

State and Federal Contact Information

Name of State Agency: Georgia Department of Human Resources

Period Under Review: 1999

Federal Fiscal Year for On-Site Review Sample: FFY 2000

Period of AFCARS Data: FFY 1999

Period of NCANDS Data: FFY 1999

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Introduction

Georgia's Approach to the Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Child welfare programs in Georgia are state supervised and county administered by the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and the state Office of Adoptions (SOA). The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) conducted in Georgia, July 15-22, 2001 provided an opportunity for Georgia to identify and support strengths in the child welfare system and develop strategies to improve services and outcomes for children and families where indicated.

Georgia recognizes that many of the improvements present challenges that will require clarification of some programs, policies and procedures; additional resources; careful review and evaluation of current resources and programs; additional training for staff and providers and more effective inter/intra agency collaboration and monitoring. Georgia has already started down the path with the creation of a child welfare reform agenda, "Safe Futures for Georgia's Children". Safe Futures has evolved from recommendations made by the Governor's Task Force on Child Protective Services and findings from internal management reviews. The results of the federal review have been incorporated into the Safe Futures Initiative agenda as reflected in the Cross Reference Table (see page 3).

The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) lifts from Safe Futures those goals, strategies and detailed work plans that directly respond to findings from the federal review. The PIP was developed in an open and inclusive process that included technical advisors, staff representing county departments, consumers, providers, child welfare advocates, and other stakeholders (see listing of these participants in the Appendix). These participants formed work groups to respond to each area needing improvement. Work groups will continue to monitor and assess Georgia's child welfare strategies and results. As required, the Title IV-B Advisory Committee will assist the Department of Human Resources (DHR) in developing and monitoring the annual Title IV-B State Plan. The comprehensive scope of the PIP reflects the commitment of the participants and extensive collaboration that will be required to implement the plan over the next five years.

Reform initiatives currently underway in Georgia, that support PIP achievement include the following: Community Partnerships to Prevent Child Abuse; Family-Centered Practice Training for Residential Providers (in collaboration with Annie E. Casey Foundation); the Transitional Living Program (in collaboration with Casey Family Programs); and the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta. Additionally, Georgia will continue its partnership with the Freddie Mac Foundation to recruit foster and adoptive families.

Georgia is committed to continue working with Region IV staff of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to implement and closely monitor the PIP. We believe that this partnership will result in a more responsive child welfare system for Georgia's children and families. DHR will maintain an open process in sharing results, progress and needs with Region IV staff, communities, stakeholders and the general public.

Georgia's PIP Layout

Georgia developed a narrative plan to address each area needing improvement. The appendices include a detailed work plan of each narrative description that will be used as a tool to manage

and track step-by-step progress and implementation of the PIP.

Georgia's Plan addresses each outcome and systemic factor that fell below the threshold for substantial conformity. The systemic factors addressed are Statewide Information System, Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention, and Service Array in addition to all seven outcomes. Priorities have been established for correcting areas that directly affect safety, permanency and child and family well-being.

The State has included a specific percentage of improvement that will be achieved over the duration of the plan for each statewide aggregate data indicator. Georgia will utilize technical assistance from the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency, the National Resource Center for Information and Technology, the National Resource Center for Youth Development, the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group, the Barton Child Law and Policy Clinic, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Georgia State University and other technical advisors listed in the appendices.

Safe Futures: A Framework for Change in Georgia

To respond to the results of the CFSR Final Report, Georgia developed overall goals, action strategies and timelines to provide a framework, establish priorities and to build on Georgia's strengths. The broad and far-reaching scope of these strategies will require a minimum of five years to complete. The following is an overview of action strategies involving critical systemic changes impacting the child welfare system:

- 1.** Review and revise laws, policies, procedures and develop if necessary, any standards to assure that safety, permanency and child and family well-being are clearly addressed. Provide training to all staff and providers on revisions and standards. **Expected completion date is June 2004 and ongoing.**
- 2.** Post copies of all policies, policy updates and standards on the Internet for easy access by staff, providers, judges, agency attorneys, prospective/current foster and adoptive parents and other stakeholders. **Expected completion date is June 2003 and ongoing.**
- 3.** Establish a baseline of current and future placement needs and resources (foster families, relative, adoption, group and emergency). Assure that resources are available and accessible to serve children and families. Increase the number of placement resources at all levels by 50% assuring that the additional resources match the needs, service areas and demographics of the children in care. A campaign will be launched to develop additional foster and adoptive home resources for children. **Expected completion date is June 2004 and ongoing.**

Implement a continuum of services for children and families by developing a service array and placement options for children and families, which ranges from prevention to reunification, relative care, adoption and transitional living services. **Expected completion date is June 2004 and ongoing.**
- 4.** Georgia has accepted the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) staffing standards of caseworker to client ratio for CPS and foster care. **Annual efforts will be made to request and advocate for caseworkers to meet these standards by June 2004. Expected**

completion date is June 2004 and ongoing.

5. Continue on-going work agreements and relationships with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Georgia Supreme Court (Court Improvement Project), Special Assistant Attorneys General, (SAAGS), Juvenile Courts, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA's), providers, consumers and all other stakeholders in the child welfare system.

Expected completion date is 2001 and ongoing.

Continue annual cross training with the above agencies to provide and share information that leads to a common understanding of how to expedite permanency for children in care. **Expected completion date is October 2002 and ongoing.**

6. Utilize Quarterly Reports sent to the Region IV ACF Office to monitor and assess progress and to revise strategies as needed. AFCARS data and other measurable benchmarks identified in the PIP will be addressed in each quarterly report. **Expected completion date is ongoing.**

7. Conduct an annual qualitative evaluation, similar to the CFSR, of a representative number of preventive (from the Federal Promoting Safe and Stable Families grant), child protective service (CPS), foster care, adoption, and independent living cases utilizing the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group, county supervisors, Social Service Consultation and Support, Program Staff, IV-B Advisory Members, stakeholders and other contractors. **Expected completion date is June 2004 and ongoing.**

8. Continue child safety reviews of county CPS and foster care cases records conducted by the DFCS Evaluation and Reporting Section (E & R). **Expected completion date is 2002 and ongoing.**

9. Contingent upon Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) PAPD and IAPD approvals, continue initial steps to build a SACWIS that supports and monitors child welfare case management services. **Expected date of completion for Release 1 is December 2003.**

10. Develop a campaign to increase public awareness regarding progress on implementing the PIP. **Expected completion date is January 2003 and on going.**

Cross Reference Table: Safe Futures Initiative, CPS Task Force Recommendations, and CFSR Outcomes

Safe Futures	CFSR Outcomes and Systemic Factors	CPS Task Force
Improve state and local accountability for improving positive outcomes for children and families	Items 30, 31, 38, 39	Perform an independent management audit of DFCS; Assure uniform implementation of DFCS policies and procedures; Assure accountability with

Safe Futures	CFSR Outcomes and Systemic Factors	CPS Task Force
		<p>appropriate rewards and sanctions;</p> <p>All elements under transformation and accountability;</p> <p>Creating the cabinet council</p>
New community partnerships focus on the prevention and early intervention of child abuse and neglect	Items 3, 38, 39, 40	<p>Promote robust partnerships that strengthen the ability of local communities to keep children safe;</p> <p>Require support and invest in local;</p> <p>Examine all federal and state funding sources for access to prevention funding without supplanting existing investments;</p> <p>Enhance the first call for help (211) help line for statewide use</p>
Responsive child protective services investigations	<p>Item 1-Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment;</p> <p>Items 02, 04</p>	<p>Establish a statewide 1-800 abuse reporting system;</p> <p>Fund, automate and implement SDM;</p> <p>Improve investigative skills; public awareness and education for mandated reports</p>
Redesign child welfare practice	<p>Items 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16;</p> <p>WB1-all items</p>	Create stronger linkages between child protection, substance abuse treatment and domestic violence initiatives
Well trained stable workforce	Items 32-34	<p>Increase the number of case workers, pay, training and supervision;</p> <p>Provide caseworker tools to perform at high levels</p>
Fully developed continuum of services and supports for children and their families	<p>P2-Items 11, 12, 15;</p> <p>WB2-all items;</p>	Expanding resources available for substance abuse treatment and home visitation as part of an increased commitment to prevention programs

Safe Futures	CFSR Outcomes and Systemic Factors	CPS Task Force
(whether birth, foster or adoptive)	WB3-all items; Items 35, 36, 37, 40	and services
Expedited permanency for children in foster care	Items 5-10, 25-27, 29, 41-45	Improve court skills
Integrated information systems	Item 24	Contingent upon SACWIS PAPD and IAPD approvals, establish a statewide, integrated, comprehensive information system

Georgia's Safe Futures Program Improvement Plan

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

Item 2 - Repeat maltreatment (and maltreatment of children in foster care)

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses the incidence of child abuse or neglect or both in foster care. This incidence is defined as the number of children who were reported in National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System as maltreated by a foster parent or a residential facility staff person for the nine-month period of January 1, 1999 through September 30, 1999, divided by the population of children served in foster care, as reported in AFCARS, for the same time period.

Georgia's 1999 incidence of maltreatment in foster care (1.08%) did not meet the (amended) national standard of 0.57%.

Plan

1. Clarify policy regarding discipline policy violations in foster care.
2. Analyze foster care maltreatment report data with the aim of informing decision making on this PIP. **Two months ago, our 2001 incidence rate of maltreatment in foster care was 0.82%. That's a 0.26% reduction, well beyond where Georgia needs to be to meet the national standard. The analysis will help the State to determine what influences this number.**
3. Examine policy and training effectiveness for foster caregivers and public and private agency staff. Recommend policy and training changes. Monitor effectiveness of policy and training changes.
4. Examine the association between demands placed on foster parents and the incidence of maltreatment in foster care. Recommend improvements to the foster parent support services array in concert with the Item 6 and Item 17. Monitor effectiveness of support services array changes.

Measurable Benchmarks

Georgia will seek to improve the incidence rate to 0.94% by June 30, 2004.

Evaluation

1. Quarterly monitoring reports will analyze and compare outcome data with the 2001 Child and Family Services Review.
2. Progress/needs will be addressed and revised as needed in the annual Title IV-B State Plan.
3. A Qualitative Case Review (QCR), similar to the CFSR, will be conducted with the assistance of the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG) on a representative sampling of cases. County supervisors, all DFCS state office Social Services Program units, Title IV-B Advisory

Committee members, and other stakeholders may participate in this review. The findings from the first QCR will be included in the 2003 Title IV-B State Plan.

See Work Plan Table Appendix A

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

Item 3 - Services to families to protect children in home and prevent removal

Item 4 - Risk of harm to child

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses findings that in home services do not adequately protect children; mental health services are not readily available to families. The Open Records Law coupled with the findings of premature closure of substance abuse and domestic violence cases is intimidating to caseworkers.

This plan also addresses the finding that 77.5% of case outcomes in items 3 and 4 rated were substantially met, 12.2% were rated as partially achieved, and 10.2% were rated not achieved. It is Georgia's goal to improve these outcomes **by 2%** by January 1, 2004.

Plan

1. Determine at what stage a more extensive family assessment process can be incorporated into the CPS family assessment process.
 - A. Review CPS and Foster Care policy regarding the assessment of family and child mental health, substance abuse or domestic violence issues.
 - B. Review CPS and Foster Care policy regarding case closure, particularly where there are mental health, substance abuse or domestic violence issues.
 - C. Expand First Placement/Best Placement (FP/BP) family assessment process for in-home cases. Develop any new required CPS policy/procedure for this process.
 - D. Develop CPS and Foster Care policy regarding case closure to prevent premature case closure, especially in substance abuse and domestic violence situations.
 - E. Involve substance abuse and domestic violence experts in the cross planning between DFCS programs, policy and services needs.
 - F. Determine statewide the level of funding needed to support a more in-depth assessment of family needs that begins in CPS.
 - G. Develop training on the revised CPS family assessment process.
 - H. Provide training on the revised CPS family assessment and case closure process to staff.
 - I. Pilot the revised CPS family assessment process in representative counties.

