would sustain the responses given to the questionnaire. OIG auditors performed the sample validation. The validation rate indicates the percentage of occurrences the auditor was able to locate and identify sustaining documentation within the case file, that supported the case reader's response to that specific question. Nine of the most significant questions were reviewed for each case selected to determine if the documentation in the case file supported the case reader's decision. The validation rate was very high, particularly for the most important questions. Please see Appendix E for validation methodology.

### Validation Rate

<b>5. Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
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<b>7. Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?</b>	<b>97% validation rate</b>
<b>8. Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>9. Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>10. If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>25. Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>27. For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>29. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>
<b>30. At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?</b>	<b>100% validation rate</b>

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A survey was conducted of members of local community organizations, primarily non-profit groups, who have contact with CPS. No respondents requested that their organization's name remain confidential.

The respondents rated CPS overall on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and ten being the best. The average rating of CPS was 6.00. The results of respondents' answers to questions are indicated in the table below.

<b>Community Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%No</b>
Does your organization wish to remain confidential?	1	17%	5	83%
Is the method by which you are required to contact CPS acceptable? (800 number)	5	83%	1	17%
Does CPS contact you in a timely manner in response to your request for assistance?	6	100%	0	0%
Is CPS responsive to your needs?	6	100%	0	0%
Has your organization ever been threatened with any type retaliation if you complain about CPS?	0	0%	6	100%

**Respondent's comments regarding problems experienced with CPS, their opinion of the cause of the problem and recommendations to improve CPS are indicated below:**

#### **Problems Experienced by Community Organizations with CPS:**

- Inexperienced caseworkers as a result of high staff turnover, which leads to uncertainty in how to handle cases in court and in general.
- 48<sup>th</sup> in the United States in agency funding.
- Time/Implementation and monitoring of contractual mandates for placement (i.e. therapy).

- Ability to place children in a timely fashion.
- Overall backlog of services for families and children.
- Occasionally has tunnel vision (hardened position taken with evidence not being sufficient).
- Extremely heavy caseload.
- CPS doesn't adhere to the Child Welfare league of America's standards.
- Lack of staff training.
- Removal of Law Enforcement from the training of staff, due to budget cuts.
- Extremely high staff turnover.
- Lack of Therapists and drivers.
- Foster parents possess too many rights.

**Community Opinion Regarding the Cause of the Problems:**

- Problems are on the part of management and a lack of resources.
- Naturally occurring Institutional mindset.
- Highest Caseload in the country.
- Lack of Foster parents.
- Lack of specialized care.
- Lack of therapeutic foster care.
- Lack of residential treatment centers.
- Lack of community involvement (not enough volunteers with state or local agencies).

**Recommendations to Change or Improve CPS:**

- Appropriate adequate funding.
- Streamline administration and decentralize management.
- Increase staff salaries.
- Decrease staff turnover.
- Increase the number of caseworkers.
- Provide law enforcement training from a certified local police officer.
- Sensitivity And Ethics training for caseworkers.
- Provide more money for prevention services, kinship care and foster parent training.
- Do not prejudge a case until all the facts have been received.

**Staff Allocation**

Management/Administrative

District Director:	1	
Program Administrators:	2 (1 C.P.S. P.A., 1 P.A. III)	
Program Directors:	10 (8 C.P.S. P.D.'s, 1 Lead P.D., 1 Risk P.D.)	
Supervisors:	37 (C.P.S. Supervisors)	
<hr/>		
Subtotal:		50

Caseworkers

Investigations:	91
Family Based Safety Services:	42
Substitute Care:	79
Generic:	10

Foster Care/Adoptions: 14

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Subtotal: 236

Clerical/Support

Administrative Technicians: 34

Clerks: 8

Human Services Technicians: 17

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Subtotal: 59

Other Staff

Contracts: (8) Worker V's: (8)

Program Specialists: (4) Permanency Planning Team Convenors: (4)

Case Analysts: (3) District Trainers: (2)

Legal Secretaries: (2) Human Services Specialists: (2)

Accountant: (1) SSI Coordinator: (1)

Public Information Officer (1) Volunteer Services Coordinator (1)

Legal Assistant: (1) Family Group Conference Specialist: (1)

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Subtotal: 39

**TOTAL REGION 11 (Edinburg): 384**

**Employee Interviews**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

Years of employment with CPS:

Tenure of employees interviewed	Number of employees interviewed	Average Tenure percentages
Employed: Less Than 1 Year	0	0
Employed: 1 – 2 Years	3	19%
Employed: 2 – 5 Years	8	50%
Employed: 5 – 10 Years	0	0
Employed: 10 + Years	5	31%

Number of first line supervisors since your first day of employment:

Number of Supervisors	Number of Employees
1	8
2	2
3	1
4	0
5 +	5

**EDUCATION:**

Degree	Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Criminal Justice	Other	Total
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bachelor's	4	1	1	2	7	15

**INTAKE:**

1. Is statewide intake collecting enough information for you, in order for you to do your job?

YES NO

1	8
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

11% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

89% of caseworkers interviewed said statewide intake is not collecting enough information for caseworkers to do their job.

1A. What information is typically missing?

Missing addresses and no directions to rural area residences

Incorrectly prioritizing cases as "Priority 1"

Missing or incorrect telephone number for the family

Misspelled or incorrect names or only child's first name

No thorough check of prior CPS history

Eliminating important information; example: victim in the hospital but reason for victim being in the hospital not mentioned in the report

Intake information is not received by caseworker for several hours

Intake report does not correctly reflect the reported allegations

2. If statewide intake fails to capture needed information, does it cause undue burden on you as a caseworker?

YES NO

9	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked intake questions.

100% of caseworkers interviewed said that because statewide intake fails to capture needed information, it causes undue burden on caseworkers.

2A. If yes, what effect does this have on the quality of the investigation?

Eight employees agreed that time is wasted trying to locate the child and family, which cause delays on all assigned cases.

One employee said, when a worker receives a Priority 1 case, they are pulled off all other cases in order to make contact within 24 hours. When the complaint is incorrectly prioritized, it creates more time management problems with the rest of their workload.

## **CASE LOAD:**

1. On average, how many new investigations are assigned to you each week?

Three FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 1-2.

Three FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 1-3.

Two investigators answered 6-7.

One investigator answered 8.

Two investigators answered 8-9.

One investigator answered 4-5.

Two investigators answered 5-6.

One employee answered 2-9.

FBSS/Sub-care workers said that the average cases assigned each week is approximately 1 case/family.

Investigators said that the average of new investigations assigned each week is approximately 7 cases.

2. What would be a reasonable amount per week?

Five FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 0-1.

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 1.

One investigator answered 1-3.

One investigator answered 1-4.

Three investigators answered 2-3.

One investigator answered 5.

Two investigators answered 3-4.

One investigator answered 4-5.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested FBSS workers should not be assigned investigations. Worker suggested an average amount of FBSS cases assigned each week should be approximately 1 case/family.

Investigators suggested that the average amount of cases considered to be reasonable per week should be approximately 3 cases.

3. What is your average caseload?

Three FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 7.

Two FBSS/Sub-care workers answered 12.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 30.

One FBSS/Sub-care worker answered 40.

One investigator answered 28-45.

One investigator answered 60.

One investigator answered 70.

One investigator answered 20.

One investigator answered 28-32.

One investigator answered 20-25.

One investigator answered 55.

One employee answered 30-100.

One investigator answered 90-100.

All employees said they don't know their average caseload per week, but they were all able to explain their average caseload per month.

FBSS/Sub-care workers said the average caseload is approximately 16 cases per month.

Investigators said their average caseload is approximately 50 cases per month.

4. What would be a reasonable caseload, in order for you to conduct a thorough investigation?

One FBSS worker suggested 15-20 per month.

Two FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 8-12.  
 Three FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested 15.  
 One FBSS/Sub-care worker suggested 20-25.  
 Two investigators suggested 12-15.  
 One investigator suggested 20.  
 Two investigators suggested 10-15.  
 One investigator suggested 15.  
 One investigator suggested 16.  
 One employee suggested 18-24.  
 One employee suggested 9.

FBSS/Sub-care workers suggested that in order to provide quality services to families, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 15 cases/families.  
 Investigators suggested that in order to conduct thorough investigations, a reasonable average caseload per month should be approximately 15 cases.

5. What happens to your cases when you are on vacation?

Fourteen employees said that a caseworker attempts to get caught up on cases before taking a vacation, then, cases sit idle. Another caseworker will take care of any emergency issues, depending on which caseworker is available and willing to take care of the emergency.  
 Two employees said the cases just sit idle.

6. Have you been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases?

YES NO

3	6
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

33% of employees interviewed said they have been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

67% of employees interviewed said they have not been able to meet policy requirements on face-to-face contacts on priority cases.

6A. If no, why?

Six employees said the heavy workload makes it difficult to meet policy requirements. Also, the inability to locate families, because of lack of information from intake.

7. Have you experienced delays in receiving case assignments?

YES NO

9	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of employees interviewed said they have experienced delays in receiving case assignments.

7A. If so, what problems have you experienced and how often?

Two investigators said it has not happened often enough to create problems.

One investigator said the delay in receiving cases increases their case management problem because they must reorganize their workload to allow for less time they are given to make contact.

One investigator said the problem was stemming from law enforcement and has been addressed.

One employee said sometimes the secretary is not in the office, so cases sit for days.

One employee said sometimes cases are reassigned and they sit for days during reassignment.

One employee said supervisors do not want more cases, so they argue that the other supervisor should assign the next case to his/her team.

One employee said sometimes, SWI sends the case to the wrong office.

One employee said sometimes supervisors are not around and the cases sit on their desks for several days without being assigned.

8. Have you experienced problems where the supervisor did not give you enough time to conduct a complete investigation?

YES NO

1	15
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6% of employees interviewed said they experienced problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

94% of employees interviewed said they did not experience problems where their supervisor did not give enough time to conduct a complete investigation.

9. Is there an emphasis placed on closing investigations within a specific time frame?

YES NO

15	1
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked to explain their answer.

94% of the investigators interviewed said there is an emphasis placed on closing investigations, within a specific time frame.

6% of the investigators interviewed said there is not an emphasis placed on closing investigations, within a specific time frame.

9A. If so, why do you believe there is an emphasis on closing investigations within a specific time frame? Seven employees said the “60-day” rule requires all cases to be closed because federal funding is not received on cases not closed within that time frame.

One employee said it is a case management rule.

Three workers did not know why there was an emphasis on closing the cases.

One employee said their supervisor has been out of the office so much during the past four months that cases are not received timely; therefore, pressure has not been put on workers if cases are not closed timely.

Three employees said it is to ensure children are safe

## **WORK PROCESS:**

One generic worker explained that he/she will be assigned investigations, just like a worker with an investigative unit. Therefore, the investigative process is the same. The difference is that an investigator will not have further contact with a child at a particular point. A generic worker, on the other hand, will follow through with a child from the initial investigation, while the child is placed in foster care and through adoption, which takes a long time.

Two substitute care workers agreed that they make arrangements for children when they are removed from a family by a CPS investigator. There is a lot of paperwork involved in placement of children and legal proceedings. The caseworker obtains medical and psychological records as well as school records. The worker must monitor children routinely to determine their wellbeing. Many children remain under CPS care for long term commitments. The caseworker visits with parents to determine problems they are experiencing and to explain how the courts operate. The caseworker explains the reasons for removal of the children and establishes a plan of service for the children. Sometimes children are placed in a location that parents are not happy with,

so a conservatorship worker is constantly working with parents in order to place the children in a different environment or closer to the parents.

Two FBSS workers agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker meets with the family, sometimes in a joint visit with the investigator. The caseworker determines services needed and processes paperwork for counseling and other needed services. The caseworker monitors the family for approximately six months, with three random home visits a month, and evaluates progress by contacting the counselors. The caseworker staffs the case with the supervisor and makes a recommendation to close the case, continue with contract services or remove child. Removal of a child is staffed with a supervisor and program director. If a child is removed, the caseworker completes the paperwork and transfers the case to a substitute care unit further monitoring.

