

Fact Sheet

for YOUTH

WHAT ARE THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS?

The Child and Family Services Reviews, or CFSRs, look at what is happening to children, youth, and families receiving services in the child welfare system. A team of people from the federal government (Children's Bureau) and each state work together on the CFSR. The CFSR looks at whether the state is meeting federal requirements and how services can be improved. During the review, the team looks at specific cases, talks with people involved in those cases, and analyzes related data.

Outcomes: The CFSR examines whether children, youth, and families involved in the child welfare system have positive outcomes in three areas: safety, permanency, and well-being. Some of the questions asked to assess these outcomes include:

- Are children and youth safe in their homes?
- Can they stay with their families?
- If they are not safe, can their families receive the help they need to take care of their children?
- If children and youth come into foster care, have they stayed in contact with the people who are important to them?
- While in foster care, have children and youth been moved to different homes only when it is in their best interests?
- Have services provided to families improved their ability to care for their children?
- Are children and youth getting the services they need to be healthy and successful? What about physical health, mental health, and educational services?

Systemic Factors: The CFSR also looks at how well systemic factors are working in each state. Systemic factors are the building blocks, or the foundation, of the child welfare system. If they are not working well, children and families are less likely to be successful. The systemic factors reviewed are:

- Statewide Information System (Does the state collect accurate data about all children in foster care?)
- Case Review System (Does every child have a case plan and timely court reviews?)
- Quality Assurance System (Does the state review cases for outcomes and how is this information used to improve practice?)
- Staff and Provider Training (Are all case workers, supervisors, and foster parents provided with quality training?)
- Service Array and Resource Development (What services are available to help children, youth, and families?)
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community (How well does the agency listen to and include input from stakeholders—people involved in the child welfare system?)
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention (How does the state recruit, license, and keep foster parents?)



YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

in the CFSRS

The CFSRs bring people together who can make a difference in the state child welfare system. Hearing from youth about their experience is crucial. Youth often understand how the system works (or doesn't work) because they have experienced the child welfare system first-hand.

Youth can be involved in the CFSR in several ways:

They may be interviewed. Two types of interviews are held:

Case-related interviews: Youths' cases may be selected for review. If that happens, they will have the chance to talk with someone about their experience. They may be asked questions like:

- Did you feel safe with your family or with your foster family?
- What was your goal and did your caseworker talk to you about it?
- What kinds of services did you get and did they help you?
- How often did you see your caseworker and what did you talk about?
- Were you placed with your siblings or with other family members?
- What connections were important to you and did you get to keep them?
- How did your caseworker help you with education or health/dental needs?

Stakeholder interviews: Youth may also have the chance to be part of a group interview with other youth. The team working on the CFSR talks with youth to get information about the systemic factors listed above. In a group interview, they may be asked questions like:

- Have you been provided with the services you needed?
- What services worked well?
- Were there services that you needed or asked for that you did not receive?
- Are the services you need available nearby?
- How often do you participate in court hearings or other reviews? How are you given a chance to give input?
- How often do you see a doctor and a dentist? What services did you receive?
- In what ways has the agency helped you with educational goals?



- What gets in the way of children, youth, and families getting the services they need?
- Are services able to meet children, youth, and families' unique or special needs?

There are other ways youth can be involved in the CFSRs. For example, they might:

- Talk with other youth in foster care about the CFSR and how they can be involved.
- Help the state team select youth to be a part of focus groups and group interviews.
- Work with their state's Youth Advisory Group and look for ways the group can provide information during the CFSR and make suggestions for improvement.

GET INVOLVED

The voice of youth is critical to the CFSR process. Making positive changes that help children and youth in the child welfare system starts with understanding what youth have experienced. We hope youth will get involved and speak out.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews> or e-mail JBS International, Inc.'s Child Welfare Reviews Project at cw@jbsinternational.com. CFSR resources can also be found at <https://training.cfsrportal.org/resources/3105>.