- J. Evaluate the revised CPS family assessment process, particularly regarding mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence issues.
2. Implement community partnerships for the protection of children in representative counties. Determine whether and if so, how the expansion of prevention and early intervention strategies within communities affects the provision of services, especially those that target mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence. The communities will focus on the following areas:
 - A. Planning and outcomes.
 - B. Local collaborative partnership building.
 - C. Development of core strategies.
 - D. Resource development to support partnerships.
3. Develop and provide for CPS staff training for handling requests for case-related information through the Open Records Act.
 - A. Through the Statewide CPS Advisory Panel, develop strategies to address workers' issues of liability and fear.
 - B. Involve the Statewide CPS Advisory Panel in the development of a statewide public relations image-building plan.

Measurable Benchmarks

Georgia's 1999 incidence for items 3 and 4 was reported as 77.5% of cases reviewed were rated substantially met; 12.2% of cases reviewed were rated as partially achieved; 10.2 cases were rated not achieved. It is Georgia's goal to improve this outcome by 2% by January 1, 2004. Qualitative reviews integrated into the Evaluation and Reporting Section's Child Safety Review Process will be conducted to determine if the goal for improvement has been met. The qualitative reviews will be similar to the ones used in the CFSR.

Evaluation

It is anticipated that the assessment of family strengths and needs, particularly regarding the presence of substance abuse and domestic violence will become more thorough. It is anticipated that cases will not be prematurely closed. A comparison to the results of Georgia's 2001 CFSR and the level of compliance will be made after additional policy clarification, training and program implementation is operational. An annual Qualitative Case Review (QCR) similar to the CFSR will be completed on a representative sampling of case records.

The strategy is the development of an evaluation process that will determine the effectiveness of a more extensive family assessment and of a family conferencing process within the CPS program. Begin basic data collection on recidivism, serious injury and foster care placements.

The following is a description of when the cases are to be reviewed:

1. Each county will have completed defining the evaluation questions to be asked, its evaluation design, implementation and reporting plan by the end of state FY 2003. The first full year of data for use in measuring the three outcomes listed above will be available at the end of state FY 2004 (i.e., June 30, 2004).
2. Policy/procedure is currently being developed for family assessment/family conferencing. Necessary policy/procedure revisions will be completed by September 2002. The pilot is planned to begin in the fall of 2002.

The following is a description of where the cases are to be reviewed:

1. There are nine pilot Community partnerships to Protect Children (CPPC) counties: Catoosa, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, Peach, Clarke, Muscogee, Jenkins and Brantley. These same nine counties will also pilot the new family assessment and family conferencing currently being developed for CPS cases.
2. The pilot for the family assessment/family conferencing will be in these same nine counties.

The following is a description of how the evaluation process will be evaluated:

1. Evaluation technical assistance is being provided through a partnership with Family Connection Partnership. The community partnership strategy has an outcome and evaluation team comprised of Social Services and Family Connection staff that is meeting regularly. The state Evaluation and Reporting Section will support the quantitative data needs of the team. Evaluation, training and technical assistance to the nine counties will be coordinated through the Family Connection regional evaluation and state staff.
2. State evaluation for the community partnerships will be coordinated through the Social Services Section and, as appropriate, linked to the work of the Accountability team as part of Georgia's Safe Futures initiative. Funds have been secured to purchase the extended family assessment and family conferencing through a vendor. The outline for policy/procedure is complete and work has begun on making necessary revisions to existing policy/procedure.

See Work Plan Table Appendix B

Permanency #1 Children have permanency and stability in their living situation.

Item 6 - Stability of foster care placement

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses the stability of children in foster care placements. The foster care placement stability indicator is defined as the proportion of all children who have been in foster care less than twelve months from the time of the latest removal that have had no more than two placement settings. Georgia's 1999 statewide data for stability of foster care exceeded the national standard (Georgia: 92.4%, National: 86.7%), and were therefore in compliance.

However, during the on-site review portion of the CSFR, in 8 out of 27 cases reviewed (29.6%), the stability of foster care placement was found to be an area needing improvement. Thus, the on-site review found that 70.4% of cases reviewed were stable, creating a discrepancy with the 92.4% reported from statewide data. To resolve this discrepancy, Georgia has accepted the indicator as not substantially achieved and has stipulated this as an area needing improvement.

The following were identified as the major reasons for placement disruptions:

- Lack of availability of homes for sexually abused children and children with emotional/behavioral issues were identified in some of the records reviewed.
- In some of the records reviewed, reviewers noted that the use of shelter care placement creates an automatic move, even for newborn and young children.
- There were indications that children with multiple serious needs that require intensive services were left with no adequate supporting services to support them, and in some cases, workers provided referral services after foster parents requested it.
- Stakeholders expressed need for resources in Kinship care and services to relatives to support placements.

The 1999 statewide implementation of First Placement/ Best Placement (FP/ BP) assessments for each child entering foster care has resulted in the availability of more thorough information for DHR, DFCS staff, the court system and other stakeholders to make more appropriate placement and permanency decisions for children and families. The availability of additional therapeutic resources, better preparation, training, and support of caregivers has and will continue to impact the stability of children in foster care. In addition, a Relative Care Subsidy has been put into place to assist relatives with the care of children placed with them. It is anticipated that this subsidy will also impact continuity of family relationships and permanency outcomes.

Issues

1. There is confusion around the definition of placement moves.
2. The demographics, characteristics e.g. Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Score (CAFAS scores), and needs of children with multiple placement settings should be analyzed.
3. The actual number of children who are not placed in the best placement based on the recommendations of the FP/BP and Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) staffing needs to be determined.
4. Case files are not adequately documented due to staff turnover.
5. FP/BP assessments should be used more consistently to provide services for children and families, develop case plans, and support placement/ permanency decisions.
6. A full continuum of care for children/ families, which includes family support services, family foster care, institutional care, adoption and transitional living needs to be established.

Plan

1. Clarify the current AFCARS policy regarding Georgia's definition of a placement move and determine how to count periodic temporary "placements". Where it is known in advance that the placement is temporary for the purpose of respite, hospitalizations, mental health treatment stabilizations, and also the plan is to return the child to the same foster home, this placement should not be counted in the number of placements in the episode.
2. Georgia will examine the methodology for extracting the data from the system to address the data discrepancy.
3. Revise and distribute policy definition of how to count a placement move in Georgia.
4. Analyze data at the county and worker level to identify issues of stability on a certain caseload or in a certain county.
5. Georgia will continue to require all providers to complete a Multi Disciplinary Team Meeting for each Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment to determine the appropriate placement of all children entering foster care within the first 30 to 60 days of the child entering care.
6. Georgia will provide technical assistance (T/A) to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to use FP/ BP assessment information to make the most appropriate permanency decisions and the implementation of new FP/BP Wrap Around Services at the beginning of the child's stay in care. The FP/BP information will be used to develop more effective case plans for the child and family.
7. Georgia will complete an annual review of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program to include on site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases. This review will be similar to the federal on site review. Children, caregivers/families and other stakeholders will be interviewed. Fulton County will be included at each annual review.
8. Georgia will complete a report of the annual review of selected counties.
9. Georgia will continue to assess the effectiveness and impact of the First Placement/Best Placement Program (assessments and Wrap Around Services) in reducing the number of placements for children in foster care.

Measurable Benchmarks

Georgia will seek to incrementally improve this item 3% by September 2002 and 3% by September 2003.

Evaluation

Georgia anticipates that the stability of children in foster care will decrease after the definitions of placements are clarified in policy. Georgia will compare the stability rates before and after the policy clarification to evaluate this hypothesis. We will also examine the mix of cases to determine what reason for disruption is reported most frequently and the most likely setting for multiple disruptions. If the stability of children in foster care has not improved significantly

within 2 quarters, then the following additional actions will be taken:

1. The state review group, which includes stakeholders, will complete on-site case reviews of an additional 50 randomly selected cases and provide technical assistance to selected counties of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program.
2. Recommend additional training and policy changes.
3. Test whether stability of children changes after training and policy changes with newly selected counties.
4. Identify if appropriate, other factors that may contribute to the stability of children in foster care.

See Work Plan Table Appendix C

Item 7 - Permanency goal for child

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses permanency goals for children. It addresses the length of time to achieve reunification as well as the other permanency goals. Georgia did not meet the national standard of 76.20% of children achieving reunification within 12 months. Areas needing improvement include: taking adequate, timely steps toward achieving the permanency goal, actively offering foster parents available services toward permanency, doing more frequent reviews, especially when the goal is reunification, identifying and eliminating delays in filing TPR (Termination of Parental Rights) by workers in court, and better documentation of compelling reasons if not filing TPR, the quality of the care of the children in the Fulton and Dekalb County public emergency shelters; the safety of those children placed at the shelter; and finally the lack of recruitment of minority foster parents.

Plan

1. Incremental increase in the number of caseworkers in order to achieve more manageable caseloads and to expedite the achievement of permanency goals for children.
2. Improve documentation as the basis on which decisions are made to file for TPR, including compelling reasons not to file.
3. Assure that every child coming into care has a Comprehensive FP/BP Assessment, which addresses the child's placement, and permanency needs.
4. Provide annual cross training for all participants in the system so that the permanency for children is fully understood.
5. Privatize public shelters for children and ensure their compliance with the Office of Regulatory Services standard, rules and findings.
6. Recruit and retain more minority foster and adoptive resources.

7. Involve foster parents in the provision of permanency planning services for children.
8. Examine the State's current case review system to determine the optimum frequency of reviews needed for expediting permanency.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. The Department of Human Resources will make annual requests to the state legislature with the goal of working toward achieving CWLA caseload standards by June 2004. The benchmark Georgia wants to be measured by is to document effort in working toward the standard.
2. Develop staff performance standards with county staff, field directors and social service staff by December 2002 to assure that the next Federal Review accurately documents case files to reflect every placement of a child in foster care.
3. Conduct an assessment of FP/BP with contractors, county offices and providers by September 2002 to determine if FP/BP assessments are completed on each child entering care.
4. Assure that every new child entering foster care will have its case plan documented in the Case Plan Reporting System (CPRS) by September 2002.
5. Conduct annual cross training with judges, DFCS staff, Dept. Juvenile Justice and agency attorneys each year in November.
6. Launch a joint state and county campaign to recruit, approve and retain minority foster parents based on the number of minority children in placement. Increase the number of minority foster parents incrementally: 15% by November 2002; 25% by September 2003; and 25% by September 2004.
7. Complete revisions of the foster parent manual and post on the Internet by September 2002.
8. Expand emergency placement options with the private sector such that the Fulton and DeKalb county Emergency placement facilities will no longer be operated by these two agencies by January 2002.
9. Georgia is implementing intensive wrap around services to expedite permanency goals for family and children. In FFY 2004 Georgia expects to increase the number of children reunified within 12 months to 76%.

Evaluation

1. Incremental reduction of caseloads by June 2004.
2. Supervisors, Consultation and Support, and Evaluation & Reporting (E & R) will conduct random reviews of files to make sure documentation is current by September 2002.
3. An evaluation of FP/BP will occur annually.
4. A report will be developed quarterly from the Case Plan Reporting System (CPRS) about

documented permanency goals from around the state.

5. Informal reviews will take place by supervisors to monitor practice.
6. Georgia's Court Improvement Program (CIP) will evaluate a sample of court case files annually to see if permanency hearings are occurring for every child.
7. Georgia's CIP will evaluate a sample of court case files annually to see if more frequent hearings lead to faster permanency.
8. Spot checks will be done at random by calling a representative number of foster parents to make sure they have a Foster Parent Manual by July 2002.
9. Log files will be examined to see if the manual is being used by September 2002.
10. Additional emergency placement options within the private sector will be increased each year to reduce the use of Fulton and Dekalb county public emergency placement facilities November 2002.
11. The results of the Recruitment Campaign will be analyzed to determine if there is an increase in the number of minority placement resources. The most effective recruitment methods will be identified and evaluated.