One FBSS worker is an Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) caseworker. He/she explained that IFP workers may also receive family reunification cases. The worker meets with the family and current worker; assesses how they are doing; staffs with supervisor; provides counseling through agency resources; schedules parenting classes; schedules anger management services; provides care for children if needed; makes weekly visits to assure children are doing well in homes, day care, schools, and with counselors; makes necessary medical appointments; monitors homes; completes all documentation of all of the above; prepares proper forms for services prepared; makes telephone contacts to set up services; and visits all the people in each assigned case on a monthly basis.

Four investigators agreed that upon case assignment, the caseworker contacts the reporter and/or law enforcement for additional information. The caseworker conducts research for prior CPS history, contacts collaterals and makes contact with the child and the parents. The caseworker staffs the case with the supervisor with a recommendation to close the case or open for services. The workers case continues to show open in their workload, because the case is not formally closed until the substitute care or FBSS unit formally opens the case. The FBSS units sometimes have workload caps, which prevents them from accepting all cases.

Three investigators agreed that on "Priority 1" cases, the caseworker gathers history on the family, does a criminal background check, and goes to the school to interview the child. The child may also be taken to the Child Advocacy Center and interviewed at that location. On sexual abuse cases, the worker usually files for an emergency removal of the child. The caseworker will go to the family home and interview parents and others that live in the house and observe the living conditions of the home. Sometimes, there are several children at home and sometimes there are multiple fathers involved in the family. Collateral witnesses have to be interviewed and the case must be staffed with the supervisor. Also, during the day, telephone calls must be returned and parenting classes must be scheduled on different cases. Caseworkers have to show a lot of parents how to change diapers, how to bathe children and how to prepare formulas for infants. Caseworkers also conduct home assessments routinely.

One investigator explained that the caseworker has to review history of the family on the impact system and obtain criminal checks on the family. If there is drug usage, the worker completes a service authorization to get a drug screening done. The caseworker gathers film, cassettes, audiotapes, a camera, and other supplies to interview children. The caseworker interviews the children, makes contact with the parents, conducts a home inspection, staffs the case with the supervisor, and completes a safety plan when necessary. The caseworker contacts collaterals, documents everything that has been done, completes placement forms, obtains clothing for children, takes the children to eat, and prepares car seats for transporting children to foster placement. The caseworker must also prepare legal affidavits, verify locations/identification of unknown fathers, conduct a 24 hour visit with children in foster homes, complete eligibility placement forms so that children may receive Medicaid benefits, and request birth certificates and social security cards. In addition, the caseworker makes referrals for family group counseling, completes vouchers so that children may receive clothing, arranges visitation for parents, ensure medical, dental, and psychological examinations are done for children, ensures confirmation on drug tests for parents, and ensure this is done twice before the 14-day hearing. The caseworker also makes contact with the child's attorney to keep them informed on any proceedings. If the family accepted family group conferencing, the worker must attend the conference. If relatives want to attend adversarial



hearings, the worker should have backgrounds and criminal histories completed before the 14-day hearing. If foster parents are unable to obtain them, the worker has to obtain medical records of the children. One district director (also the district director for Region 8) explained that he/she meets with staff when possible. The district director will staff high-level cases that will end in adverse actions, such as dismissals and probation type cases with the program administrator. A district director reviews data in order to anticipate growth problems and determine how money should be spent in other needed areas. One district director has been mentoring a group of supervisors that meet in order to develop their leadership abilities, to locate weaknesses in making their decisions and to assist them with ways to handle stress. It is necessary to meet with judges, district attorneys, child welfare boards and review ombudsman complaints in order to see what is going on in communities. Status reports are completed on different issues and sent to Austin. One district director said workdays are usually 16-hour days.

**INVESTIGATIONS:**

1. Are you aware of when you are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case?

YES NO

9	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the employees interviewed said that they were aware of when they are required to request law enforcement involvement on a case.

1A. If so, when?

Eight employees said law enforcement is required to assist on “Priority 1” cases involving sexual abuse or serious physical abuse or in a situation in which the worker safety may be in jeopardy.

One employee added “Priority 2” cases where bruising is visible

2. Are you aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist you on cases?

YES NO

9	0
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FBSS/Sub-care workers were not asked this question.

100% of the investigators interviewed said they were aware of laws established that requires law enforcement to assist them on cases.

2A. If so, when?

Nine employees said law enforcement is required to assist on all “Priority 1” cases; cases with sexual abuse and serious physical abuse, but that is not happening because of a shortage of officers available.

3. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with the community as a whole?

YES NO

9	7
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56% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the community.

44% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the community.

3A. Explain:

Two employees said the negative publicity in the media has hurt CPS and creates more obstacles for workers. One employee said the public should be made more aware of all that CPS does.

Two employees said school counselors try to conduct investigations without contacting CPS. They will not allow CPS to interview a child unless a principal or counselor is present. School officials contact parents on bruises, etc. before they contact CPS.

One employee said neighbors do not want to talk to CPS.

One employee said the community hates CPS, because bad experiences spread like wildfire.

4. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with law enforcement?

YES NO

12	4
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75% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with law enforcement.

25% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with law enforcement.

4A. If not, why?

One employee said law enforcement in some areas refuses to run criminal history checks for CPS, which is a huge impact on "Priority 1" cases. Therefore, CPS has to complete a form located on the CPS Impact System and send the request to CPS in Austin. By the time a caseworker receives the criminal history information, 2 or 3 days have lapsed and sometimes, it takes a week or longer to receive the information.

One employee said most agencies are good, but one county will not assist CPS. A few months after CPS closes a case, officers in that county will call and ask for copies of CPS notes, so they can complete their records

One employee said the CPS turnover rate is so high that it is difficult to establish and build relationships with law enforcement

One employee said law enforcement is not supportive. When CPS calls, they say that they do not have anybody to send to assist CPS.

5. Does C.P.S. have a good working relationship with the court system?

YES NO

10	6
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63% of the employees interviewed said CPS has a good working relationship with the court system.

37% of the employees interviewed said CPS does not have a good working relationship with the court system.

5A. If not, why?

One employee said judges sometime hinder the case by not listening to the facts because they are more focused on reunification.

One employee said the high turnover rate among the prosecutors handling the CPS cases result in less-experienced prosecutors who are not knowledgeable in the area of child abuse.

One employee said the prosecutors set continuances and do not inform the CPS workers, which results in the worker showing up for a court appearance that is not held.

One employee said a particular judge does not like CPS and sometimes he tells caseworkers (in court) that they don't know how to do their job. Also, the same judge has returned many children to abusive homes, because he is premature with his decisions. He tells CPS to do things for families but CPS does not have the money to handle his requests. He demands foster care parents to bring children to his courtroom, then he yells at the foster care parents to keep the children quiet

One employee said a particular judge allows attorneys to verbally attack caseworkers on the stand.

One employee said a particular judge refers to caseworkers as puppets, because he says they do not know how to do their job and can not make decisions without their supervisors telling them what to do

## TRAINING BARRIERS

1. Do you receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects?

YES NO

5	11
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31% of the employees interviewed said they receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

69% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive regularly scheduled training on job related subjects.

2. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for case investigations?

YES NO

4	12
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25% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for case investigations.

75% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for case investigations.

2A. If no, why?

Eight employees said on-the-job training is desperately needed, where a new caseworker has an opportunity to work with an experienced caseworker for several weeks or months.

Two employees said the training is too focused on investigations, leaving FBSS and CVS workers unprepared.

One employee said the training needs to be updated to include training in identifying drug paraphernalia

One employee said training consists of a few definitions and general information in class and one week in the field and caseworkers are expected to know how to handle cases

3. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for legal procedures, protocol issues?

YES NO

6	10
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38% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

62% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for legal procedures and protocol issues.

3A. If no, why?

One employee said the training was too brief for FBSS and CVS workers.

Five employees said the training barely skimmed the subject of procedures and protocol is different in every county.

Four employees said it was difficult to grasp the meaning enough to correlate with the real events.

4. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for assessment of risk and safety?

YES NO

12	4
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75% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

25% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepare them for assessment of risk and safety issues.

5. Did the initial training academy adequately prepare you for C.P.S. Policies and Procedures?

YES NO

13	3
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81% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

19% of the employees interviewed said the initial training academy did not adequately prepared them on CPS policies and procedures.

6. Do you believe training is needed which has not been provided to you?

YES NO

15	1
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94% of the employees interviewed said they need training that has not been provided to them.

6% of the employees interviewed said they do not need additional training.

6A. If so, what training?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

7. Are the tools and resources needed to perform your job available to you?

YES NO

2	14
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13% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are available to them.

87% of the employees interviewed said the tools and resources needed to perform their job are not available to them.

7a. If not, what tools would be helpful?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

8. Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from performing your job?

YES NO

12	4
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75% of the employees interviewed said there are obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

25% of the employees interviewed said there are not obstacles or barriers that prevents them from performing their job.

If so, what are they?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

9. Are C.P.S. policies and procedures adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

11	5
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69% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are adequate to perform their jobs.  
31% of the employees interviewed said CPS policies and procedures are not adequate to perform their jobs.

If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

10. Are regulations and laws adequate to perform your job?

YES NO

9	7
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56% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are adequate to perform their jobs.  
44% of the employees interviewed said regulations and laws are not adequate to perform their jobs.

10A. If no, why?

See “EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT”

### **SERVICE DELIVERY:**

FBSS/Sub-care workers were the only employees asked the following questions regarding Service Delivery.

1. Are you familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension?

YES NO

7	0
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100% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they were familiar with the legislative requirement to achieve permanency for children (in substitute care) within twelve months, with a one time six-month extension.

2. Do these time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children?

YES NO

4	3
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57% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

43% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said the time frames (12 months, with a one time 6 month extension) did not have an effect on the quality of services provided to families and children.

2A. If so, what?

Three employees said additional time is needed for services, especially with parents with alcohol or drugs problems. It is difficult for them to change their habits within an 18-month period.

One employee said mental illness clients and drug clients need more than 12 months, more than 18 months, because they have relapses and there are other factors that keep them from completing programs within time frames.

3. Do you believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) is reasonable?

YES NO

3	4
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43% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believed the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

57% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe the twelve to eighteen-month time frame (to achieve permanency) was reasonable.

3A. Explain:

Two employees said the eighteen-month time frame was reasonable, but not the twelve-month. Additional time is needed for people with alcohol and drug addictions.

One employee said two years is more reasonable on alcohol and drug cases.

One employee said that is not enough time to deal with difficult mental illness or drug addicts.

4. Do you believe that CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

3	4
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43% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe CPS is able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

57% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they did not believe CPS was able to provide adequate services (purchased or otherwise) to meet the needs of client families and children.

4A. Explain:

One employee said there is a lack of funding for services.

One worker said he/she is the only Spanish-speaking worker in the office and time is taken away from his/her own cases to translate for everyone.

One employee said there is a shortage of drug treatment facilities.

One employees said basic parenting classes are not provided on days and times that would enable some people to attend; many parents do not have knowledge of how to clean their houses; some parenting classes are not effective.

5. Do you believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children?

YES NO

2	5
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29% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

71% of the FBSS/Sub-care employees interviewed said they do not believe that sufficient community resources exist to assist CPS in meeting the needs of client families and children.

5A. Explain:

One employee said more resources are needed, especially drug assessment, testing and treatment facilities; no inpatient services provided.

Three employees said there is a lack of resource specialists available.

One employee said there are few or no community services provided in Spanish.

## MANAGEMENT

1. Have you had a performance evaluation in the past 12 months?

YES NO

14	2
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88% of the employees interviewed said they had received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

12% of the employees interviewed said they had not received a performance evaluation in the past 12 months.

1A. If not, when was your last evaluation?

One employee said July 2003.

One employee could not recall the date of his/her last evaluation.

2. On average, how many employees are supervised by a CPS unit supervisor?

Two employees answered 6.

Two employees answered 5-6.

Three employees answered 6-8.

Three employees answered 7

Four employees answered 8.

One employee answered 7-9.

One employee answered 8-9.

Employees interviewed said that the average amount of employees supervised by a CPS supervisor is approximately 6 employees.