See Work Plan Table Appendix D

Item 9 - Adoption

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

Length of Time to Achieve Adoption

Of all children who exited care to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from the home?

	National Standard	Georgia
FFY 1999	32%	23.05%

The state did not meet the standard in this area but has made major strides in adoption planning and placement following a change in State law in 1996 that created the Office of Adoptions and Senate Bill 611, which addressed timely Tars. The mission of the Office of Adoptions is to promote, develop and support quality adoption services for Georgia's families and children. The goals and objectives are centered on reducing the length of stay in foster care and moving children into adoption in a timely manner in order to meet the national standard.

In order to meet the national standard it is imperative to have a coordinated effort of DFCS, Office of Adoptions, Courts, Law Department and a statutory base which supports and enforces

timely decision making. The following are the goals/strategies that are necessary to make the required improvements.

Plan

1. Reduce lengthy time period to file TPR:
 - A. Improve accountability for ensuring existing policies and procedures related to filing of TPR are adhered to.
 - B. Develop measures to determine that TPR is filed according to ASFA and policy.
 - C. Develop strategies in partnership with the law department that will require the SAAGS to file TPR within 30 days of receiving a complete legal service referral and prepare court orders within 15 days of termination hearing.
2. Reduce lengthy time periods to finalize adoptions.
 - A. Determine needed statutory changes that will impact the length of time to achieve adoption.
 - B. Include post termination requirements in CPRS review.
 - C. Examine foster care and adoption policy requirements for impact on length of time to achieve adoption.
3. DFCS to expedite movement of children from foster care to adoption finalization.
 - A. Develop a court order tracking system to verify full reporting of free children by county offices (until implementation of SACWIS).
 - B. Office of Adoptions will provide DFCS and Social Services Director, Field Directors and County Directors with quarterly reports of overdue life histories.
4. Determine if court delays are impacting length of time to achieve adoption.
 - A. Court Improvement Project will complete assessment of juvenile court process through surveys and interviews of judges and case file review to identify specific barriers.
 - B. DFCS will provide a checklist of services for the purpose of improving judicial oversight during annual reviews.
 - C. Enhance existing adoptions A-file system to evaluate and identify whether delays are occurring between filing for adoption and finalization.
 - D. Convene group of stakeholders including judges, caseworkers, supervisors, SAAGS, CASAS, GALs, and citizen panel volunteers to develop strategies to resolve problems and support identified achievements.
 - E. Monitor new pilot project taking place in Fulton County where Superior Court Judges have delegated adoption jurisdiction to Juvenile Court Judges for adoption cases where the deprivation petition originated in the juvenile court.

5. Inform foster parents of service options available to them if they adopt.
 - A. Provide Adoption Assistance Handbook and Post Adoption Services Directory to all foster care and adoption MAPP participants.
 - B. At time of signing of Form 150 provide copies of the Adoption Assistance Handbook and the Post Adoption Services Directory, if foster parents do not have current literature. Also provide current web listing of post adoption services.
 - C. At time of signing of the Form 33/37 Placement Agreement, review existing literature and provide packet of resource information from Adoption Resource Center.
 - D. Train placement and resource development staff on benefits and services for adoptive parents.
 - E. Develop a web page for the Adoption Assistance Manual and Handbook.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Increase the percentage of children exiting foster care for adoption within 24 months of their last removal from the home. Increase to 25% by June 2004.
2. Reduce the time from TPR to registration of the child's life history from current average of ten months to six (6) months by June 2004.
3. Reduce the time from the child's adoptive placement to finalization from the current average of 7.56 months to six (6) months by June 2004.

Evaluation

A Qualitative Case Review (QCR), similar to the CFSR, will be conducted with the assistance of the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG) on a representative sampling of cases. County supervisors, Social Service Program Staff, Consultation and Support Units, Title IV- B Advisory Committee members and other stakeholders may participate in this review. The results of the first QCR will be included in the 2003 Title IV-B State Plan.

See Work Plan Table Appendix E

Item 10 - Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses the understanding and development of other planned permanent living arrangements for children who cannot be reunified with their parents, adopted, referred for legal guardianship, nor placed permanently with a fit and willing relative. The federal review revealed a need for developing other permanency options such as guardianships, long-term foster care by agreement and emancipation. There was also concern about case plans that are not developed with recognition of serious underlying problems that influence certain behaviors. The Review

emphasized the need for other permanency options, such as: legal guardianship of children who are 12 years or older and children who do not want to be adopted.

Plan

1. Provide cross-training and technical assistance to participants (Sags, judges, caseworkers) in the child welfare system regarding appropriate circumstances to select the permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement and how to document decisions on case plans when selected.
2. Evaluate guardianship laws and determine if they present any barriers to choosing guardianship as an option.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Foster parents will understand the difference between the various permanency goals and all of their potential roles in the child's life (such as long-term foster care by agreement) through enhanced MAPP training and Foster Parent Institutes by December 2002.
2. Revise new worker and supervisor training as well as on-going training content to include a higher documentation standard for this permanency goal resulting in workers understanding the need for very good documentation to justify their choices, when faced with choosing emancipation or long term foster care by December 2002.
3. A report on the current guardianship laws will be prepared by March 2004.

Evaluation

1. A survey sampling of foster parents will reveal if training is successful.
2. Case files showing choices of emancipation or long term foster care will show thorough documentation of compelling reasons.
3. DHR will propose changes in guardianship laws as necessary.

See Work plan Table Appendix F

Permanency #2 The continuity of family relationships and connections will be preserved for children.

Item 12 - Placement with siblings

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

While there were significant efforts to place siblings together in roughly 72% of the cases reviewed, other cases reviewed revealed the necessity for improvement in this area. The problems identified are: (1) too much emphasis on locating placement, rather than placing siblings together; (2) insufficient documentation to show that adequate efforts were made to place children in the same home; (3) lack of training for foster parents to equip them with the tools needed to provide care for children with special needs and behavioral problems (also a

barrier for sibling group placement); (4) and a need to recruit more foster parents who can accommodate large sibling groups.

Plan

1. **Request and advocate for caseworkers to meet CWLA staffing standards.** The most important step toward improving the percentage of children who are placed together with their siblings is a reduction in caseloads. As reported in the review, because of the time constraints associated with high caseloads, too much emphasis is on locating an available placement rather than spending the time necessary to identify more appropriate placements that will accept sibling groups. A reduction in caseloads by hiring additional caseworkers will require significant monetary appropriations and therefore will require the commitment of and advocacy by the Governor, DHR/DFCS, and child advocates with the General Assembly. Such an effort must be sustained over several fiscal years.
2. **Improve documentation of efforts to place siblings in the same home.** Reducing caseloads to a manageable level will also provide each caseworker with adequate time to document efforts to place siblings in the same home. It is believed that caseworkers often do attempt placement of siblings together, but because of time constraints, do not take additional time to document those efforts. Improved accountability of supervisors is also an important element of improved documentation. Adapting current DFCS Supervisory Review Forms and the case plan to include documentation of efforts to place siblings together will enhance such accountability.
3. **Explore other states' models on how to recruit and retain foster homes that accept large sibling groups.** Florida and Illinois have led the nation in developing models for keeping sibling groups together. One of these models is Hull House. To determine their viability in Georgia, thorough research is required. A review of literature on these models, interviews with key participants, and research with the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning. If appropriate, a pilot will be developed for Georgia with a subsequent evaluation for statewide consideration. Targeted recruiting of foster homes that will accommodate large sibling groups will be undertaken.
4. **Provide training and support for foster parents, and specifically, those who parent large sibling groups.** Training and support is essential to attract and retain a sufficient pool of foster parents who accept large sibling groups. Foster parents must be provided with specialized training applicable to managing sibling group dynamics as well as be provided with respite care so as not to burn out or request separation of siblings. These efforts must be sustained and on going in order to have a sufficient number of caregivers available.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Request and advocate for case workers to meet the CWLA staffing standards by **June 2004.**
2. Supervisory Review Form will be adapted to document efforts to place siblings together (at the time of their reviews) by February 2003.
3. Supervisors are trained to document efforts to place siblings together (at the time of their reviews) by **June 2003.**

4. Case plan is adapted to document efforts to place siblings together by March 2003.
5. Caseworkers are trained to document efforts to place siblings together (in case plans) by June 2003.
6. Research Hull House and States' statutory initiatives developed to maintain sibling groups, including legislation, literature, and interviews with participants and National Resource Centers by January 2003.
7. Develop the objectives and evaluation (for six above) to pilot in Georgia and prepare for implementation by March 2003.
8. Enhanced utilization of the new Relative Caregiver Subsidy (RCS) through training and awareness by December 2002.
9. Implement targeted recruitment of foster homes willing to accept sibling groups. Include importance of keeping siblings together in education of prospective foster parents by December 2002.
10. Develop foster parent training to include specialized segments on managing sibling groups by December 2002.
11. Request and advocate for increased respite care funding to prevent placement disruptions. Ongoing through June 2004.
12. Develop resource homes to provide respite for foster parents and children in placement by June 2004.

Evaluation

1. Documentation of efforts to reduce caseloads to CWLA standards. Ongoing through June 2004.
2. Efforts to place siblings in the same home will be documented in at least 90% of the cases by June 2004.
3. If the model is evaluated successfully, at least one pilot site will be implemented in Georgia and an evaluation of that pilot will take place by June 2004.
4. Determine the number of foster parents who will accept sibling groups and establish a percentage of the additional homes needed by December 2002.

See Work Plan Table Appendix G

Item 13 - Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

In roughly 33% of the cases reviewed, visits between parents and siblings of children in foster care were a problem. Problems identified included: (1) high caseloads; and (2) staff turnover, which affects caseworkers' ability to schedule adequate and meaningful visits with parents and

siblings in foster care. In one site, the majority of cases reviewed showed a lack of contacts between parents and siblings in foster care. Visits that did occur took place in the DFCS office without documentation as to the reasons why other less restrictive visiting arrangements were not made, nor were efforts made to be flexible in arranging visits outside the agency.

Plan

1. **Request and advocate for caseworkers to meet CWLA staffing standards.** The single most important step toward improving the number and quality of visits and contacts between parents and children is a reduction in caseloads. As reported in the review, this is often attributable to the time constraints associated with high caseloads. Visits that do occur often take place in the DFCS office due to these same limitations. A reduction in caseloads by hiring additional caseworkers will require significant monetary appropriations and therefore will require the commitment of and advocacy by the Governor, DHR/DFCS, and child advocates with the General Assembly. Such an effort must be sustained over several fiscal years.
2. **Improve documentation of visits that do occur and reasons explaining nature/location of those visits.** Reducing caseloads to a manageable level will also provide each caseworker with adequate time to document visits that do occur. It is believed that caseworkers do visit children and parents more often than is documented, but because of time constraints, do not take additional time to document those visits. Improved accountability of supervisors is also an important element of improved documentation. Adapting current DFCS Supervisory Review Forms and the case plan to include documentation of visits will enhance such accountability.
3. **Provide training to emphasize the importance of visitation in the role of maintaining familial bonds.** More emphasis in caseworker training on the importance of maintaining the continuity of family relationships and connections must be achieved. Such training should occur not only in new-hire training, but also as part of ongoing professional development of caseworker staff.
4. **Develop additional visitation centers that allow visitation in the evenings and on weekends for parents and children.** Promotion and development of community-based visitation centers that are designed with a working parent's schedule in mind are critical to increasing the number and quality of interactions between parent and child while reducing the number of more restrictive visits at the agency. Such parent-child friendly environments contribute to promoting continuity of relationships and toward successful reunification.