3. Are systems or processes in place to assist you in making critical or life threatening case decisions?

YES NO

16	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said there are systems or processes in place to assist caseworkers in making critical or life threatening case decisions.

3A. If so, what are they?

Sixteen employees said that their supervisor would be called in these situations and, at times, the supervisor will contact the program director.

4. Do you believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist you in reaching critical decisions?

YES NO

10	6
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63% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

37% of the employees interviewed said they believe existing systems/processes are not sufficient to assist them in reaching critical decisions.

4A. Explain:

Three employees said supervisors are not always accessible.

One employee said sometimes the supervisor is busy and a lot of time is spent waiting for a response.

Two employees said supervisors are unable to remember cases, due to the volume of cases.

5. Do you get adequate support from your supervisor/manager?

YES NO

13	3
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81% of the employees interviewed said they receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

19% of the employees interviewed said they do not receive adequate support from their supervisor/manager.

5A. If no, why?

One employee said, due to turnover rate, many supervisors were promoted that are not as prepared as they should be to be a supervisor

One employee said the supervisor does not appear to care about clients; is unconcerned about what is happening on cases and expects tenured workers to not bother him/her with questions on cases.

One employee said the supervisor has been out a considerable amount of time during the past four months resulting in cases not being reviewed and closed timely. Employee suggests a system be put in place to cover supervisor's workload during exceptional times, such as this.

6. Does your manager often meet with you face-to-face on your cases?

YES NO

15	1
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94% of the employees interviewed said their manager often meets with them face-to-face on their cases.

6% of the employees interviewed said their manager does not often meet with them face-to-face on their cases.

7. How often does your manager meet with you?

One FBSS/Sub-care worker said his/her manager meets with the employee once a month and cases are reviewed every 3 months.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee twice a month.

Three employees said his/her manager meets with the employee once a month.

Five employees said his/her manager meets with the employee once a week.

Five employees said his/her manager meets with the employee, daily, constantly or as often as needed.

One employee said his/her manager meets with the employee only when the caseworkers approach him.

8. How often should your manager meet with you?

Twelve employees said his/her manager should meet with the employee on an as-needed basis.

Two employees said his/her manager should meet with the employee once a week.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee twice a week.

One employee said his/her manager should meet with the employee once a month.

9. Does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

YES NO



6	3
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FBSS/Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

66.7% of the employees interviewed said policy does require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

33.3% of the employees interviewed said policy does not require employees to staff their cases in person with their supervisor.

9A. If so, when?

One employee believes the requirement to staff in person is on the 15<sup>th</sup> day, 30<sup>th</sup> day and when closing the case.

One employee believes the requirement to staff in person is before closing the case.

One employee said he/she was not sure of when it was a requirement to staff in person.

Two employees said the requirement to staff in person was immediately on Priority 1 cases and during the investigation on Priority 2 cases.

One employee said, as soon as the caseworker visibly looks at the child, the caseworker will call the supervisor and explain the situation, then the caseworker will travel to the office and meet face-to-face with the supervisor.

10. Have you noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors?

YES NO

16	0
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100% of the employees interviewed said they have noticed inconsistent practices and/or changing priorities among supervisors.

10A. Explain:

One employee said some supervisors are willing to review and downgrade complaints to assist workers in case management; some send workers out on everything, according to it's original prioritization, even when there is clear evidence that the priority is incorrect.

Four employees said supervisors are very inconsistent in their risk assessments.

One employee said there has been an emphasis on removal of children, possibly because of all the high profile cases.

One employee said supervisors should assist in conflicts between investigators and FBSS workers.

One employee said some supervisors downgrade too many cases.

One employee said some supervisors appear to be working by a different set of policies and procedures.

One employee said, in each region, policies and procedures are administered differently.

One employee said there is conflict between supervisors with regard to accepting cases.

One employee said some supervisors do not appear to be knowledgeable of the policies and procedures.

One employee said some supervisors are micro-managers, whereas, some allow the workers to do their job.

One employee said some supervisors have regular staff meetings and others seldom have meetings.

One employee said a supervisor decided that all parent/child visitations should take place after school, which causes workers to work in the evening before returning the child.

One employee said a supervisor assigned a serious sexual abuse case to a new investigator, untrained in sexual abuse investigations; same supervisor pushed to find justification of removal of a child because she did not like the mother.

11. Do these practices contradict policies and procedures?

YES NO

9	7
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56% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors contradict policies and procedures. 44% of the employees interviewed said inconsistent practices by supervisors do not contradict policies and procedures.

12. When does policy require you to staff your case in person with your supervisor?

One employee believes the requirement to staff in person is on the 15<sup>th</sup> day, 30<sup>th</sup> day and when closing the case.

One employee believes the requirement to staff in person is before closing the case.

One employee said he/she was not sure of when it was a requirement to staff in person.

Two employees said the requirement to staff in person was immediately on Priority 1 cases and during the investigation on Priority 2 cases.

One employee said, as soon as the caseworker visibly looks at the child, the caseworker will call the supervisor and explain the situation, then the caseworker will travel to the office and meet face-to-face with the supervisor.

13. Do you feel you are discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations?

YES NO

4	12
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25% of the employees interviewed said they feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

75% of the employees interviewed said they do not feel discouraged from seeking legal intervention when handling high-risk case situations.

13A. If so, why?

One employee said some workers believe it is because supervisors and program directors forgot what it is like to be in the field.

One employee said CPS legal and assistant district attorneys will not write affidavits for CPS caseworkers, so caseworkers have to write their own affidavits.

One employee said some supervisors do not want the hassle of getting involved with CPS legal or assistant district attorneys, so they will not remove children even when circumstances dictate they should.

One employee said assistant district attorneys and county attorneys tell CPS that they will not take CPS cases or they will tell CPS that they do not have enough information on cases, which discourages CPS.

14. What do you do if your supervisor is not responsive or gives guidance you are not comfortable with?

Five employees said he/she discusses the issues further with the supervisor; that they felt comfortable speaking up.

Six employees said he/she talks to the Program Director because there is an open-door policy in their office.

One employee said he/she complies with directives of the supervisor, but does feel comfortable discussing cases with other supervisors, if own supervisor is not in the office.

One employee said this situation has not happened.

Three employees said they will follow their supervisor's decision.

15. Do you have knowledge of any case situations that made you uneasy or that you feel were handled inappropriately?

YES NO

7	9
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44% of the employees interviewed said they have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or felt that some cases were handled inappropriately.

56% of the employees interviewed said they did not have knowledge of case situations that made them uneasy or that made them feel that some cases were handled inappropriately.

15A. Explain:

One employee said he/she did not believe placing children with relatives is a good choice. A weak supervisor who does not stand up to aggressive parents and family members leave the children in an unsafe environment.

Three employees said he/she believes caseworkers are not conducting complete investigations, which is supported by a supervisor who tells the caseworkers not to interview other children or collaterals.

One employee believes a supervisor has falsified risk assessments on the Impact System, which left children in a dangerous environment.

Three employees believe that on several cases, CPS did not remove children when they should have been removed.

One employee believes when the assistant district attorney or county attorney refuse to accept cases, children are left at risk.

Three employees believe judges have allowed children to be returned to abusive homes.

Two employees said sometimes, services are not offered to parents because a caseworker does not want to take time to work with parents.

One worker had a child's head injury case that was ruled "Reason to Believe". The family moved to another region and the case was closed in the region where the family moved.

One employee said he/she believes a supervisor pushed to find justification of removal of a child because she did not like the mother.

16. Are you able to make a decision of "Rule-out" or "Unable to Determine" a case, where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline?

YES NO

5	4
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FBSS and Sub-care employees were not asked this question.

56% of the employees interviewed said they were able to make a decision of "Rule-out or "Unable to Determine" a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

44% of the employees interviewed said they were not able to make a decision of "Rule-out or "Unable to Determine" a case where the parent and child agree that the parent caused the injuries through discipline.

Example: (Child moved while parent used his/her hand to discipline and struck the child in the face, leaving visible bruising.)

17. Have you been directed to change/alter case documentation on any cases?

YES NO

0	16
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100% of the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to change/alter case documentation on cases.

18. Have you been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner?

YES NO

0	16
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100% on the employees interviewed said they had not been directed to respond to OIG questions in a specific manner.

18A. If so, by who and what was said?

19. Is there any other information, which you feel we should know about?

YES NO

12	4
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75% of the employees interviewed said they had information for the OIG.

25% of the employees interviewed said they had no other information for the OIG.

19A. If so, what?

See "EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT"

20. Are you afraid or intimidated by anyone in your management structure?

YES NO

0	16
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100% of the employees interviewed said they were not afraid or intimidated by anyone in their management structure.

#### **EMPLOYEES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Provide additional training for interview and investigation skills.
- Provide self-defense training and how to deal with difficult and aggressive people.
- Provide training for CPR and first aid.
- Provide training on the use of pepper spray and be authorized to carry for protection against dogs.
- Provide training on how to deal with people with psychological problems, mental disabilities and ADHD.
- Provide transportation for special needs children.
- Provide training on how to deal with current drug issues.
- Provide training on how to direct youth on birth-control issues.
- Provide training on how to recognize medical concerns regarding injuries that are not visible (under the skin).
- Provide audio tape recorders and additional tapes.
- Provide enough digital cameras, so each worker has a digital camera and training on how to download pictures to computers.
- Provide a few color printers with quality printing capabilities.
- Provide at least one state vehicle per unit for transporting children.
- Provide workers with a protective vest and mace for worker safety.
- Provide a better way of having film developed, because workers in rural areas do not have enough agency contract locations for developing photographs.
- Provide workers with professional looking identification badges with a leather case, instead of the current ID's that consist of a photograph on a plastic card that looks like an electronic access card.
- Provide general office supplies, such as copier printer paper, pads, pens and copies of the parents' guides are not available in the office.

- Provide Texas Family Code (condensed version) reference books to caseworkers.
- Provide state cell phones or enough money to cover all CPS calls made on caseworkers personal cell phones. \$50 per month does not cover the monthly charges for CPS calls
- Provide cars or additional money for driving personal cars, because of liability issues when transporting children and their families in personal cars, wear and tear on personal cars such as voluminous amount of miles each month, tires, brakes, oil changes, various repairs and \$.35 for gas is not enough, due to gas prices.
- Provide child seats in various sizes.
- Community services for families are needed, such as drug rehab, parenting classes and anger management classes.
- Shelters are needed for the homeless, for families, and for children.
- Provide additional funding for contract services.
- Negative media attention has placed an emphasis on removing children, but something needs to be done, because there is a lack of available foster homes and the children are, sometimes, placed in a worse situation than the one they left.
- Changes need to take place in order to force juvenile probation officers from constantly referring juveniles to CPS instead of doing their job. They call CPS and ask CPS to look inside a home and call the juvenile probation officer back and let him/her know the living conditions at the home.
- Administration needs to force all supervisors to support caseworkers. Children are placed in foster homes when they should not be placed there. Foster parents make complaints against caseworkers and the it appears that the complaints are believed by CPS, without questioning the caseworkers.
- Provide stability among workers, because there appears to be an extreme amount of favoritism shown towards investigators over sub-care workers.
- Provide additional support staff to transport aides, which will allow workers more time for investigations and providing client services.
- Provide enough workers, so FBSS workers can concentrate on FBSS issues and not have to investigate cases. Also, an unmanageable workload means there is less time to effectively care for children. Right now, children are at risk, because caseworkers cannot keep up with the cases.
- Provide incentives to keep good workers. The turnover rate increases workload problems for remaining employees.
- Supervisors should assign cases to caseworkers assigned to cover particular geographical areas.
- Some workers believe the state office determines the workload by dividing the number of cases by investigative positions, instead of the number of workers. They believe this needs to be changed in order to ease the workload.
- Workers said there is a need for a night unit or back-up plan when too many Priority 1 cases come in at night.
- The same families are arguing constantly, so they call the hot line on each other over and over, causing unnecessary investigations to be conducted. CPS or law enforcement should be able to file criminal charges for false reporting on these type issues.
- Workers believe policies and procedures should be revamped, because they are voluminous and they change constantly. Most policies are confusing and they do not cover reality issues.
- Some workers believe the time frame of 12 months with a 6-month extension for a person to change his habit and behavior is unrealistic. They believe the time frame should be extended to 24 months.
- Workers said legal action should be taken against families for not complying with counseling and parenting classes.
- The legislature should change Fourth Amendment issues, which do not allow workers to confirm the safety of a child if the family will not allow them access to the child. Workers said time spent attempting to obtain compliance from the family would be reduced if workers had peace officer status.

Many people who deal in drugs have enough money to hire expensive lawyers. By the time CPS is finally allowed in the family home, the home has been cleaned and there are no signs of drugs.

- Laws are too vague and need to be tightened. Definitions of abuse and neglect make it easy for defense attorneys to have an answer for all issues. The legislature should make changes in law regarding discovery issues. Currently, defense attorneys, through the rule of discovery, request information on every case that a caseworker has investigated, so the defense attorney can try to find something that the investigator might have handled improperly on a previous case.
- Law enforcement needs to be trained on domestic violence issues, because they don't know that they are supposed to make arrests when they see bruises
- Agency needs to focus on eliminating the turnover rate by providing better pay and a manageable work schedule; all workers suffer when employees resign.
- The agency needs to show more support and concern of their workers, their emotional wellbeing and the health issues they develop because of the stress of the job. Workers are fearful of taking time off because they get further behind; many workers never get a break and their stress levels increase, developing into health problems. Employees working overtime on the weekends to keep up diminish the time spent with their own families; overtime is not paid and workers previously were only allowed to carry up to 120 hours of overtime.
- Salaries need to be elevated, but employees are not happy with the recent \$3,000 bonus incentive, because of the stipulations required before a caseworker is eligible. Also, hurt feelings among all non-investigator CPS employees, because the offer was made only to investigators.
- The on-call situation should be changed, because it is extremely difficult on the caseworkers family life.
- Changes need to take place, because workers are unable to take time off because of workload. The workload increases when the worker returns, but management does not want to pay overtime for the worker to catch up. Workers believe management attempts to "guilt-trip" caseworkers by telling them that paying overtime takes money away from any new position the unit may gain.
- Management needs to be investigated, because tenured caseworkers have been "black-balled" because they are not "yes" people. If a caseworker feels strongly about his/her position and is willing to voice it, he/she will never be promoted.
- Changes need to be made, because some excellent, tenured workers who are capable of working without tight supervision are to the point of quitting because of being micro-managed.

# **Appendix B**

## **Sampling Methodology Region 3**

### Sampling Procedures

- Open the file on the CD Rom from CPS, list is sorted alphabetically<sup>11</sup>, data is TDFPS Completed Investigations Region 3, January 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004 and dated July 7, 2004.
- Review the data and determine if there is a meaningful method to stratify the data. Because of the uneven number of records reported by each unit and the large number of units it was determined that stratification by unit number would not provide additional assurance as compared to sampling the entire population.
- Sort by:
  1. “Case ID” – ascending, and
  2. “Stage ID” – ascending
- Review list for duplicates. Noted only one duplicate in the data file<sup>12</sup>.
- Using the SAO *Statistical Tools Version 2.1*, calculated potential sample sizes with a confidence level of 95% and different margins of error.
- Determine the highest total sample size would be 1,800 (1,200 primary plus 600 replacements). See table below.
- Select one set of random numbers without replacements from the RAT-STAT software, using a documented seed number “5678.” The range of numbers to use will be from 1 to the **Number of Records** in the sample. The number of random numbers to be generated in the set will equal the **Total Sample Size (1,800)**.
- Add two columns to the table.
- Label the first column “Line Number (#)” and number each item in the order presented on the Excel file. (See footnote 1.)
- Label the second column “Sample Order”. Fill in the “Sample Order” for each item listed on the RAT-STAT printout column for “order of selection.”
- Delete records with no sample number.
- Review the sample file to ensure that it is complete (number of records) and accurate (correct line numbers).
- Case readers will be assigned the primary sample records. Replacement records will be pulled in sample number sequence, as needed.

### Sample Sizes

The following is a table that compares the statistical ranges at different sample sizes for the CPS investigation records provided by TDFPS for Region 3. We used a confidence level of 95 percent for all, and based the sample sizes on the assumption that half of the cases will have problems (the most conservative estimate). The variable is margin of error.

The results from a review of a random sample of investigations at a given sample size would yield the same results as the sampled universe as a whole, plus or minus the margin of error, 95 percent of the time.

Primary Sample Size	Confidence Level	Margin of Error (Plus or minus)	Estimated Attribute Error Percentage
698	95 percent	3.68 percent	50 percent
797	95 percent	3.44 percent	50 percent
897	95 percent	3.24 percent	50 percent
997	95 percent	3.07 percent	50 percent

<sup>11</sup> Note: There are two lines where CPS left a space before the last name, which prevented a comprehensive alphabetical sort.

<sup>12</sup> Duplicate record Nerida Torres Case ID 24995942, line number 41700 in the data file.

1099	95 percent	2.92 percent	50 percent
1202	95 percent	2.79 percent	50 percent

Based on a universe of 46,827 investigations.

Primary Sample Size	Confidence Level	Margin of Error (plus or minus)	Estimated Attribute Error Percentage
698	95 percent	3.68 percent	50 percent
797	95 percent	3.44 percent	50 percent
897	95 percent	3.24 percent	50 percent
997	95 percent	3.07 percent	50 percent
1099	95 percent	2.92 percent	50 percent
1202	95 percent	2.79 percent	50 percent

## **Appendix C**

### **Sampling Methodology Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11.**

The following sampling methodology was used for Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. Region 3 was read separately and has an individual sample methodology included with the case reading results for the Region.

#### Sample for Case Readers

Used data provided by TDFPS for completed investigations from January 1, 2003 to June 4, 2004. Record refers to a line on the spreadsheet in the order provided by TDFPS.

#### Sampling Procedures

- Opened the Excel data files on the CD ROM from CPS.
  - Result: The records (investigations) on the CD ROM are sorted alphabetically by last name<sup>13</sup>. The data on the CD ROM consists of TDFPS Completed Investigations for **Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11** for the period January 1, 2003 – June 4, 2004. The CD ROM is dated July 13, 2004. Data for each region is in a separate Excel file on the CD ROM.
- Reviewed the data for each region to determine if there is a meaningful method to stratify the data.
  - Result: We determined the only reasonable method of stratifying the data was to allocate the primary sample to each region based on the percentage of investigations in each region. The results of this allocation are in Table 2 on page 3.
- Sorted each data file by:
  3. “Case ID” – ascending, and
  4. “Stage ID” – ascending
- Reviewed the files for duplicate records.

<sup>13</sup> A comprehensive alphabetical sort by last name was prevented because of the following problems with the Case Name field:

- Region 1 – one line where CPS left a space before the last name
- Region 3 – two lines where CPS left a space before the last name
- Region 6 - one line where CPS left a space before the last name; two lines with “unknown” name, and one line with only a “,” in the field
- Region 8 – three lines where CPS left a space before the last name
- Region 11 – two lines where CPS left a space before the last name; one line with “(reporter)” in the field



- Result: Noted two duplicates in the data files<sup>14</sup>. If duplicate records appear in the sample, we will replace the second item with a sample item from the replacement sample list.
- Used the SAO *Statistical Tools Version 2.1*, calculated primary sample sizes for the population of 149,280 investigations for **Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11**, with a confidence level of 95% and a 2.92% margin of error.
  - Result: The highest total sample size for all regions would be 1,676 (1,117 primary plus 557 replacements). This is documented in Table 1 on page 3.
- Allocated the primary sample to each region based on the percentage of investigations in each region.
  - Results of this allocation are in Table 2 on page 3.
- Selected the random sample using ACL software program for each region’s data file according to the allocation in Table 2 on page 3.
  - Used seed number 5678. Export the data file to Excel.
  - Sorted the sample files in alphabetical order.
  - Saved each sample data file using the following file-naming convention: CPS Region XX sample.
- Selected the replacement sample using ACL software program for each region’s data file according to the allocation in Table 2 on page 3.
  - Used seed number 1234.
  - Exported the data file to Excel. ACL output was in alphabetical order.
  - Saved replacement sample data file for each region using the following convention: CPS Region XX replacement sample.
- Visually reviewed each replacement sample record against the respective primary region sample to check for duplicates before randomizing the order of replacement file.
  - Result: No duplicate records were found in the comparison of the primary region samples to the region replacement samples.
- Randomized the order of the replacement sample for each region.
  - Used RAT-STAT with same seed number “1234” to generate random numbers based on the region population size for the number of sample records in the replacement sample.
- Opened the Excel file for the replacement sample for each region.
  - Added a column in the first column position.
  - Copied the first column from the RAT-STAT file “Order” into the replacement sample file generated by ACL (for example, Region 1 replacement sample).
  - Sorted the replacement file by the “Order” column to randomize the replacement sample records.
  - Saved file under same name (for example, CPS Region1 replacement sample).
- Case readers will be assigned the primary sample records for each region.

#### Sample Sizes

Following are tables for the CPS investigation records provided by TDFPS for Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. We used a confidence level of 95 percent, a margin of error of 2.92%, and based the sample size on the assumption that half of the cases will have problems (the most conservative estimate).

The results from a review of a random sample of investigations at a given sample size would yield the same results as the sampled universe as a whole, plus or minus the margin of error, 95 percent of the time. The primary sample size is based on a universe of 149,280 investigations.

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<sup>14</sup> Duplicate records found include:

- Region 7 – Spencer, Kipling; Case ID 24861358; line numbers 21196 and 21197 in the CPS data file
- Region 11 – Randle, Tammy; Case ID 24858035; line numbers 14268 and 14269 in the CPS data file

Table 1: Sample Size

Primary Sample Size	Confidence Level	Margin of Error (Plus or minus)	Estimated Attribute Error Percentage
1,117	95 percent	2.92 percent	50 percent

Table 2: Allocation of Sample To Regions

Region	Number of Investigations	Percentage of Investigations	Primary Sample Size Allocation of 1,117	Replacement Sample Size (50%) <sup>15</sup>
1	8,725	5.84%	65	33
2	6,071	4.06%	45	23
4	10,733	7.19%	80	40
5	7,833	5.25%	59	29
6	39,920	26.74%	299	149
7	24,959	16.72%	187	93
8	20,701	13.87%	155	77
9	5,205	3.49%	39	19
10	5,382	3.61%	40	20
11	19,751	13.23%	148	74
Total	149,280	100.00%	1,117	557

## **Appendix D**

### **Validation Methodology and Results Region 3.**

The following validation methodology and results are for Region 3. Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 were read separately and have individual methodologies and results included in Appendix E. The validation of the case reading was conducted by OIG Auditors.

**Source:**

- Case Reader responses to review questions stored on Access database
- Case file documentation (electronic)

**Purpose:**

To determine if case file documentation exists to support the case readers' responses to selected questions on the case readers' review questionnaire.

**Procedures:**

- Obtain a list from HHSC-OIG of all case readers.
- Judgmentally select 30 cases making sure that at least one case for each reader from the previous day's list of case readings has been reviewed.
- For each case selected, obtain hard copies of the case readers' responses to the review questionnaire.
- Using IMPACT, read the case documentation.
- Select the following questions from the case reading tool to determine if documentation exists to support the case readers' responses:
  - **Question # 5:** Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?
  - **Question # 7:** Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?
  - **Question # 8:** Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?

<sup>15</sup> Sample replacement size for each region is 50% of the sample size allocation for that region. Excel was used to calculate the sample and sample replacement sizes leading to slight differences in the methods of rounding.

- Question # 9: Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?
- Question # 10: If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?
- Question # 25: Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?
- Question # 27: For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?
- Question # 29: At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?
- Question # 30: At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?

- Using an electronic spreadsheet format, document the case readers’ response and the auditor’s assessment regarding the sufficiency of documentation to support the response. “Yes” indicates sufficient documentation exists to support the case reader’s answer. “No” indicates that sufficient documentation does not exist to support the response.
- For all “No” answers, use a footnote to document that type of exception. Special Auditors will compile a master footnote legend as the review progresses. Each auditor will be responsible for updating the footnote legend when they identify an exception not previously listed.
- Cross-reference the auditor’s review on the spreadsheet to the case reading tool, ensuring all work papers have a reference. File the case reading tool in the work paper binder.