Measurable Benchmarks

See Item 12, Measurable Benchmarks, 1-7.

1. Request and advocate for caseworkers to meet CWLA standards by June 2004.
2. Supervisory Review Form will be adapted to include efforts to place siblings together in their reviews by February 2003.
3. Supervisors are trained to include efforts to place siblings together in their reviews by June 2003.

4. Case plan is adapted to include efforts to place siblings together by March 2003.
5. Caseworkers are trained to include efforts to place siblings together in case plan by June 2003.
6. New caseworker training will include segment with emphasis on importance of visitation by December 2002.
7. On-going training and professional development will include a segment on importance of visitation by December 2002.
8. Develop guidelines on how to establish and operate visitation centers by September 2003.
9. Continue to utilize Safe and Stable Families Grant to fund visitation centers.

Evaluation

1. Establish a baseline of where most visits occur by December 2002.
2. Evaluation of caseworker training will reflect understanding of importance of visitation by February 2003.

See Work Plan Table Appendix H

Child and Family Well-Being #1 Families will have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Item 17 - Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of Problem

This area addresses the need for appropriate services in the areas of mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence. Other areas include the need for up front comprehensive assessments, and the need for individualized and not just standardized services. Additionally case managers and supervisors were not always aware of the available services; there was a lack of follow through when assessments were completed and the duration of substance abuse services ended too soon.

Plan

1. Georgia will continue to require all providers to complete a Multi-Disciplinary Team Staffing for each Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment to determine the appropriate needs and services of all children and families entering foster care within the first 30 to 60 days of the child entering care.
2. Georgia will provide technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to complete a FP/BP comprehensive assessment and how to use the collected information to make the most appropriate permanency decision at the beginning of the child's stay in foster care. The FP/ BP information will also be used to develop more effective case plans for the child and family.

3. Georgia will provide technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers of the content of the FB/BP comprehensive assessment and how to use the collected information to meet the health, mental health, dental and educational needs of the child and family.
4. Georgia will provide technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to use the collected FP/BP information to meet the child and family needs as it related to post substance abuse counseling, monitoring and support as a part of the early intervention process and/or in-home intensive treatment services.
5. Complete a monthly county-by-county report as it relates to the initial assessment of the First Placement/Best Placement Comprehensive Assessment and the identified types of placements needed and available to provide permanent homes for children.
6. Complete a monthly county-by-county report as it relates to the frequency of First Placement/ Best Placement Wrap Around Services used for each child in foster care.
7. Georgia will complete an annual statewide review of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program to include on site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases. This review will be similar to the federal on site review. Children, caregivers/families and other stakeholders will be interviewed. Fulton will be included at each annual review.
8. Georgia will complete an annual review throughout the state of the First Placement/Best Placement Wrap Around Services Program by completing on-site case reviews during the same time as completing the random selected case review in #7.
9. Georgia will continue to assess the effectiveness and impact of the First Placement/Best Placement Program Assessment Program and Wrap Around Services Program in reducing the number of children in foster care once the family's needs have been identified and services have been completed.
10. Develop policy regarding case closure to prevent premature closure especially in substance abuse and domestic violence situations.
11. Georgia will work in conjunction with the DFCS Economic Support Services Section to assure that families have access to adequate housing, food and income.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Georgia will provide on-site training and technical assistance to staff and providers on how to use FP/BP assessments and services as it relates to mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, and individualized service delivery by September 2003.
2. Georgia will post on the web the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Resource Guide by June 2002.
3. Improve Fulton County DFACS case transfer procedures for CPS, Foster Care and Adoption by June 2002.

Evaluation

Please see Evaluation for Items 3 and 4, page 8.

Item 18 - Child and family involvement in case planning

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses involvement and participation of parents of children in foster care in the development of the case plan. Georgia's failure points were in documentation. While smaller counties were better in ensuring parental involvement, the larger county (Fulton) was insufficient in making sure that parents were included, especially if the parents did not actively seek involvement.

The statewide assessment revealed that state law promotes the involvement and participation of parents of children in foster care in the development of the case plan. Parents receive written notice of the case plan meeting. The law also requires that any recommendations of the parent be included in the case plan when submitted to the court for review. As part of the Judicial Review Report, the county must include: the parent's receipt of advance written notice, the extent of parental participation and the parent's agreed upon obligations or why the parent does not concur. The parent's lack of participation and/or availability in the case planning process must be documented.

Plan

1. Provide training to teach methods to promote mandatory parental involvement in case planning. Training will be assigned to eliminate the practice of caseworkers developing plans and then presenting them to parents to accept. Special attention will be paid to include fathers and older children in case planning. Training will also include on-going involvement with families to assure regular assessments and updates of the steps of the case plan with identification of improving strengths, continuing needs and services to be provided. Judicial and SAAG training needs to incorporate these issues as well.
2. Supervisors and county directors must assure that family conferences are conducted in every appropriate case and documentation should be in the record when a family conference is not held, e.g. domestic violence issues. Family group conferencing needs to be implemented statewide, as currently required in state policy, and better supported.
3. Caseloads need to be within the CWLA standards in order to allow caseworkers enough time to work with parents.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. **Improve documentation of child and family involvement in case planning by September 2003.**
2. All new case plans will be entered into the CPRS (which will include documentation of parental involvement) by July 2002.
3. Training on family group conferencing will be included in the on-site training provided to county departments and providers, as discussed in Item 17.

Evaluation

1. Survey sampling of caseworkers and supervisors will be done to measure understanding and improvement in documentation.
2. Survey sampling of judges will be done to measure compliance.
3. A report documenting parental involvement will be generated from the CPRS and distributed monthly to supervisors and county directors. After review and approval by the Division, SOA and Commissioner, a quarterly report will be presented to the Regional IV ACF staff.
4. To see if counties are in compliance, sample spot checks with counties will be conducted by Supervisors and Consultation and Support staff
5. Feedback will be sought quarterly from the CPRS Project Managers on progress and needs for continued successful implementation.
6. Request and advocate for caseworkers to meet CWLA staffing standards.

See Work Plan Table Appendix J

Item 19 - Worker visits with child

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

Large caseload size has had a negative affect on the ability of the case manager to maintain appropriate contact with children. There is a need to make the contacts with children more meaningful and in the least restrictive environment.

The standards and policies for private agencies are not the same for worker visitation with the child.

Policies for face-to-face visitation with a child in long-term foster care, institutional foster care and public or private residential treatment centers need to be strengthened to comply with ASFA.

Plan:

1. Request and advocate for caseworkers to meet CWLA staffing standards.
2. Review current policies and practices for compliance with ASFA guidelines.
3. Revise policies and practices according to need.
4. Use child friendly environments like Child Advocacy Centers.
5. Clarify standards and policies of private agencies.
 - A. MOUs and agreements with private agencies need to have identified deliverables that specify frequency of worker contacts that document to the DFCS caseworker that visits were meaningful and in the least restrictive environment.
 - B. Revise supervisory review tools so as to assure that policy compliance and good practice

are in place.

6. Assure that ICPC contacts are being made by allied agencies in out-of-state placements on behalf of Georgia children that are placed in those states.
 - A. Conduct supervisory review of ICPC policy compliance for quarterly reports to ensure appropriate contacts are being made.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Modify visitation policies for compliance with ASFA guidelines by September 2002.
2. Revise Supervisory Review Form to capture quarterly ICPC visitation reporting requirements by September 2002.

Evaluation

Please see Evaluation for Items 3 and 4, page 8.

See Work Plan Table Appendix K

Item 20 - Worker visits with parents

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

Large caseload size has had a negative affect on the ability of the case manager to maintain appropriate visits with families. The contacts with parents need to be more meaningful and individualized to the families. Frequently visits are not planned or purposeful.

Plan

1. Request and advocate for caseworkers to meet CWLA staffing standards.
2. Develop increased capacity within the case manager work force to develop an understanding about the importance of meaningful and purposeful visits between parents and case managers.
 - A. Revise current practice standards by establishing guidelines for frequency expectations of contacts with parents.
 - B. Establish a standard for expectations for visits with parents to occur in the residence of the parent at least every other month.
 - C. Revise supervisory review tools so as to assure that policy compliance and good practice are in place.
 - D. Develop training components to support work with the parents through New Worker Training and as an on-going skills training course for veteran staff.
 - E. Utilize newly implemented FP/BP Wrap Around Services to provide individualized services to families based on the needs identified in the case plans.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Develop visitation opportunities in the least restrictive setting and in compliance with ASFA guidelines (in a representative sampling of counties) by September 2002.
2. Revise Supervisory Review Guide to require county supervisors to monitor ICPC compliance with quarterly reporting requirements by September 2002.

Evaluation

Please see Evaluation for Items 3 & 4 page 8.

See Work Plan Table Appendix L

Child and Family Well-Being #2 Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Item 21 - Educational needs of the child

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

The state does not have data available regarding the educational needs of children in its care. In the two smaller sites there is mostly timely assessment and follow through on services to meet children's educational needs. There is good collaboration between DFCS and Education. However, there are some cases with delayed or no educational assessment or follow through on the child's educational needs. Improvement is needed in follow up when cases are transferred out of the county. In the larger site (Fulton county) educational needs are not consistently addressed in the case plan. There is a lack of up front educational assessment to identify needs. There is a need to go beyond seeing if children are on grade level to identify other problems in school.

Plan

The proposed strategy is to require that all counties begin to use the CPRS to develop case plans for each child coming into care. The DOE will allow CPRS to download a list of all Georgia's public schools along with their addresses, fax numbers, etc. This information will be incorporated into CPRS so that it is readily available on all case plans. Additional fields will be added to the CPRS Education Screen to make sure staff are getting information on and addressing the individual educational needs of each child.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Change placement policy to require all counties to use the CPRS for each child coming into care by **December** 2002.
2. Expand fields on Education Screen in CPRS to add additional questions by **December** 2002.

Evaluation

Please see Evaluation for Items 3 and 4, page 8.

Child and Family Well-Being #3 Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Item 22 - Physical health of the child

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses the physical health for children in foster care placements. In the smaller sites there is a lack of resources for dental needs due to a lack of Medicaid dental resources in rural areas and there is a lack of health care provider resources. In the larger site (Fulton) there are concerns that specific health problems are not consistently addressed. There appears to be a challenge to getting children connected to Peachcare and Medicaid.

A complete physical of all children entering foster care and the collection of all health records prior to a child entering foster care are required as a part of the FP/BP Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment. The physical health of a child is identified and it is determined as to how to provide services to meet the identified needs at the required Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) Staffing for each child entering foster care. The family is now required to be at the MDT staffing, which will improve meeting the needs of a child's health in Georgia. At the MDT staffing the child's health needs will be put into the case plan making it more child specific and effective for each child and their identified needs.

Georgia anticipates that with the new Wrap Around Services and the monitoring of the FP/BP Program, the health needs of a child will improve. The availability of additional therapeutic resources, crisis intervention services, better preparation training and support of DHR/DFCS staff, providers and caretakers has and will continue to positively impact the safety, permanency, stability and well being of children in foster care.

Plan

1. Georgia will ensure that eligibility determination will be made on all children and families it interfaces with. Georgia will put in to policy a descriptive usage of how the county mini – grants and the Safe and Stable Families Programs can be used to meet the health needs and provide services to children in CPS and Foster Care cases. This will encourage the use of these programs to add more resources to services families in each county.
2. Georgia will continue to require all providers to complete a Multi-Disciplinary Team Staffing for each Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment to determine the appropriate health needs and services of all children entering the foster care program within the first 30 to 60 days of the child entering care.
3. All eligible children will be linked to a primary health care provider. Georgia will provide technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to complete a FP/BP comprehensive assessment and how to use the collected information to make the most appropriate health decision at the beginning of the child's stay in foster care. The FP/BP information will also be used to develop more effective case plans for the child and family.

4. Georgia will provide technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers on the content of the FB/BP comprehensive assessment and how to use the collected information to meet the health, mental health, dental and educational needs of the child and family.
5. Georgia will provide technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers on how to use the collected information to meet the child's needs as it related to post substance abuse counseling, monitoring and support as a part of the early intervention process and/or in-home intensive treatment services.
6. Georgia will continue to assess the effectiveness and impact of the First Placement/Best Placement Program and Wrap Around Services Program in reducing the number of children in foster care once the family's needs and services have been met.
7. Georgia will continue to expand services under the Medicaid and Treatment Residential (TRIS) Programs to meet the needs of the children in care. The Statewide Eligibility Centers will be used to determine timely and accurate eligibility of Medicaid, Title IV-E, and Peachcare by September 2002.

Georgia will continue to assess the effectiveness and impact of the FP/BP program and Wrap Around Services program in reducing the number of children in foster care once the family's needs have been identified and appropriate services have been provided. If the provision of services to children and families in foster care has not improved significantly within one year then the following additional actions will be taken:

1. Establish a larger state review group, which will include more stakeholders to review and provide technical assistance to counties and the annual statewide review of the First Placement/Best Placement Program and Wraparound Services to include on site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases.
2. Examine policy and training effectiveness for DFCS staff and private providers.
3. Recommend additional training and policy changes.
4. Test whether stability of children changes after training and policy changes.
5. Identify if appropriate, other factors that may contribute to the stability of children in foster care.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Georgia will put in to policy a descriptive usage of how the county mini-grants and the Safe and Stable Families Programs can be used to meet the health needs and provide services to children in CPS and Foster Care cases. This will encourage the use of these programs to add more resources to service families in each county.
2. Georgia will complete an annual statewide review of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program to include on site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases. This review will be similar to the federal on site review. Children, caregivers/families and other stakeholders will be interviewed. Fulton will be included at each annual review.

Evaluation

Please see Evaluation for Items 3 and 4, page 8.

See Work Plan Table Appendix N

Item 23 - Mental health of the child

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses the need for mental health assessments and the lack of readily available mental health resources in the smaller sites.

Plan

Long-term goals will be developed to focus on the multi-system implications for designing a seamless state system of care for children and youth. Philosophically, it is acknowledged that for there to be an effective response to the overwhelming need for mental health services to children in Georgia's care, there must be a multi-system collaborative approach with defined leadership roles and a unified state vision and capacity-building plan. There must be formal partnerships and recognition that these are "our children" collectively. There must be focused, sustained, unified efforts to decrease fragmentation across agency lines and to build capacity to meet Georgia's growing need for services to children, adolescents, and families in crisis.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. The statewide multi-agency protocol will include a formal communication process for dissemination of assessment findings for case plan development by **June 2004**.
2. Case managers have the capacity to work closely with children and families in order to ensure sustained access to needed treatment resources.
3. Development of a statewide vision for coordinated service delivery system to children and families by **June 2004**.

Evaluation

Please see Evaluation for Items 3 and 4, page 8.

See Work Plan Table Appendix O

Systemic Factors

Statewide Information System

Item 24 - State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

Georgia does not have a statewide information system. IDSONLINE does capture all of the federal required data elements and is reportedly inconsistent, and not user friendly. The state of Georgia believes that in order to overcome the current flaws with its existing child welfare programs and improve the well being, outcomes and future of the state's children and families, it must implement a SACWIS system that supports reengineered Georgia child welfare program processes and services. Any and all issues relating to SACWIS in this document is contingent upon SACWIS PAPD and IAPD approvals.

Department and case managers recognize that sophisticated automated tools are needed at all levels of DFCS and the Office of Adoptions if systemic changes and improvements are going to occur and succeed. The state's Child Protective Services Task Force has recommended that the state develop an automated statewide information system that will support improved and consistent case management practices and provides information that could be used to hold every participant in the child welfare system accountable for his/her actions in the protection of at-risk children. The Governor, DHR Commissioner, Director of the Office of Adoptions and DFCS Director have all accepted this recommendation and are committed to creating new policies, proposing new legislation, designing new practices and implementing new automated tools to achieve these results.

Plan

1. Build reliability and consistency in the data system.
 - A. Improve accuracy in data through training and on-going communication.
 - B. Link data elements to statewide need for evaluation and reporting and planning.
2. Increase the competency skills of the core users.
 - A. Educate the core user group as to the management tools that exist in system and how to use them when analyzing the data.
3. Continue enhancement plan in existing system in order to meet changing needs of counties and state.
 - A. Develop a "one stop" social services data system.
 - B. Create additional auxiliary reports that track existing data elements.

4. Contingent upon PAPD and IAPD approvals initiate development of a SACWIS system.

A. Complete DFCS Case Management Business Process Reengineering (6/02).

B. Gain ACYF approval for Georgia SACWIS development approach through approved Planning Advanced Planning Document (PAPD) (8/02).

C. Test SACWIS Conceptual Design (10/02 – 11/02).

D. Gain ACYF approval for Georgia SACWIS implementation approach through approved Implementation Advanced Planning Document (IAPD) (2/03).

E. Start implementation of Georgia SACWIS statewide through a series of releases (6/03).

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Build reliability and consistency in IDSONLINE.
2. Increase competency skills of core user group by November 2003.
3. Enhance existing system to meet on-going data needs by December 2003.

Evaluation

Please refer to the SACWIS Planning Document (PAPD).

See Work Plan Table Appendix P

Service Array

Item 35 - State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

Item 36 - The services in Item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered by the State's CFSP.

Item 37 - The services in Item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

This plan addresses the critical needs to expand the pool of out-of-home placement resources for children entering care particularly adolescents; children with serious emotional and behavioral issues; teen mothers and their children. Additionally there is a need to expand the pool of accessible providers capable of responding to the array and intensity of services needed by individual children and families statewide; enhance the capacity of staff and service providers to assess, and address through service coordination the underlying family needs that create safety

concerns for children; and increase the supports to foster and adoptive parents to prevent placement disruptions and reduce multiple placements.

Plan

1. Conduct a needs assessment survey of existing support services and distribution to determine gaps in service array and accessibility/distribution of services. This is to include mental health services, family violence, substance abuse, continuum of treatment for sexual abuse, intensive in-home services, and the continuum of out-of-home services. The needs assessment will also include the immediate availability of foster homes, medically fragile foster homes and therapeutic foster homes.
2. Take the findings of the needs assessment survey and work with providers, stakeholders, and consumers to address the gaps in the service array and develop a continuum of services that is accessible statewide.
3. To post on the web a comprehensive directory of local and state service resources.
4. To develop and provide training to staff to assist in assessing the underlying family needs that create safety concerns for children.
5. To provide family conferencing training to staff and providers so that it is consistency in application where appropriate.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. To compile and disseminate a report of the findings from the needs assessment survey by December 2002. The findings will be used in DHR budget and planning activities.
2. To post on the web the comprehensive directory of local and state service resources by December 2002 and ongoing.
3. To develop the curriculum for assessing underlying family needs by February 2003.

Evaluation

1. Monthly monitoring of the website to determine the frequency of usage.
2. In the annual qualitative case review, a representative sample of cases will be reviewed to determine if there is improvement in the case managers' ability to adequately assess underlying family needs that leads to issues of safety concerns.

See Work Plan Table Appendix Q

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention

Item 42 - The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

The standards for family foster home licensure in the public and private sectors within the state are different. This has presented a problem, not only in terms of the discontinuity of requirements, but also in terms of the dual standards that must be met by private agencies when serving as placement resources for DFCS children. The August 2001 statistical report from the Evaluation and Reporting Section of the division indicates that of the 14,070 children in DFCS custody, 1,534 were placed in privately run childcare institutions or group homes. The state is in compliance with federal requirements that uniform standards be applied to both relative and non-relative foster homes.

In order to address the issues, as noted by stakeholders during the federal review, DFCS and ORS, along with the Georgia Association of Homes for Children, members and non-members, will collaborate in analyzing licensing standards applicable to all public and private family foster homes and child-caring institutions receiving IV-E or IV-B funds within the state. The following are the goals/strategies necessary to identify and implement required improvements.

Plan

1. Explore the development of uniform licensing standards for all public and private family foster homes and child-caring institutions by establishing a committee to do the following:
 - A. Analyze DFCS and ORS policy commonalities and differences in standards for licensure/approval of family foster homes and child-caring institutions.
 - B. Identify what agency policy and legislative requirements, if any need to be revised and implemented to bring about uniformity.
 - C. Research procedures used by other states in bringing public and private agencies under common licensure.
 - D. Identify the impact of uniform licensing requirements on staffing and other fiscal factors.
 - E. Make recommendations based on information gathered in activities A-C above.
2. Review and revise as recommended DFCS policy regarding waivers for minimum standards requirements for foster homes under unusual situations.
 - A. Develop workgroup consisting of DFCS staff, administrators and stakeholders to identify and resolve problems in this area.
 - B. Revise and implement recommended policy changes.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. The development of uniform licensing standards for all public and private family foster homes and child-caring institutions by July 2003.
2. Revise DFCS policy regarding the local county departments waiver of minimum standard requirements for foster homes by September 2002.

Evaluation

1. Conduct a comparison of the public and private written standards.
2. Review a sampling of cases from public and private standards to see if the standards are being met.

See Work Plan Table Appendix R

Item 44 - State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Areas Needing Improvement: Statement of the Problem

Recruitment and Retention of Adequate Placement Resources

A summary of the results of stakeholder interviews held during the review indicates that the state does not have an adequate pool of placement resources to meet the continuum of needs presented by children entering care today. Georgia's overall challenge in this area is consistent with national statistics according to the Journal of the National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption (Vol. 15, 2001). It states: "The AFCARS Report: Preliminary Estimates as of April 2001 (5), indicates the number of children in care had risen to 568,000 as of March 30, 2000. At the same time, states are reporting that it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the needed pool of foster and adoptive parents for the children coming into care. Recruitment and retention of resource families is a critical issue in child welfare today."

Despite this shortcoming, the Office of Adoption and the Division of Family and Children Services has made tremendous strides in implementing strategies aimed at increasing the state's pool of foster and adoption resources. In order to further improve in this area, the following plan has been developed to address the need for a continuum of placement resources, including emergency placements, that reflect the specialized and individual needs, as well as the racial and ethnic diversity of the children entering care, including sibling groups, teens and children with specialized medical and psychological needs.

Plan

1. Expand Placement Resource Options for Foster and Adoptive Placements.
 - A. Fund staffing strategies that incorporate the development of regional resource development teams for the recruitment, preparation and approval, retention, re-evaluation, supervision and support of foster, adoptive and foster/adopt homes each

region.

- B. Expand the use of funding options for private child-placing agencies to recruit, develop and provide on-going supervision and retention services to foster and foster/adopt homes, similar to the requirements of existing Office of Adoption contracts with private agencies for the development of adoptive homes.
 - C. Make funding available for a Foster Care Recruitment position at the division level that requires working in conjunction with the Office of Adoption Recruitment Manager in providing leadership to resource development teams and private child-caring agencies in recruiting a continuum of placement resources (including foster, adoptive and foster/adopt homes, emergency placements, and homes for siblings and teens) that reflect the specialized and individual needs, as well as the racial and ethnic diversity of the children needing placement throughout the state.
 - D. Develop a data system to support the sharing of placement services and resources for children and families among DFCS and private child-caring agencies across county lines.
 - E. Develop protocol with privately operated shelters for the implementation of MOUs with county DFCS offices to increase the pool of emergency placement resources for children entering care and to address a broad range of emergency placement needs that include teen, sibling, therapeutic and medically fragile care.
2. Improve the Retention Rate Among Foster Families.
- A. Evaluate the current foster parent preparation model (GPS: MAPP) for effectiveness in the preparation and retention of foster parents.
 - B. Assure foster parent participation in annual, competency-based in-service training.
 - C. Enhance capacity to retain foster parents by strengthening team/partnership strategies between county departments and foster parents.
 - D. Provide supportive wrap-around services for crisis intervention to prevent placement disruptions.