**Results:**

A total of 280 cases were reviewed as a result of judgmentally selecting 30 cases for each case reader from the previous day's list of case readings. Special Audit ensured that at least 2 cases were read for each case reader from the previous day’s list of case readings. Explanations are provided below the questions to document the exceptions noted in reviewing the case readers’ responses to the questionnaire.

Question # 5: Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect or at risk of abuse/neglect?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	115	165	0	280

The auditors agreed with the case readers’ responses in 278 of all 280 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

Two exceptions were noted as follows:

- In two cases the reader answered no, however, there is documentation that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect or at risk of abuse/neglect.

Question # 7: Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short-term protection of the child(ren) or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	63	114	103	280

The auditors agreed with the case readers’ responses in 279 of all 280 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

One exception was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered yes, however, there is no documentation that indicates the implementation of a safety plan for the short-term protection of the child(ren) or the child(ren) being placed into substitute care.

Question # 8: Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	126	40	114	280

The auditors agreed with the case readers’ responses in 278 of all 280 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

Two exceptions was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered yes, however, there is no documentation to support the response that appropriate steps were taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect.

- In one case the reader answered no, however, documentation exists to support the response that appropriate steps were taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect.

**Question # 9:** Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	52	228	0	280

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in 279 of all 280 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

One exception was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered yes, however, there is no documentation to support the response that there was an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home

**Question # 10:** If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	25	53	202	280

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in all of the 280 cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 100%**

**Question # 25:** Were other services needed, that were not provided by the caseworker?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	59	56	165	280

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in 279 of all 280 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

One exception was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered no, however, there is documentation to support the need for other services, that were not provided by the caseworker

**Question # 27:** For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with CPS policy?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	5	7	268	280

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in all of the 280 cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 100%**

**Question # 29:** At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	41	238	1	280

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in 279 of all 280 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

One exception was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered no, however, there is documentation to support that during CPS involvement with this case, a child was permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action.

**Question # 30:** At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life-threatening situation?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total

Case reader responses	2	277	1	280
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The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in 279 of all 280 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

One exception was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered no, however, there is documentation to support that during CPS involvement with this case, a child(ren) were permitted to remain in a life-threatening situation

# **Appendix E**

## **Validation Methodology and Results Regions 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 and 11.**

The following validation results are for Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. Region 3 was read separately and has individual validation results included in Appendix D. The validation of the case reading was conducted by OIG Auditors.

### **Source:**

- Case Reader responses to review questions stored on Access database
- Case file documentation (electronic)

### **Purpose:**

To determine if case file documentation exists to support the case readers' responses to selected questions on the case readers' review questionnaire.

### **Procedures:**

- Obtain a list from HHSC-OIG of all case readers.
- Judgmentally select 30 cases making sure that at least one case for each reader from the previous day's list of case readings has been reviewed.
- For each case selected, obtain hard copies of the case readers' responses to the review questionnaire.
- Using IMPACT, read the case documentation.
- Select the following questions from the case reading tool to determine if documentation exists to support the case readers' responses:
  - Question # 5: Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect, or at risk of abuse/neglect?
  - Question # 7: Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short term protection of the child(ren), or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?
  - Question # 8: Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?
  - Question # 9: Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?
  - Question # 10: If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?
  - Question # 25: Were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker?
  - Question # 27: For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with C.P.S. policy?
  - Question # 29: At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?
  - Question # 30: At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life threatening situation?
- Using an electronic spreadsheet format, document the case readers' response and the auditor's assessment regarding the sufficiency of documentation to support the response. "Yes" indicates sufficient documentation exists to support the case reader's answer. "No" indicates that sufficient documentation does not exist to support the response.
- For all "No" answers, use a footnote to document that type of exception. Special Auditors will compile a master footnote legend as the review progresses. Each auditor will be responsible for updating the footnote legend when they identify an exception not previously listed.
- Cross-reference the auditor's review on the spreadsheet to the case reading tool, ensuring all work papers have a reference. File the case reading tool in the work paper binder.

### **Results:**

A total of 243 cases were reviewed as a result of judgmentally selecting 30 cases for each case reader from the previous day's list of case readings. Special Audit ensured that at least 2 cases were read for each case reader from the previous day's list of case readings. Explanations are provided below the questions to document the exceptions noted in reviewing the case readers' responses to the questionnaire.

Question # 5: Is there documentation in the structured narrative or risk assessment tool that indicates the child was in a state of abuse/neglect or at risk of abuse/neglect?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Total</b>
Case reader responses	118	125	0	243

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in 241 of 243 of the cases reviewed.

### **Validation rate 99%**

Two exceptions were noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered “No.” However, there was documentation to support that the child was in a state of abuse/neglect or at risk of abuse/neglect.
- In one case the reader answered “No.” However, there was documentation to support that the child was in a state of abuse/neglect or at risk of abuse/neglect.

**Question # 7:** Did the caseworker implement a safety plan for the short-term protection of the child(ren) or was the child(ren) placed into substitute care?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	63	97	83	243

The auditors agreed with the case readers’ responses in 242 of 243 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

One exception was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered “Yes.” However, there was no documentation to support that the caseworker implemented a safety plan for the short-term protection of the child.

**Question # 8:** Were appropriate steps taken to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	89	42	112	243

The auditors agreed with the case readers’ responses in 241 of 243 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

Two exceptions was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader checked “No.” However, there is documentation in the files to support that appropriate steps were not taken to protect children from further abuse and neglect.
- In one case the reader checked “Yes.” However, there is documentation that does not support that steps need to be taken to protect the child from further abuse and risk.

**Question # 9:** Was there an imminent threat to the health or safety of any child in the home?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	68	175	0	243

The auditors agreed with the case readers’ responses in all 243 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 100%**

**Question # 10:** If yes to question # 9, was the child removed from the home?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	25	51	167	243

The auditors agreed with the case readers’ responses in all 243 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 100%**

**Question # 25:** Were other services needed, that were not provided by the caseworker?

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Case reader responses	27	28	188	243

The auditors agreed with the case readers’ responses in 242 of 243 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

One exception was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader answered “N/A.” However, there was documentation to support that there were other services needed that were not provided by the caseworker.

Question # 27: For FBSS cases, was contact initiated and maintained with the family in accordance with CPS policy?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Total</b>
Case reader responses	10	14	219	243

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in all 243 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 100%**

Question # 29: At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Total</b>
Case reader responses	7	22	0	29

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in 242 of 243 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 99%**

One exception was noted as follows:

- In one case the reader checked "Yes", however, there is no documentation that supports the readers response that at any time during CPS involvement with this case, a child was permitted to remain in a state of abuse or neglect without appropriate action.

Question # 30: At any time during CPS involvement with this case, was a child(ren) permitted to remain in a life-threatening situation?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Total</b>
Case reader responses	17	226	0	243

The auditors agreed with the case readers' responses in all 29 of the cases reviewed.

**Validation rate 100%.**



# **Appendix F**

## **CPS Handbook, Section 6121, The Decision to Remove the Child**

CPS October 2004

### Assessment

Before removing a child from his or her home, CPS must explore every reasonable alternative for keeping the child safe from abuse and neglect. The decision to remove the child only occurs when there is no reasonable way to protect the child from abuse or neglect in the immediate or short-term future without removal.

CPS's decision to remove a child, therefore, is preceded by a thorough assessment of:

- the immediacy and severity of the risk to the child;
- the feasibility of protecting the child without removal;
- the parents' willingness to participate in whatever actions must be taken to protect the child without removal;
- the identification of noncustodial parents, relatives, or other caregivers, and the parents' willingness to place the child with these people; and
- the use of other legal options besides conservatorship removal.

For additional information about making the assessments specified here, see [Section 2280](#), Risk Assessment and Safety Evaluation.

For additional information about providing ongoing services to the child and family without removing the child from the home, see Sections [3300](#), In-Home Safety Services; and [3330](#), Intensive In-Home Safety Services.

### Requires Approvals

Before removing a child from his home, the worker must obtain the supervisor and program director's approval. If the supervisor is unavailable, the program director can give approval for the supervisor. If the program director is not available, the worker or supervisor must contact the program administrator to obtain approval. The worker must also meet any additional requirements that the region has established for securing approval of a child's removal.

The worker documents the approvals for the removal in the contact narrative.

Exception: In an emergency removal when there is not enough time to get prior approval, the worker must secure approval as soon as possible after removing the child. At the latest, the removal must be approved by the time of the child's initial placement.

### The Court Order

The decision to remove a child from his or her home must be supported by a court order authorizing DFPS to take possession of the child and manage his care. Depending on the circumstances, the court order may be secured before or after the removal.

For additional information regarding securing court orders and meeting other legal requirements, see [Section 5200](#), Court-Related Services for Children at Risk of Abuse or Neglect.

### Preparing for the Child's Substitute-Care Placement

The worker must get as much information as possible about a child's needs, circumstances, and functioning before removing the child from his home. The information about a child that the worker secures at the time of the child's removal constitutes CPS's best guide to selecting an appropriate caregiver for the child. It is also often key to the department's long-term planning for the child.

At a minimum, the worker must collect as much as possible of the following information about the child at the time of removal. This includes:

- age, sex, religion, race/ethnicity, Native American heritage (whether the child is or could be an American Indian), place of birth, nationality, and personality;
- social and emotional history and needs;
- developmental and educational history and needs;
- medical and dental history and needs, including immunizations;

- history of previous out-of-home placements, if any;
- current physical, mental, and emotional functioning;
- current behavioral issues, and methods of discipline currently used; and
- current routine, habits, and interests.

*Note:* As specified in [Item 6123.3](#), Services to the Caregiver, the worker must give the information listed above to the substitute caregiver at the time of the child's initial placement.

The worker must also collect as much as possible of the following information about the child's family and relatives at the time of removal. This includes:

- the names and address(es) of the child's parents, including any absent parent(s);
- the marital and family history;
- the race/ethnicity of the family (for the parents, record what they say is their race/ethnicity);
- the family's medical history; and
- the names and addresses of the family's relatives.

In every case, staff need to ask the parents (and any child old enough) whether the family has American Indian heritage/ancestry. If a child is considered to be of American Indian heritage/ancestry, refer to the policies in [Item 1227](#), Indian Child Welfare Act, and [Appendix 1226-A and B](#). If a child is not considered to be Indian, document in the case record which family member provided that information.

#### Follow-Up Services

After removing a child from his home, CPS must immediately provide follow-up services to:

- the child,
- the child's parents,
- the substitute caregiver, and
- the court.

For information regarding the services that must be provided to the child, the child's parents, and the substitute caregiver, see [Item 6122](#), Selecting a Substitute Caregiver at the Time of Removal, and [Section 6123](#), Services to the Parents, the Child, and the Caregiver at the Time of Removal.

For information regarding working with the court, see [Section 5200](#), Court-Related Services for Children at Risk of Abuse or Neglect.

### **Texas Family Code, Section 262.102**

§ 262.102. EMERGENCY ORDER AUTHORIZING POSSESSION OF CHILD. (a) Before a court may, without prior notice and a hearing, issue a temporary restraining order or attachment of a child in a suit brought by a governmental entity, the court must find that:

- (1) there is an immediate danger to the physical health or safety of the child or the child has been a victim of neglect or sexual abuse and that continuation in the home would be contrary to the child's welfare;
- (2) there is no time, consistent with the physical health or safety of the child and the nature of the emergency, for a full adversary hearing under Subchapter C; and
- (3) **reasonable efforts**, consistent with the circumstances and providing for the safety of the child, were made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child.

(b) In determining whether there is an immediate danger to the physical health or safety of a child, the court may consider whether the child's household includes a person who has:

- (1) abused or neglected another child in a manner that caused serious injury to or the death of the other child; or
- (2) sexually abused another child.