Measurable Benchmarks

1. Assess the availability of public and private placement resource options statewide by December 2002.
2. Expand placement resource options where gaps exist by July 2003.
3. Assess the current retention rate among foster parents by December 2002.
4. Improve the Retention rate among foster families by December 2003.

Evaluation

Evaluate the results of the recruitment and retention strategies to determine effectiveness in the

following areas:

1. There is 10-15% increase in the overall number of foster parents in the state;
2. The increase reflects the race/ethnicity of children needing placement;
3. Foster parents and case managers have increased access to resources;
4. Reduced violations of foster care policy;
5. Overall decrease in disruption of foster care placements;
6. Increased retention rate of foster families;
7. Gather statistical information regarding impact of agency policies and procedures on the retention of foster families.

See Work Plan Table Appendix S

APPENDIX A

Work Plan Detail – Item 2, Repeat Maltreatment (Maltreatment of Children in Foster Care)

Goal: To improve the incidence of maltreatment in foster care

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	Finalize CPS policy clarification distinguishing discipline violations handled by foster care from maltreatment reports to be handled by CPS (Form 431). Publish CPS policy clarification to county staff.	Transmittal to counties	Rebecca Jarvis	Dec. 2001
June 2002	Inquire at ORS regarding their collection of data from maltreatment investigations in institutional settings.	Memo to team	Shirley Vassy	Sept. 2002
July 2002	Produce descriptive statistics on foster care victims	Report to team	Shirley Vassy	Sept. 2002
July 2002	Compare foster care victims to other victims	Report to team	Shirley Vassy	Sept. 2002
July 2002	Compare foster care victims to non-victim foster care children	Report to team	Shirley Vassy	Sept. 2002
June 2002	Determine proportions of reports by placement setting	Report to team	Shirley Vassy	June 2002
July 2002	Produce a profile of foster families involved in maltreatment investigations	Report to team	Shirley Vassy	Sept. 2002
May. 2002	Examine the policy and training of institutional staff	Report to team	Normer Adams	Mar. 2002
Oct. 2002	Examine the policy and training of foster parents and social services staff	Report to team	Liz Bryant, Winifred Abdullah, Betty Wright, Geraldine Jackson-White	Dec. 2002
May. 2002	Recommend policy and training changes for institutional staff	Report to team	Normer Adams	May 2002

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Dec. 2002	Recommend policy and training changes for foster parents and social services staff	Report to team	Liz Bryant, Winifred Abdullah, Betty Wrights, Geraldine Jackson-White	Dec. 2002
Dec. 2002	Recommend improvements to the foster parent services array in concert with the Item 6 and Item 17 PIPs	Report to team	Doris Walker Liz Bryant	Feb. 2003
Feb. 2003	<p>Implement new training plan in family foster care and/or institutional foster care</p> <p>Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly monitoring reports will analyze and compare outcome data with 2001 CFSR. Progress/needs will be addressed and revised as needed in the Annual IV-B State Plan A Qualitative Case Review (QCR), similar to the CFSR, will be conducted with the assistance of the Child Welfare Policy and Practice (CWPPG) on a representative sampling of cases. DFCS county supervisors, Social Service Program staff, Consultation and Support Units, IV-B Advisory Committee members and other stakeholders may participate in this review. The results of the first QCR will be included in the 2003 IV-B State Plan. 	Report to team	Doris Walker Liz Bryant	May 2003

APPENDIX B

Work Plan Detail – Item 3, Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in Home and Prevent Removal and

Item 4, Risk of Harm to Child

Goal: To improve this outcome by January 2004

DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
June 2002	<p>Develop family assessment, which includes policy for the assessment of mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence needs and prevents premature case closure.</p> <p>Review existing assessment policy in CPS and Foster Care. Review includes multi-disciplinary team and experts in the field.</p> <p>Develop revised CPS policy, training and staffing recommendations.</p> <p>Develop training and budget recommendations to implement revised policy.</p> <p>Monitoring Steps: Participant notes and meeting minutes Policy Draft Training and budget recommendations.</p>	<p>Development of recommendations for policy, practice and training based on the completed review.</p> <p>Policy, practice and training steering meetings.</p> <p>Written revised policy.</p> <p>Recommendations for training and budget for implementation of recommendations.</p>	<p>Protective Services and Foster Care Policy Committee: CPS, Foster Care Units, Office of the Child Advocate; Professional Development Section; Social Services Section as deemed appropriate. DFCS Economic Support Section; Substance Abuse Assessment Workers.</p>	Jan. 2004
June 2002	<p>Develop and implement community partnerships for the protection of children (CPPC) in representative counties.</p> <p>Identify community partners.</p> <p>Begin strategy development, resource development, partnership building and outcome and planning.</p> <p>Provide support</p> <p>Monitoring Steps: Meeting minutes</p>	<p>Partners identified and committed to development of strategies.</p> <p>Implementation of nine counties in phase I.</p>	<p>Representatives of DFCS and Family Connections, Children's Trust, Prevent Child Abuse in Georgia and allied agencies.</p>	Jan. 2004
Sept. 2002	<p>Develop and provide for CPS and foster care training to handle requests for case-related information through the open record act.</p>	<p>Panel agrees to this request and adds to agenda of next meeting.</p> <p>Panel provides draft of recommendations.</p>	<p>Statewide CPS Advisory Panel (David Myers)</p>	Jan. 2004

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	Request Statewide CPS Advisory Panel to provide recommendations.			
Sept. 2002	<p>Strengthen prevention and early intervention strategies to prevent child abuse and support families.</p> <p>Develop and implement voluntary support for medically fragile children at high risk of abuse</p> <p>Expand capacity for parent aide and early intervention.</p> <p>Enhance access for screened out CPS calls to voluntary community assistance.</p> <p>Evaluation: It is anticipated that the assessment of family strengths and needs, particularly regarding the presence of substance abuse and domestic violence will become more thorough. It is anticipated that cases will not be prematurely closed. A comparison to the results of Georgia's 2001 CFSR and the level of compliance will be made after additional policy clarification, training and program implementation is operational. An annual Qualitative Case Review (QCR) similar to the CFSR will be completed on a representative sampling of case records.</p>	<p>Partnership with DeKalb and Fulton DFCS and Grady Hospital for early intervention of children at high risk.</p> <p>Develop with Budget Office recommendations to adequately fund early intervention, parent aide, PUP and Homestead.</p> <p>Partnership with United Way 211 to provide dedicated, formalized information and referral outbound calling services to CPS screened out reports.</p>	Protective Services state and county staff, Grady Hospital, United Way 211 staff.	Jan. 2004

APPENDIX C

Work Plan Detail – Item 6, Stability of Foster Care Placement

Goal: Georgia will seek to improve this indicator by 3% by September 2002 and 3% by September 2003.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Jan. 2002	Clarify the current AFCARS policy regarding Georgia's definition of a placement move and how to count periodic temporary "placement", i.e. where it is known in advance that the placement is temporary for the purpose of respite, hospitalizations, mental health treatment stabilizations and also the plan is to return the child to the same foster home this placement should not be counted in the number of placement moves in the foster care episode.	Provide definition to Feds and obtain approval.	Kathy Herren	Apr. 2002
May 2002	Examine the methodology used to extract the data from the system in order to address the discrepancy in the data reported from the system and the on site review.	Provide report of findings to team.	Shirley Vassy Kathy Herren	Sept. 2002
Apr. 2002	Revise and distribute policy definition of how to count a placement move for AFCARS.	Rewrite policy as to the approved definition.	Linda Doster	July 2002
May 2002	Analyze data at the county and worker level to identify issues of stability on a certain caseload or in a certain county.	Provide report of the findings to the team and each county department.	Andy Barclay, Dr. John Carter, Joe Wassell, Jill Andrews TA: Shirley Vassy, Andy Barclay	Sept. 2002
July 2002	Georgia will continue to require all providers to complete a Multi-Discipline Team Meeting for each Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment to determine the appropriate placement of all children entering foster care within the first 30 to 60 days of the child entering care.	Provide 11 county site trainings to staff and providers beginning 7/2002 and review cases in selected counties during the annual on-site review beginning 10/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd, Stakeholders	Dec. 2002 and on-going
July 2002	Georgia will provide technical assistance (TA) to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to use FP/BP assessment	Provide 11 county site trainings to staff and providers beginning 7/2002 and review cases in	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd,	Dec. 2002 and on-going

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	information to make the most appropriate permanency decisions and implementation of wraparound services at the beginning of the child's stay in care. The FP/BP information will be used to develop more effective case plans for the child and family.	selected counties during the annual on-site review beginning 10/2002.	Stakeholders	
Oct. 2002	Georgia will complete an annual review (of selected counties) of the First Placement/Best Placement Program to include on-site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases. This review will be similar to the federal on-site review. Children, caregivers/families and other stakeholders will be interviewed. Fulton will be included at each annual review.	Complete at least 50 case reviews beginning 1/2003.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd	May 2003
May 2003	Georgia will complete a report of the annual review of selected counties.	Report to team, DFCS Division Director, DFCS Social Services Section Director, Foster Care Unit Manager, selected counties.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd	July 2003 and on-going
July 2003	Georgia will continue to assess the effectiveness and impact of the First Placement/Best Placement Program (assessments and Wrap Around services) in reducing the number of placements for children in foster care.	Report to team, DFCS Division Director, DFCS Social Services Section Director, Foster Care Unit Manager, selected counties.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd	Oct. 2003 and on-going
July 2003	If problem is predominantly institutional: The state review group, which includes stakeholders, will complete on-site case reviews of an additional 50 randomly selected cases and provide technical assistance to selected counties of the First Placement/Best Placement Program.	Complete additional case reviews, if appropriate, by 7/2003.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd	Dec. 2003
Oct. 2003	Examine policy and training effectiveness for DFCS staff and private providers.	Within 60 days of completing additional on-site case reviews.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd, Linda Doster	Dec. 2003
Oct. 2003	Recommend additional training and policy changes.	Within 60 days of completing additional on-site case reviews.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent	Dec. 2003

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
			Houston, Linda Ladd, Linda Doster	
Jan. 2004	Test whether stability of children changes after training and policy changes with newly selected counties.	Complete additional case reviews.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd, stakeholders	May 2004
Jan. 2003	<p>Identify, if appropriate, other factors that may contribute to the stability of children in foster care.</p> <p>Evaluation: Georgia anticipates that the stability of children in foster care will decrease after the definitions of placements are clarified in policy. Georgia will compare the rates before and after the policy clarification to evaluate this hypothesis. We will also examine the mix of cases to determine what reason for disruption is reported most frequently and the most likely setting for multiple disruptions. If the stability of children in foster care has not improved significantly within 2 quarters, then the following additional actions will be taken:</p> <p>The state review group, which includes stakeholders, will complete on-site case reviews of an additional 50 randomly selected cases and provide technical assistance to selected counties of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program.</p> <p>Recommend additional training and policy changes. Test whether stability of children changes after training and policy changes with newly selected counties.</p> <p>Identify if appropriate, other factors that may contribute to the stability of children in foster care.</p>	Complete a report to the team.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd, stakeholders	Apr. 2003