(c) If, based on the recommendation of or a request by the department, the court finds that child abuse or neglect has occurred and that the child requires protection from family violence by a member of the child's family or household, the court shall render a temporary order under Chapter 71 for the protection of the child. In this subsection, "family violence" has the meaning assigned by Section 71.004.

## **INTERSTATE COMPACT ON THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN (ICPC)**

An interstate compact is a binding contract among the states that enact it. The *Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)* is a statutory law that has been enacted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ICPC was enacted to ensure protection and services to children who are placed across state lines for foster care or adoption. Under the terms of the law, states agree to follow uniform procedures when making or accepting interstate placements of children. The ICPC aims to assure the same protections and services that would be provided if the children remained in their home states.

The ICPC contains 10 articles that define the types of placements subject to law, the procedures to be followed in making an interstate placement, and the protections, services, and requirements brought by enactment of the law. The Compact assigns responsibility for those involved in placing the child and *defines how agencies should work together to achieve the best outcome for the child*. The ICPC is the only official means to ensure that a child is placed in a safe environment, that the placement is supervised, and that he or she receives the services needed.

### **COMPACT REQUIREMENTS**

In general, the ICPC requires that the **sending state** (where the child and birth mother are living) and the **receiving state** (where the adoptive parents live) **both agree that the child may be placed with the adoptive parents**. The state where the child is born **must ensure that the legal rights of the birth parents have been terminated**, either by court proceeding or by signing of their consent relinquishment of parental rights). The sending state may also require a genetic history of the birthparents and the hospital medical records of the child.

### **ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMPACT**

Every state appoints a Compact Administrator (and one or more Deputy Administrators) who performs the day-to-day tasks associated with the administration of the Compact. The Compact Administrator is the central clearing point for all referrals for interstate placements. The Administrator and his/her deputies are authorized to conduct the necessary investigation of the proposed placement and to determine whether or not the placement is contrary to the child's interests. After the placement is approved and the child is moved into the state, the Compact Administrator is responsible for overseeing the placement as long as it continues.

The ICPC coordinator in the receiving state will typically require a home study of the proposed placement to ensure the child will be provided with a good, stable home. Once the home study is approved (receiving state) and all required documentation is received from the sending state, approval is granted for the child to leave the birth state. **Completion of home studies and monitoring of ICPC placements is handled by designated staff (C.P.S.) within each jurisdiction**. It is illegal to leave the sending state or enter the receiving state without ICPC approval.

### **A. STRENGTHS**

Primary strengths of the ICPC include:

**UNIFORMITY**- All 50 states (to include the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands) have enacted the Compact, and are therefore in agreement to uniform procedures for the interstate placement of children (adoption and foster Care). The ICPC has standardized procedures, processes, and documentation required to expedite placement of children across state lines.

**SAFEGUARDS** - In order to safeguard both the child and the parties involved in the child's placement, the ICPC: 1) Provides the sending agency the opportunity to obtain home studies and an evaluation of the proposed placement; 2) Allows the prospective receiving state to ensure that the placement is not "contrary to the interests of the child" and that its applicable laws and policies have been followed before it approves placement; 3) Guarantees the child legal and financial protection by fixing these responsibilities with the sending agency or individual; 4) Ensures that the sending agency does not lose jurisdiction over the child once the child moves to the receiving state; 5) Provides the sending agency the opportunity to obtain supervision and regular reports on the child's adjustment and progress in the placement.

## **B. CONCERNS**

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) was drafted in 1960 and has been enacted by all of the states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It ensures protection and services to children who are placed across state lines for foster care or adoption by establishing procedures for ensuring that the placements are safe, suitable and able to provide proper care, and fixing legal and financial responsibilities for those involved in making the placements. *(See ICPC Task Force Report dated March 2004, American Public Human Services Association).*

There has been growing dissatisfaction with the Compact as it is currently written and implemented:

- (1) its language is overly broad in terms of the definition of its scope
- (2) its procedures are antiquated
- (3) its current structure lacks enforcement and accountability.

In July 2003, the American Public Human Services Association formed the ICPC Task Force. The members of the task force include state commissioners, state and local child welfare directors, ICPC administrators, and a representative from American Association of Public Welfare Attorneys (AAPWA). The task force was charged with identifying steps that need to be taken to improve the process of placing children across state lines. To date, the task force has met 10 times.

Issues identified and addressed by the ICPC Task Force include:

- (1) case accountability at the staff level.
- (2) the need for receiving state responsibility for timely placements of children being placed in their state by other states, not just children on their caseloads.
- (3) the lack of system oversight and enforcement.
- (4) the need to review ICPC regulations and opinions and recommend and make any necessary changes.
- (5) the appropriate role of the Secretariat in administering the Compact.
- (6) the need for a more comprehensive approach for working with critical stakeholders.

*(See ICPC Task Force Report dated March 2004, American Public Human Services Association).*

## **NEXT STEPS**

The task force members agreed that while there are a number of interim steps that can be taken to improve the interstate placement process, true reform will require revisions to the actual language of ICPC itself. The question that was not answered conclusively by the task force is whether the revised compact should be passed by the states themselves (a new ICPC) or whether federalization of a revised compact would be the most effective and enforceable route to addressing the issues regarding the interstate placement of children.

## **DATA**

It was agreed that accurate and complete data on the number of children placed across state lines, the types of placements being made, and the time it takes to complete the process is critical information that is needed to guide changes in policy and practice. To that end, APHSA conducted a survey of states requesting such data and found that states ability to capture this type of data was limited. The recommendation of the task force is to determine why states are unable to capture the data and what support and assistance they need to be able to capture the data.

## **FINANCE/ACCOUNTABILITY**

The underlying assumption regarding the provision of home studies and post placement supervision in interstate cases is one of quid pro quo: each state would send the same number of children as they received, therefore the financial burden for all the states for conducting home studies and post-placement supervision for children placed in their states would be similar. However, both data and anecdotal evidence suggest that this is no longer the case. Many states send more children than they receive, and some state receive many more children than they send. The task force recommended the development of a new financing scheme for interstate placements that will support improved performance and timeliness. In addition, they suggested an analysis of the administrative costs, the costs of the home study and post placement supervision, as well as states' purchase of service (POS) capability and barriers to POS. Other suggestions included: (1) identifying ways that receiving states can capture federal dollars for the cost of providing home studies and post-placement supervision, and (2) alternative federal support for these cases including an enhanced federal match.

## **COVERAGE**

The task force reviewed each of the types of placements that are "covered" by ICPC including those specifically identified and those that have been via secretariat opinion or practice to be included. For each placement type, e.g. private adoption, independent adoption, public adoption, residential treatment placement, the task force discussed whether ICPC was an appropriate regulatory system for the placement and what the underlying public policy interest was for it. If the placement type should not fall under ICPC, then how is the protection of these children ensured. A summary has been developed outlining all the placement types and the public policy supporting and not supporting ICPC coverage of the placement type for consideration by all states that, in turn, will be used to inform the process of reforming the language of the ICPC.

## **PRACTICE AND ADMINISTRATION**

The task force recommended the following: (1) there needs to be a bedrock of values that the states are bought into which are demonstrated in their interaction with each other and that are communicated from the top level administrators, e.g. interstate cases are as important as intrastate cases, child centered practice, presumption of good will, etc., (2) there needs to be performance management through the use of technology and identification of what outcomes states will hold themselves to and how to measure them consistently, and (3) the secretariat should identify and develop tools that support best practice. *(See ICPC Task Force Report dated March 2004, American Public Human Services Association.)*

## **REFORM OF THE ICPC**

**STAKEHOLDER REFORM** – The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), as the Secretariat of the Association of Administrators of the ICPC, has recently initiated a comprehensive reform process (ICPC Task Force). In July 2004, a drafting and development team comprised of representing state commissioners, state and local child welfare directors, ICPC administrators, the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, court administrators, the American Bar Association, Juvenile and Family Court Judges, National Indian Child Welfare Association, Child Welfare League of America, and the National CASA Association, begun the work of redrafting the ICPC. The process will be completed by the end of the year, 2004.

**FEDERAL LEGISLATION REFORM** - The United States Congress has recently recognized the issues and barriers affecting the inter-state placement of children. In June 2004, the U.S House of Representatives enacted a bill (**H.R. Bill 4504, 108<sup>TH</sup> Congress**) entitled the “**Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2004**”. The bill is also referred to as the “**Orderly and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2004**”.

This federal legislation is intended “**To improve protections for children and to hold States accountable for the orderly and timely placement of children across State lines, and for other purposes**”. The bill was approved by the House of Representatives and received by the Senate on October 6, 2004.

As written, H.R. 4504 **recognizes that the ICPC is outdated and a barrier to the timely placement of children across State lines**. Recommendations include that “States should expeditiously revise the ICPC to better serve the interests of children and reduce unnecessary work, limit the applicability to children in foster care (except those seeking placement into a residential treatment facility), and provide deadlines for the completion and approval of home studies.” The legislation would impose a 60-day time limit on the completion of home studies and penalize states with the loss of all their IV-E funding if they fail to meet this deadline. The legislation also encourages the use of private (contracted) agencies to expedite home studies, and provides “incentive payments” to states in compliance with the legislation.

**Excerpt from H.R. 4504**  
**108th CONGRESS, 2nd Session**  
**IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES**  
**October 6, 2004**

### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the ‘Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2004’.

### **SEC. 2. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.**

(a) Finding- The Congress finds that the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) was drafted more than 40 years ago, is outdated, and is a barrier to the timely placement of children across State lines.

(b) Sense of the Congress- It is the sense of the Congress that the States should expeditiously revise the ICPC to better serve the interests of children and reduce unnecessary work, and that the revision should include--

- (1) limiting its applicability to children in foster care under the responsibility of a State, except those seeking placement in a licensed residential facility primarily to access clinical mental health services; and
- (2) providing for deadlines for the completion and approval of home studies as set forth in section 4.

# **Appendix G**

## **TEXAS PEDIATRIC/ADOLESCENTS DRUG REVIEW**

**ACS-Heritage High-level Analysis of Selected Drug Utilization Among Medicaid Clients Under Age 18.  
Reported by ACS Heritage on 9/23/04**

### **DATA UTILIZED AND METHODOLOGY**

Three specific drug classes chosen for review:

- Stimulants [most utilized of these three classes in this population]
- Antidepressants
- Antipsychotics

All agents among these classes were selected for review

### **DATA ANALYSIS OF CLAIMS**

- This Retrospective review of pharmacy claims was conducted for July and August 2004- a total of 5,709,263 pharmacy claims. These were matched against available medical claims to search for corresponding appropriate diagnoses for the drugs reviewed –note 720 days of historical medical claims were utilized (approximately 3,332,040 medical claims). Heritage compared the pharmacy claims to the diagnosis on the medical claims submitted for the same patients in search of FDA-Approved indications to warrant the use of the drugs in the study. A strict interpretation of FDA guidelines was used and off label use was not considered. For example, they reviewed the following:
  - Stimulants: ADD, ADHD, and Narcolepsy
  - Antidepressants: Depression, Bulimia, Obsessive Compulsive disorders, Panic disorders, Social phobia, PTSD
  - Antipsychotics: Bipolar Affective Disorder, Schizophrenias, etc.

### **DATA NOT CONSIDERED AT THIS LEVEL**

- HMO encounter data was not included in the claims universe. The medical claims may have included services such as counseling, case management, diagnostics, and other associated claims information not utilized during the high-level analysis.

### **THIS PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG SUMMARY REPORT FOR JULY THROUGH AUGUST 2004 REPORTED:**

- Drug Class
- # Patients
- # Claims
- % of Claims
- Total Paid
- Paid Per Claim
- Then totals of all 3 drug classes together

- Each of the 3 Drug Classes then had separate reports breaking down the numbers by drug name. For example, the separate Antidepressant Drug Class reported data on drugs included in this class such as Zoloft, Prozac, Paxil, among others.

### **AGE AND GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS WERE PERFORMED FOR EACH DRUG CLASS**

- Age distribution was as follows:
  - <3
  - 3-5
  - 6-8
  - 9-11
  - 12-14
  - 15-17

### **ISSUE ANALYSIS**

- Combination Therapy – regards a client who is taking more than one of the targeted drug classes simultaneously
- Potential Inappropriate drug use based on documented diagnosis for available claims:
  - Based on not having a proper documented diagnosis to warrant the drug use
  - For the Atypical Antipsychotics drugs – which does not have an FDA-approved indication for use in patients under the age of 18 – the report included the use of these agents among patients without a history of an appropriate diagnosis documented over the past 2 years.
  - The Percentage of Potential Inappropriate Use was indicated for each Drug Class
- Potential Inappropriate dosing
  - The analysis looked at potential inappropriate dosing among various drugs within each of the 3 Drug Classes
  - A query was performed looking at patients who received “once-daily” drugs in divided doses
  - Claims exceeding maximum doses were also evaluated
  - Percentage of Potential Inappropriate Dosing was indicated for each Drug Class

ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL OVERUTILIZATION AMONG PRESCRIBERS WAS ALSO PERFORMED.

- Analysis performed of Prescribing Providers of agents within all 3 Drug Classes
- Providers that prescribed for potential inappropriate uses and doses were identified
- A list of the Top 5 prescribers within each drug class was provided
- A spreadsheet of all providers identified within each category was also provided.

### **Summary**

ACS-Heritage conducted an in-depth analysis of psychotropic drug use among patients under the age of 18. Three specific drug classes were chosen for review. A review of stimulants, antidepressants, and antipsychotics was performed to determine utilization among this population. The findings include the following:



- Stimulants are the most utilized psychotropic agents among patients under the age of 18.
- Approximately 23,183 patients received a claim for an antidepressant agent. Of these, nearly 75% of the claims were for an agent referenced in the March 2004 warning letter issued by the FDA.
- Data analysis showed that 19,403 patients received a claim for an antipsychotic agent. Of these, nearly 98% of the claims were for an atypical antipsychotic, which has no FDA-approved indication for children under the age of 18.
- Approximately 19,365 or 31% of the patients identified has two or more of the three drugs selected.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) or 12,335 of the patients receiving stimulants do not appear to have a proper diagnosis warranting their use.
- Fifty-two percent (52%) or 12,168 of patients receiving antidepressants do not appear to have a proper diagnosis warranting their use.
- Forty-seven (47%) or 9,115 of patients receiving antipsychotics do not appear to have a proper diagnosis warranting their use.
- Inappropriate dosing among agents within each drug class revealed that 52% of antipsychotics, 14% of stimulants, and 10% of antidepressant doses were potentially administered inappropriately.

## **Background**

At the request of Texas Health and Human Services Commission, ACS-Heritage conducted an in-depth analysis evaluating drug utilization among patients under the age of 18. The specific drugs evaluated are part of three different drug classes. All agents among stimulants, antidepressants, and antipsychotics were selected for review. An analysis was also performed evaluating clinical issues such as inappropriate drug use (based on documented diagnosis), inappropriate dosing, and combination therapy. Age and gender demographics were also isolated. Issues related to overutilization among prescribers was also performed and included in the analysis. The retrospective review of claims was conducted for July and August 2004.

In March 2004, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requested that manufacturers of several antidepressant drugs include within their labeling a warning statement recommending close observation of adult and pediatric patients treated with their agents for worsening of depression and/or emergence of suicidal ideations. The drugs of concern are highlighted below:

- Prozac<sup>®</sup> (fluoxetine)
- Zoloft<sup>®</sup> (sertraline)
- Paxil<sup>®</sup> (paroxetine)
- Celexa<sup>®</sup> (citalopram)
- Lexapro<sup>®</sup> (escitalopram)
- Effexor<sup>®</sup> (venlafaxine)
- Remeron<sup>®</sup> (mirtazapine)
- Wellbutrin<sup>®</sup> (bupropion)
- Luvox<sup>®</sup> (fluvoxamine)
- Serzone<sup>®</sup> (nefazodone)

Initial studies with Paxil<sup>®</sup> (paroxetine) and subsequent studies with other agents suggest that there appears to be an increased risk of suicidal thought and actions in children who were prescribed antidepressant drugs. Several of these drugs are also approved for the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) in pediatric patients (sertraline, fluoxetine, fluvoxamine). Only Prozac<sup>®</sup> (fluoxetine) is approved for use in children with major depressive disorder. The rest of the drugs have no FDA approved uses in children.

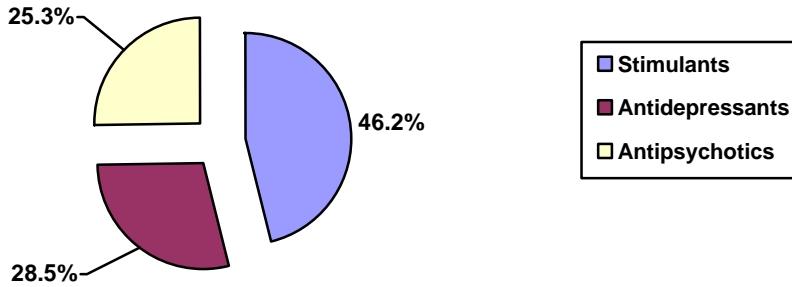
Although it is unclear whether antidepressants directly contribute to the emergence of suicidal thinking and behavior, the FDA's actions are intended to highlight the need for careful monitoring of patients, particularly children and adolescents being treated with these drugs. Therapy changes should be conducted under the guidance of a physician, as certain medications should be tapered rather than stopped abruptly. Following these suggestions, the FDA recently endorsed the advisory committee's recommendations regarding reports of an increased risk of suicide associated with the use of antidepressants in children. The following recommendations were made:

- FDA endorsed an approach to classify and analyze all suicidal events and behaviors observed in controlled clinical trials.
- Concluded that the findings of an increased risk of suicide applied to all the drugs studied as well as agents not included in controlled clinical trials in pediatric patients.
- Reached a split decision regarding recommending a "black-box" warning related to an increased risk for suicide in pediatric patients for all antidepressant drugs.
- Endorsed a patient information sheet for antidepressants to be provided to the patient or his/her caregiver with every prescription.
- Recommended that the results of controlled pediatric trials of depression be included in the labeling for antidepressant drugs.

The availability of atypical antipsychotics with a more favorable side effect profile when compared to older typical agents has increased their utilization among children with behavior disorders. Many of the atypical antipsychotics such as Zyprexa<sup>®</sup> (olanzapine), Risperdal<sup>®</sup> (risperidone), and Clozaril<sup>®</sup> (clozapine) have been studied in children suffering from various illnesses such as Tourette's syndrome, bipolar mania, autism, anorexia, schizophrenia, and other pervasive developmental disorders. Most of these studies have been small in scale and provided minimal background on the use of these agents in children and adolescents. Additional studies are needed to define ideal dosing strategies and long-term safety of these agents in younger patients. Currently, no atypical antipsychotics are approved for use in children.

Various analyses reveal that the amount of stimulant prescriptions written for children is on the rise. Although stimulants are approved for the use in children over three years of age, concerns of adverse drug events have persisted for this patient population. Studies have documented a widespread use of these agents for non-FDA approved indications. A consensus exists that behaviorally disturbed children are increasingly subjected to pharmacological agents as opposed to informed and coordinated psychotherapeutic options.

**Psychotropic Drug Use Among Patients under 18 years of age**

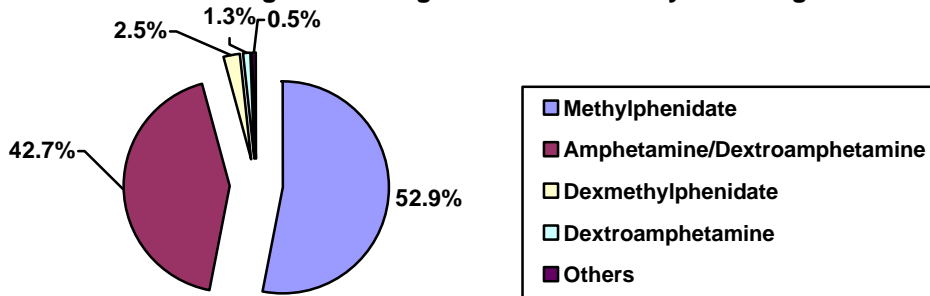


*Psychotropic Drug Summary Report (July – August 2004)*

<i>Drug Class</i>	<i>Patients</i>	<i>Claims</i>	<i>Percent of Claims</i>	<i>Total Paid</i>	<i>Paid per Claim</i>
Stimulants	43,523	66,871	46.2%	\$6,551,603	\$97.97
Antidepressants	23,187	41,292	28.5%	\$2,461,835	\$59.62
Antipsychotics	19,404	36,547	25.3%	\$8,272,432	\$226.35
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>86,114</b>	<b>144,710</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$17,285,871</b>	<b>\$119.45</b>

As expected, stimulants were the most prescribed psychotropic drug class among patients under 18 years of age. This is due to their documented efficacy in the treatment of hyperactivity disorders and approved FDA-labeling. A spreadsheet listing all patients identified is presented in Exhibit 1.

**Stimulant Drug Use Among Patients under 18 years of age**



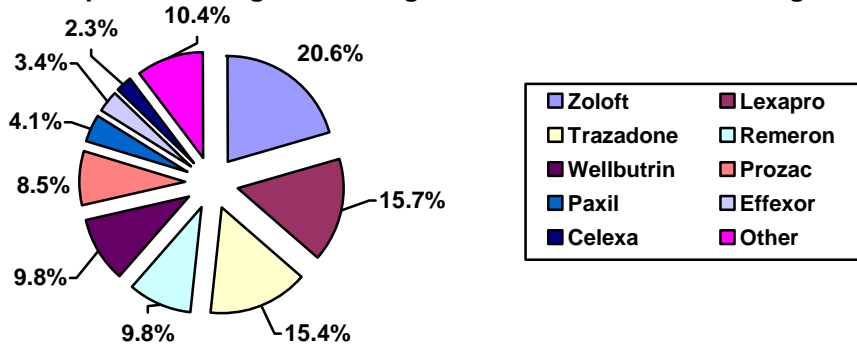
*Stimulant Drug Summary Report (July – August 2004)*

<i>Drug Class</i>	<i>Patients</i>	<i>Claims</i>	<i>Percent of Claims</i>	<i>Total Paid</i>	<i>Paid per Claim</i>
Methylphenidate	23,592	35,357	52.8%	\$3,429,073	\$96.98
Amph/Dextroamph	18,943	28,574	42.7%	\$2,893,048	\$101.25
Dexmethylphenidate	1,208	1,707	2.5%	\$98,976	\$57.98
Dextroamphetamine	609	893	1.3%	\$31,853	\$35.67

Others	237	337	0.5%	\$49,111	\$207.22
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>44,589</b>	<b>66,868</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$6,502,061</b>	<b>\$97.24</b>

Methylphenidate products such as Concerta<sup>®</sup>, Ritalin<sup>®</sup>, and Metadate<sup>®</sup> were the most prescribed stimulants. This group was followed by the combination of dextroamphetamine/amphetamine salts such as Adderall<sup>®</sup>. Dexmethylphenidate (Focalin<sup>®</sup>) and dextroamphetamines (Dexedrine<sup>®</sup>) were prescribed to nearly 4% of the population. “Other” agents such as Cylert<sup>®</sup> (pemoline), Provigil<sup>®</sup> (modafanil), and caffeine products were given to less than 1% of the study population.