APPENDIX D

Work Plan Detail Item 7, Permanency Goal for Child

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Sept. 2001	Continue annual request to state legislature for additional staff with a goal of making incremental steps towards meeting CWLA staffing standards.	Support and advocate for: 2000 supplement - 171; 2002 – 100; 2003 - 100	DHR Commissioner Jim Martin Governor Georgia Legislature	June 2004
Jan. 2002	Maintain accurate documentation of every placement of a child in foster care Evaluation: Spot checks of files will be performed by the E & R group to make sure this documentation is occurring. Evaluation: All needed information about placements will be available for next Federal Review.	Have developed staff performance standards with DFCS county staff, Field Directors, and social service staff to assure that case files are accurately documented to reflect every placement of a child in foster care.	County Supervisors County Directors Field Directors	Dec. 2002
Mar. 2002	Conduct an assessment of FP/BP with contractors, county offices and providers to determine if FB/BP assessments are completed on every child coming into foster care. Evaluation: An evaluation of First Placement/Best Placement will occur annually.	First Placement/Best Placement will be established and supported in every county.	Doris Walker Contractors	Sept. 2002
May 2002	Require that permanency goals be documented as part of the on-line Case Plan Reporting System, CPRS Evaluation: A report will be developed quarterly from the CPRS about documented permanency goals from around the state.	Every child coming into care will have a case plan in the CPRS.	Kelli Stone Field Directors County Directors Supervisors Consultation & Support Unit Mentor Unit	Sept. 2002
Mar. 2002	Conduct annual cross training for judges, case managers, Sags, GALs, parent attorneys, CASAs, and Citizen Panel volunteers on acceptable permanency goals. Evaluation: Informal reviews will take place by supervisors to monitor practice.	Practice will change and acceptable permanency goals will be established and worked toward for every child in care. Compelling reasons for not choosing acceptable permanency goals will be	Geraldine Jackson-White	Nov. 2002

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
		documented.		
Mar. 2002	Conduct annual training for judges, case managers, Sags, GALs, parent attorneys, CASAs, and Citizen Panel volunteers on the Permanency Hearing requirements. Evaluation: Georgia's Child Improvement Project (CIP) will evaluate a sample of court case files annually to see if permanency hearings are occurring for every child.	Permanency hearings will take place in juvenile court for every child in state care no later than 12 months after a child has entered foster care and periodically no later than 12 months thereafter if the child remains in care.	Michelle Barclay Wilfred Hamm Geraldine Jackson White	On-going in November of every year: Two cross cultural trainings will be completed by Nov. 2004
Jan. 2002	Examine the present review system for children in care to determine the optimum frequency of reviews needed for expediting permanency. Evaluation: Georgia's CIP will evaluate a sample of court case files annually to see if more frequent hearings lead to faster permanency.	A decision will be made whether to change if necessary to ensure a review occurs every 3 months.	Linda Doster TA: Michelle Barclay	Nov. 2002
Mar. 2002	Provide foster parents with a copy of the foster parent manual upon their completion of MAPP. Include information on services that might be available to foster parents in the foster parent manual and in MAPP groups. Evaluation: Spot checks will be done at random by calling foster parents and making sure they have a manual.	Every foster parent will have a manual. The foster parent manual and policy manual will be reviewed and revised as needed to incorporate the services available to foster parents.	Liz Bryant	Sept. 2002
May 2002	Post the foster parent manual on the Internet to reduce the costs of printing as well as to ensure it is accessible to all who need it. Evaluation: Log files will be examined to see if the manual is getting used.	The manual posted on the Internet.	Liz Bryant	Sept. 2002
Nov. 2001	Expand options with the private sector such that the Fulton and DeKalb Emergency facilities will no longer be operated by these DFACS agencies and that they comply with the Office of Regulatory Services standards, reviews and findings.	County DFACS will no longer own the DeKalb and Fulton Emergency facilities.	Juanita Blount-Clark Office of Regulatory Services	Nov. 2002

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	Evaluation: Fulton and Dekalb Emergency Placement shelters will be privatized.			
Nov. 2001	Recruit and maintain more minority foster and adoptive resources giving special attention to placements for minority children. Evaluation: The results of the campaign will be measured to see if it results in an increase of minority placement recruitment and which tactics were most effective.	A campaign will be launched to focus on recruiting minority foster and adoptive parents for minority children. Increase the numbers of minority parents by 15% in 2002; by 25% in 2003; and by 25% in 2004.	Liz Bryant Doris Walker	Sept. 2004

APPENDIX E

Work Plan Detail – Item 9, Adoption

Goal: Reduce lengthy time period to file TPR (Termination of Parental Rights)

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
<p>Aug. 2002</p> <p>July 2003</p>	<p>Improve accountability for ensuring existing policies and procedures related to filing of TPR are adhered to:</p> <p>A. Develop standards of measurement for county compliance in filing for TPR.</p> <p>B. Incorporate developed standards into County Directors' Performance Management Plan.</p>	<p>Revision and utilization of review instruments to include newly developed standards.</p> <p>30% of counties will be in compliance with developed standards.</p>	<p>Field Directors Casework Policy and Practice Group, Professional and Administrative Development Section, Evaluation & Reporting Section</p>	<p>June 2003</p> <p>June 2004</p>
<p>July 2002</p> <p>Dec. 2002</p>	<p>Develop measures to determine that TPR is filed according to ASFA and policy:</p> <p>A. Expand utilization of Case Panel Review System (CPRS) to assist the counties in identifying cases appropriate for TPR and non-reunification.</p> <p>B. Develop capacity within CPRS or another reporting system to produce an exception report when TPR and non-reunification are not filed timely.</p>	<p>The CPRS will be used in all 159 counties.</p> <p>Timely filing of TPR</p>	<p>Michelle Barclay, Kelli Stone, Evaluation & Reporting Section</p>	<p>June 2004</p> <p>June 2004</p>
	<p>Develop strategies in partnership with the law department that will urge the SAAGS to file TPR within 30 days of receipt of complete legal services</p>	<p>Decrease in length of time to file TPR.</p>		

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Jan. 2002	referral and prepare court orders within 15 days of termination hearing: A. Develop a referral packet for counties to use to properly put together a legal referral.	Development of legal services referrals and protocol packets, which will be incorporated into policy and distributed to county departments and SAAGS.	Vivian Egan Linda Doster DFCS Social Services Section	July 2004
Sept. 2002	B. Develop a protocol for counties to report overdue petitions and court orders to DFCS Legal Services to address with law department. Problems in complying with this requirement will be reported to the Commissioner.			
April 2002	C. Urge the law departments to increase number of SAAGS to reduce delays created by backlog of cases.			
August 2002	D. Provide new SAAGS training and manuals on specialized legal issues and procedures associated with TPR every 18 months.	Provision of specialized training to SAAGS.		Jan. 2004

Goal: Reduce lengthy time periods to finalize adoptions.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
July 2002	Determine statutory changes needed that will impact length of time to achieve adoption: A. Recommend change to Chapter 19-8 of the O.C.G.A. to allow state and agency adoptions to be heard 15 – 30 days from filing of petition (rather than the current minimum of 60 days). B. Recommend amendment to Section 15-11-58 of the O.C.G.A. to require Juvenile Court judges determine whether DFCS has made reasonable efforts to achieve permanency within 12 months of time child enters care. C. Recommend change to section 15-11-103(d) of the O.C.G.A. to require post termination reviews every six months rather than annually.	Introduction of statutory change.	DFCS Social Services, Vivian Egan, LaMarva Ivory Office of Adoptions,	July 2004
Jan. 2002		Passage of statutory change	Legislation Team, and Jim Martin	May 2002 (completed)
June 2002		Passage of statutory change.		May 2002 (completed)
Jan. 2002	Include post termination requirements in CPRS review: A. Develop prototype of CPRS that includes specific elements of adoption policy. B. Pilot in Dekalb County. C. Reviews should be completed by agency staff and provided to judges at time of post termination reviews.	Development of prototype and implementation of pilot project.	Michelle Barclay, Kelli Stone,	Dec. 2002
Mar. 2002		Measure of success of utilization in pilot area for improved outcomes.	Office of Adoptions, Andy Barclay	July 2002
July 2002		Measure the effectiveness of the new information provided by CPRS for judicial decision making by qualitative interviews with judges.		Dec. 2002

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Sept. 2002	Examine foster care and adoption policy requirements for impact on length of time to achieve adoption: A. Evaluate policy requirements regarding reducing length of supervision for uncomplicated state adoption placements. B. Change Office of Adoptions requirements regarding approval for contracting child life histories to allow request at time of legal service referral. C. Make addition to six month CPRS instrument to require agency to report steps taken to achieve permanency goal.	Complete and distribute manual transmittals reflecting needed policy changes.	Office of Adoptions	June 2004
Jan. 2002		Reduction in time from TPR to registration of Life History and in time from placement to finalization.	Office of Adoptions	June 2004
Mar. 2002		Measure the effectiveness of the new information in the CPRS for judicial and agency decision making for permanency by qualitative interviews.	Michelle Barclay Kelli Stone	Mar. 2003

Goal: DFCS to expedite movement of children from foster care to adoption finalization.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Feb. 2002	Develop a court order tracking system to verify full reporting of free children by county offices (until implementation of SACWIS): A. Notice to counties, Field Directors and Social Services Director on quarterly basis when child is unreported. Counties will be required to comply with policy regarding unreported children.	Existence of an operational system. Early identification of children whose parental rights have been terminated.	Office of Adoptions, Juvenile Court	June 2003
Sept. 2002	B. Referrals will be made to Consultation & Support (C&S) and Regional Adoption Coordinators (RACs) for follow up.			June 2004 and on-going
July 2002	Office of Adoptions will provide DFCS and Social Services Director, Field Directors and County Directors with quarterly reports of overdue life histories: A. Standards of accountability for compliance with policy regarding Life History registration will be developed.	Revision and utilization of review instruments to include newly developed standards.	Field Directors; Juanita Blount-Clark; Foster Care Unit; Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group	June 2004
July 2002	B. Standards of accountability will be included as an element in staff Performance Management Plan (PMP).			Sept. 2003
Feb. 2002	C. Overdue life history reports will be shared with Office of Adoptions and DFCS Directors and Commissioner on a quarterly basis.			Feb 2002 (completed)

Goal: Determine if court delays are impacting length of time to achieve adoption.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
June 2002	Court Improvement Project (CIP) will complete assessment of juvenile court processes through surveys and interviews of judges and case file review to identify specific barriers.	Identification of barriers and needs. Report of findings and recommendations.	Michelle Barclay Doris Walker	Sept. 2002
March 2002	Enhance existing Adoptions A-file system to evaluate and identify whether delays are occurring between filing for adoption and finalization.	Addition of needed data elements. Evaluate data to determine significance of court delays in finalization.	Office of Adoptions IT Section Contractor (would require funding)	June 2003
May 2002	Convene group of stakeholders, including judges, caseworkers, supervisors, SAAGS, CASAS, GALs, and panel volunteers to develop strategies to resolve problems and support achievements identified.	A Report identifying problems will be completed.	Michelle Barclay Vivian Egan	October 2002 Sept. 2002
May 2002	Monitor new pilot project taking place in Fulton County where Superior Court Judges have delegated adoption jurisdiction to Juvenile Court Judges for adoption cases where the deprivation petition originated in the juvenile court.	A qualitative report will assess the impact of the pilot to determine if the delegation is beneficial for adoptions and any other impact on the child welfare system. Recommendation for statewide implementation will follow if appropriate.	Michelle Barclay	December 2002

Goal: *Inform foster parents of service options available to them if they adopt.*

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Provide Adoption Assistance Handbook and information regarding accessing Post Adoption Services to all foster care and adoption MAPP participants.	All prospective adoptive parents will have information regarding post adoption services available to them.	Gail Greer, Adoption Support and Resource Center	June 2003
Feb. 2002	At time of signing of the Form 33/37 Placement Agreement, provide a packet of information from the Georgia Center for Adoption Resources and Support that will assist families in identifying post adopt services, support groups, community resources and events relating to adoption. Packets will include copies of the Adoption Assistance Handbook.	Information packets provided.	Gail Greer	June 2003