**Antidepressant Drug Use Among Patients Under 18 Years of Age**

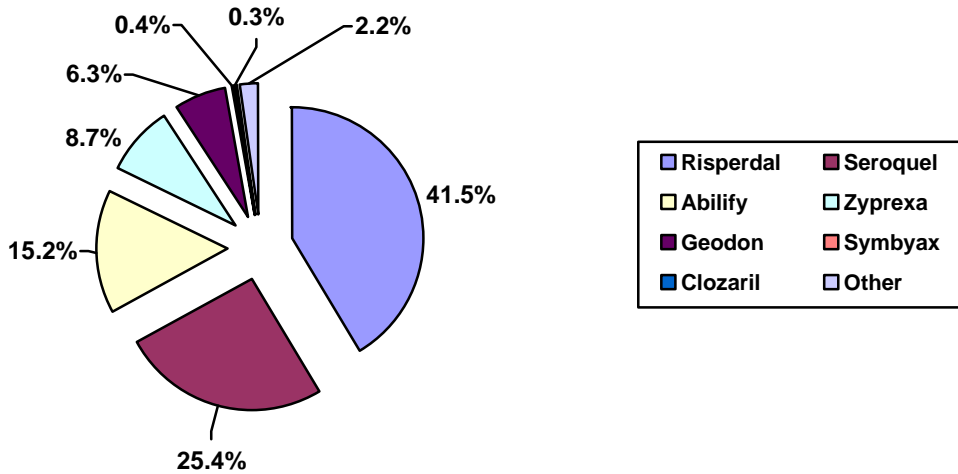


*Antidepressant Drug Summary Report (July – August 2004)*

<i>Drug Class</i>	<i>Patients</i>	<i>Claims</i>	<i>Percent of Claims</i>	<i>Total Paid</i>	<i>Paid per Claim</i>
Zoloft <sup>®</sup> (sertraline)	5,481	8,507	20.6%	\$731,150	\$85.95
Lexapro <sup>®</sup> (escitalopram)	4,180	6,486	15.7%	\$444,468	\$68.42
Desyrel <sup>®</sup> (trazodone)	4,068	6,347	15.4%	\$51,904	\$8.18
Remeron <sup>®</sup> (mirtazapine)	2,579	4,042	9.8%	\$264,123	\$65.34
Wellbutrin <sup>®</sup> (bupropion)	2,563	4,053	9.8%	\$374,421	\$92.38
Others (TCAs)	2,826	4,025	8.8%	\$65,851	\$23.30
Prozac <sup>®</sup> (fluoxetine)	2,270	3,517	8.5%	\$104,190	\$29.62
Paxil <sup>®</sup> (paroxetine)	1,180	1,701	4.1%	\$151,810	\$89.25
Effexor <sup>®</sup> (venlafaxine)	864	1,402	3.4%	\$167,024	\$119.13
Celexa <sup>®</sup> (citalopram)	595	942	2.3%	\$80,458	\$85.41
Luvox <sup>®</sup> (fluvoxamine)	149	259	0.6%	\$26,424	\$102.03
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>26,755</b>	<b>41,281</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$2,461,823</b>	<b>\$59.63</b>

Nearly 75% of all the antidepressant claims filled during the months of July and August 2004 were for agents referenced in the aforementioned March 2004 FDA warning letter. The “other” agents included Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs) such as amitriptyline, doxepin, and imipramine.

### Antipsychotic Drug Use Among Patients Under 18 Years of Age



Antipsychotic Drug Summary Report (July – August 2004)

Drug Class	Patients	Claims	Percent of Claims	Total Paid	Paid per Claim
Risperdal <sup>®</sup> (risperidone)	9,269	15,180	41.5%	\$2,905,650	\$191.41
Seroquel <sup>®</sup> (quetiapine)	5,042	9,290	25.4%	\$1,844,583	\$198.56
Abilify <sup>®</sup> (aripiprazole)	3,270	5,565	15.2%	\$1,845,510	\$331.63
Zyprexa <sup>®</sup> (olanzapine)	1,828	3,173	8.7%	\$1,048,245	\$330.36
Geodon <sup>®</sup> (ziprasidone)	1,311	2,289	6.3%	\$557,256	\$243.45
Others (TCAs)	485	760	2.2%	\$21,798	\$28.68
Symbyax <sup>®</sup> (olan/fluoxetine)	100	161	0.4%	\$40,463	\$251.32
Clozaril <sup>®</sup> (clozapine)	27	129	0.3%	\$8,918	\$69.14
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>21,332</b>	<b>36,547</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$8,272,423</b>	<b>\$226.35</b>

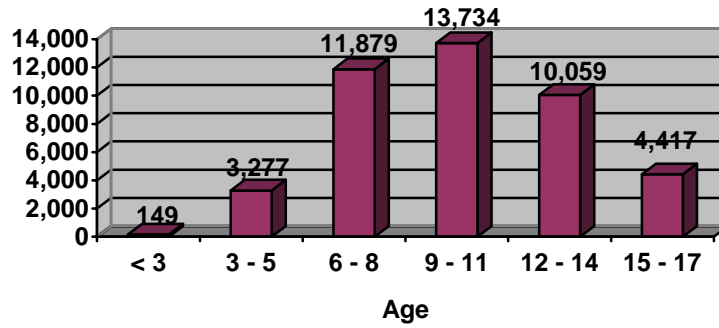
Nearly 98% of all the antipsychotics filled during the months of July and August 2004 for patients under the age of 18 were for atypical antipsychotics. No atypical antipsychotic is FDA-approved to treat patients under the age of 18.

### Demographics

#### 1. Stimulants

From July through August 2004, **43,521** recipients received at least one claim for a stimulant drug. An analysis of the age demographics is shown below. Stimulants should not be used in patients under the age of 3. It appears that 149 recipients under three years of age are currently receiving treatment with a stimulant.

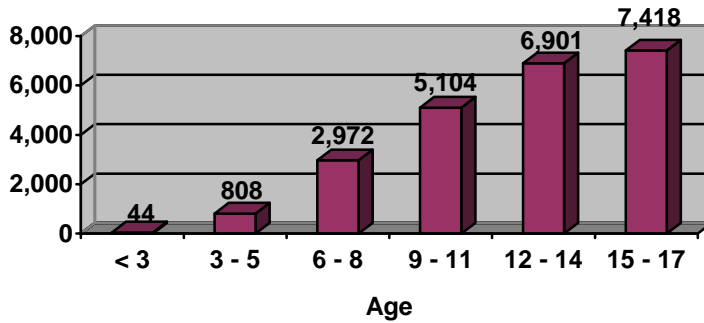
### Age Distribution for Stimulant Utilization



### 2. Antidepressants

From July through August 2004, **23,183** recipients received at least one claim for an antidepressant. An analysis of the age demographics is presented below. As mentioned earlier, antidepressants should be used with caution in children and adolescents.

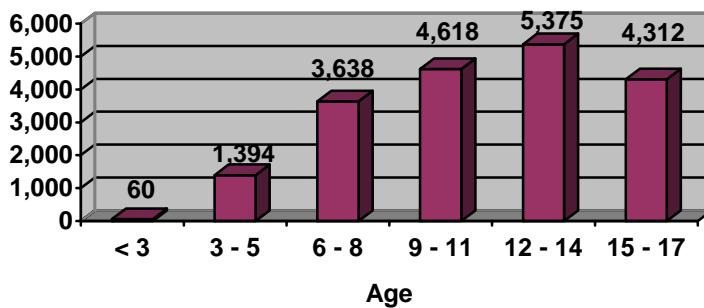
### Age Distribution for Antidepressant Utilization



### 3. Antipsychotics

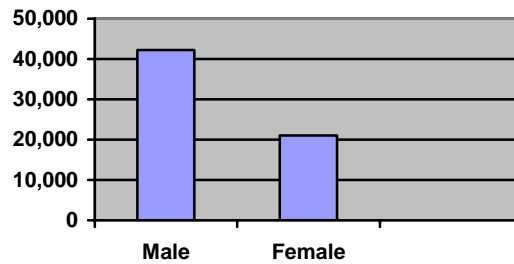
From July through August 2004, **19,403** recipients received at least one claim for an antipsychotic. An analysis of the age demographics is displayed below.

### Age Distribution for Antipsychotic Utilization



### 4. Gender Distribution

The analysis identified 63,118 recipients under the age of 18 who received at least one drug from the three drug classes reviewed. Of these, 42,220 (67%) were male and 20,898 (33%) were female.



## Clinical Evaluations

### 1. Combination Therapy

An analysis of concomitant drug therapy revealed that 19,365 or 31% of patients selected are currently taking more than one of the targeted drug classes simultaneously. Of these, nearly 25% or 4,704 patients are under the age of 9.

### 2. Inappropriate Use

#### Stimulants

Stimulant use in children is generally limited for the treatment of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The use of these agents in Narcolepsy is also well documented and established. Of the 43,521 children currently receiving treatment with stimulants, 12,335 or 28% do not have a proper diagnosis to warrant their use.

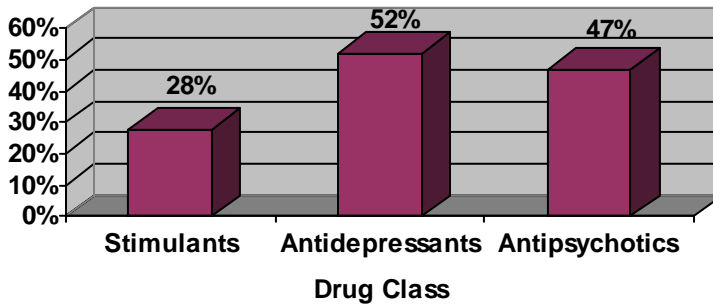
#### Antidepressants

As referenced in the introduction section of this report, antidepressant use in children is accompanied with risk of adverse drug events. Only Prozac<sup>®</sup> (fluoxetine) is FDA-approved for use in children with major depressive disorder. However, currently there appears to be 12,168 patients under 18 who do not have a documented diagnosis for the use of antidepressants. This figure is approximately 52% of all patients analyzed that are currently receiving antidepressants.

#### Antipsychotics

As documented earlier, atypical antipsychotics do not have an FDA-approved indication for the use in patients under the age of 18. However, an analysis was performed evaluating the use of these agents among patients without a history of an appropriate diagnosis documented over the past two years. The query revealed that 9,115 patients or 47% of children under 18 years of age did not have a documented diagnosis that would warrant the use of an atypical antipsychotic.

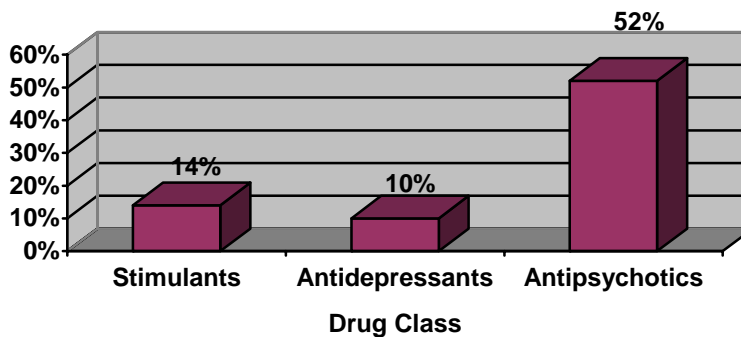
### Percentage of Potential Inappropriate Use



### 3. Inappropriate Dosing

A dosing analysis was performed evaluating inappropriate dosing among various drugs within each of the drug classes. A query was performed targeting patients who received “once-daily” drugs in divided doses. Also, claims exceeding maximum doses were also evaluated. The graph below shows the percentage of patients who received inappropriate doses within each drug class. Antipsychotics appear to be the most inappropriately used agents, particularly atypical agents, which are generally dosed once a day. Slightly over 52% of the patients receiving antipsychotics appear to have received inappropriate doses. A list containing both patients and providers who received or prescribed potential inappropriate doses is located in Exhibit 5.

### Percentage of Potential Inappropriate Dosing



There is an example of at least one patient who received several claims for potential inappropriate doses. As recent as 7/6/04, this patient received consecutive claims for Adderall XR 20mg #60 tablets for a 30-day supply (two doses per day). This agent is generally dosed once daily and its maximum dose is listed as 30mg per day. This patient exceeded the maximum dose by 10mg. In addition to the potentially inappropriate stimulant dose, this patient has received for seven consecutive months claims for Zyprexa 10mg #60 for 30-day supply. Zyprexa is also generally dosed as one tablet daily. A 20mg tablet is also available in order to simplify the aforementioned claim.

### Summary

Psychotropic drug use among children has a long history of controversy. Clear benefits of these agents have been debated and continue to cause much concern. Nevertheless, abrupt discontinuation and withdrawal of these agents carries enormous risk. Also, countless examples of successful pharmacological treatment of children with psychotropic agents have also been documented. Prudent use of these agents among these patients should be followed along with monitoring for signs or symptoms of adverse drug events.