APPENDIX F

Work Plan Detail – Item 10, Permanency Goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Enhance the content of MAPP training and annual training at the Foster Parent Institutes to include other roles for foster parents to assist children in developing permanency living arrangements. Evaluation: Survey sampling will reveal if training is successful.	Foster parents will understand the difference between the various permanency goals and all of their potential roles in child's life (such as long-term foster care by agreement).	Placement Resource Development Unit, Jayne Bachman, Resource Development Workers TA: Ed Fuller	Dec. 2002
June 2001	Revise new worker and supervisor training as well as on-going training content to include a higher documentation standard for this permanency goal. Evaluation: Case files showing choices of emancipation or long term foster care will show thorough documentation of compelling reasons.	Revised new worker and supervisor training as well as on-going training content to include a higher documentation standard for the permanency option long-term foster care.	Geraldine Jackson-White County Supervisors TA: Ed Fuller	Sept. 2003
Sept. 2002	Review all guardianship laws in Georgia to determine if any changes are needed to allow for greater compliance with the permanency goals established by ASFA. (Guardianship as defined by ASFA includes all legal arrangements that are permanent and self-sustaining, thus the relationship outlives the jurisdiction of a court). Evaluation: DHR will propose changes in guardianship laws as necessary.	A report on the current state of guardianship laws will be prepared.	Vivian Egan TA: Karen Worthington	Mar. 2004

APPENDIX G

Work Plan Detail – Item 12, Placement with Siblings

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Sept. 2001	Goal #1 Continue annual request for additional staff with a goal of making incremental steps towards meeting CWLA staffing standards.	Support and advocate for: 2000 supplement – 171 positions; 2002 – 100 positions; 2003 – 100 positions	Commissioner Jim Martin Governor Georgia Legislators	June 2004
June 2002 Feb 2003 Feb. 2003 Feb. 2003	Goal #2 Step 1: Supervisory Review Form will be adapted to include efforts to place siblings together. Step 2: Supervisors are trained to include efforts to place siblings together in their reviews. Step 3: Case plan is adapted to include efforts to place siblings together. Step 4: Caseworkers are trained to include efforts to place siblings together in case plan. Evaluation: Efforts to place siblings in the same home will be documented in at least 90% of cases by June 2004.	Form and standards adapted by Feb. 2003. June 2003 Case plan adapted by Mar 2003. June 2003.	Foster Care Unit, Professional Development Section, Kelli Stone	June 2004
Mar 2002	Goal #3 Step 1: Research Hull House (IL, FL) and other states' statutory initiatives developed to maintain siblings together, including legislation, literature, participant interviews, and national resources. Research summary report prepared. Step 2: Evaluate Step 1 models for pilot in Georgia and prepare for implementation. Step 3: Enhanced utilization of new Relative Caregiver Subsidy (RCS) through training and awareness. Step 4: Implement targeted recruitment of foster homes willing to accept sibling	January 2003 March 2003 December 2002 December 2002	Sarah Brownlee, Professional Development Section, Foster Care Unit	June 2004

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	<p>groups. Include importance of keeping siblings together in education of prospective foster parents.</p> <p>Evaluation: If model evaluated successfully, at least one pilot site will be implemented in Georgia and an evaluation of that pilot will take place.</p>			
Mar 2002	<p>Goal #4</p> <p>Step 1: Develop foster parent training to include specialized segments on managing sibling groups.</p> <p>Step 2: Evaluate effectiveness of respite care funding as a strategy to prevent placement disruptions.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop resource homes to support foster parents and children in placement.</p> <p>Evaluation: Determine the number of foster parents who will accept sibling groups and establish a percentage of the additional homes needed.</p>	<p>December 2002</p> <p>Ongoing through June 2004</p> <p>June 2004</p>	Foster Care Unit, Placement Resource Development Unit	June 2004

APPENDIX H

Work Plan Detail – Item 13, Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Sept. 2001	Goal #1 Continue annual request for additional staff with a goal of making incremental steps towards meeting CWLA staffing standards.	Support and advocate for: 2000 supplement – 171 positions; 2002 – 100 positions; 2003 – 100 positions	Commissioner Jim Martin Governor Georgia Legislature	June 2004
June 2002 Feb. 2003 Feb. 2003 Feb. 2003	Goal #2 Step 1: Supervisory Review Form will be adapted to include review of visits between parents and children. Step 2: Supervisors are trained to include visits in their reviews. Step 3: Case plan is adapted to include documentation of visits between parents and children and reasons for their location. Step 4: Caseworkers are trained to include documentation of visits in case plan. Evaluation: Visits between parents and children and location of visits will be documented in at least 90% of cases by June 2004.	Form adapted by Feb. 2003. June 2003 Case plan adapted by Mar. 2003. June 2003	Foster Care Unit, Consultation & Support Unit Professional Development Section, Kelli Stone, Field Directors, County Directors, County Supervisors	June 2004
July 2002	Goal #3 Step 1: On-going training and professional development will include segment on importance of visitation. Evaluation: Evaluations of caseworker training will reflect understanding of importance of visitation.	Sept. 2002	Foster Care Unit	Dec. 2002
August 2002	Goal #4 Step 1: Thorough research will be compiled and a report prepared on other states' models for successful visitation centers. Step 2: Communities and stakeholders will be contacted and engaged to facilitate	Five visitation centers will be developed across the state, especially in the metro areas. A "how to" book will be developed for counties and courts in establishing other new centers across Georgia.	Ann Dennard Smith TA: Michelle Barclay	June 2004

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	<p>development of visitation centers, including local judges, churches, and community groups involved with children.</p> <p>Step 3: Sites will be selected, staffing resources will be assessed and identified, and items to create a family-friendly environment will be secured.</p> <p>Step 4: A "How To" guide to develop other centers will be prepared and issued.</p> <p>Evaluation: Visitation centers will be measured by a documented increase in the number of visits that occur between parents and siblings.</p>	<p>Aug. 2002</p> <p>Jan. 2003</p> <p>June 2003</p> <p>Sept. 2003</p>		

APPENDIX I

Work Plan Detail – Item 17, Needs and Services of Child, Parents, Foster Parents

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
April 2002	Georgia will continue to require all providers to complete a Multi Discipline Team Meeting for each Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment to determine the appropriate needs and services of all children and families entering foster care program within the first 30 to 60 days of the child entering care.	Review at each annual on-site review.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	Jan. 2004
July 2002	Georgia will complete technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to complete a comprehensive assessment and how to use the collected information to make the most appropriate permanency decision at the beginning of the child's stay in foster care. The FP/BP information will also be used to develop more effective case plans for the child and family.	Provide 11 county site training to staff and providers beginning in 7/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	Dec. 2002 and ongoing
July 2002	Georgia will complete technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers of the content of the comprehensive assessment and how to use the collected information to meet the health, mental health, dental and educational needs of the child and family.	Provide 11 county site training to staff and providers beginning in 7/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	Dec. 2002 and ongoing
July 2002	Georgia will complete technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to use the collected information to meet the child and family needs as it related to post substance abuse counseling, monitoring and support as a part of the early intervention process and/or in – home intensive treatment services.	Provide 11 county site training to staff and providers beginning in 7/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	Dec. 2002 and ongoing
June 2002	Complete a monthly county-by-county report as it relates to the initial assessment of the First Placement/ Best Placement Comprehensive Assessment and the identified types of placements needed and available and permanency plans of children.	Complete a report as to findings from July 2001 – March 2002.	Dr. John Carter, Joe Wassell and Jill Andrew	Sept. 2002
June 2002	Complete a monthly county-by-county report as	Complete a report as to the	DFCS through contractors	Sept. 2002

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	it relates to the First Placement/ Best Placement Wrap Around Services used for each child in foster care.	findings from December 2001 – March 2002.		
Oct 2002	Georgia will complete an annual statewide review of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program to include on site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases. This review will be similar to the federal on site review. Children, caregivers/families and other stakeholders will be interviewed. Fulton will be included at each annual review.	Complete at least 50 case reviews beginning 1/2003.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	May 2003
Oct. 2002	Georgia will complete an annual review throughout the state of the First Placement/ Best Placement Wrap Around Services Program by completing on-site case reviews during the same time as completing the random selected case review in #8 above.	Complete at least 50 case reviews beginning 1/2003.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	May 2003
June 2003	Georgia will continue to assess the effectiveness and impact of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program and Wrap Around Services Program in reducing the number of children in foster care once the family's needs and services have been met.	Report to team.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	June 2004 and on-going
Nov. 2003	If problem is predominantly institutional: Establish a larger state review group, which will include more stakeholders to review and provide technical assistance to counties and the annual statewide review of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program and Wraparound Services to include on site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases.	Complete additional case reviews, if appropriate by 11/2003.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	June 2004 and on-going
Nov. 2003	Examine policy and training effectiveness for DFCS staff and private providers.	Within 60 days of completing additional on-site case reviews, provide a written report, if appropriate.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd and Linda Doster	June 2004 and on-going
Nov. 2003	Recommend additional training and policy changes.	Within 60 days of completing additional on-site case reviews, provide a written report, if appropriate.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd and Linda Doster	June 2004 and on-going
Jan 2003	Test whether needs and services to children and families changes after training and policy	Complete additional case reviews, if appropriate.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent	June 2004 and on-going

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	changes.		Houston, Linda Ladd and stakeholders	
Jan. 2003	Identify if appropriate, other factors that may contribute to the needs and/services of children and families not being met while in foster care. Evaluation: Please see Evaluation for Items 3 & 4, page B-2.	Complete a report to the team.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd and stakeholder	June 2004 and on-going

APPENDIX J

Work Plan Detail – Item 18, Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Goal: Families will have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
April 2002	Training curriculum for caseworkers will include provision to specifically address child and family involvement in case planning. Special attention will be paid to involving fathers and older children. Evaluation: Survey sampling of caseworkers and supervisors will be done to measure understanding.	All curricula will include those provisions.	Professional Development Section TA: Ed Fuller	Sept. 2002
April 2002	Judicial training will highlight the findings of the federal review on this item and the need for making sure that families and children are involved in their case planning. Evaluation: Survey sampling of judges will be done to measure compliance.	Annual training will include session on the federal review.	Eric John TA: Michelle Barclay	Nov. 2003
April 2002	SAAG training will highlight the findings of the federal review on this item and the need for making sure that families and children are involved in their case planning. Evaluation: Survey sampling of judges will be done to measure compliance.	Annual training will include session on the federal review.	Vivian Egan TA: Michelle Barclay	Aug. 2002
April 2002	The CPRS will be mandated to make sure that documentation of parental involvement be collected statewide. Evaluation: A report documenting parental involvement will be generated from the CPRS and distributed monthly to supervisors and county directors. A quarterly report will be presented to the Regional IV staff after review and approval by Division, SOA and Commissioner.	All case plans will be entered into the CPRS.	Kelli Stone TA: Michelle Barclay	July 2003
Effectuated	Family group conferencing must be done at the 30-day case plan with multi-disciplinary staffing to ensure parental involvement in case planning. Evaluation: Sample spot checks with counties	Family group conferencing will take place with all foster care cases.	County Supervisors	June 2004 and on-going

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	will occur to see if counties are in compliance.			
Jan. 2002	Family Group Conferencing and First Placement/Best Placement projects will get sufficient support, leadership and project management to ensure successful implementation and maintenance. Evaluation: Feedback will be sought quarterly from the project managers on progress and needs for continued successful implementation.	A project manager will be assigned to both programs with full support for implementation.	Juanita Blount-Clark Wilfred Hamm	July 2002
Sept. 2001	Continue annual request for additional staff with a goal of making incremental steps towards meeting CWLA staffing standards.	Support and advocate for: 2000 supplement – 171 positions; 2002 – 100 positions; 2003 – 100 positions	Commissioner Jim Martin Governor Georgia Legislature	June 2004

APPENDIX K

Work Plan Detail – Item 19, Worker Visits with Child

Goal: Reduce caseload size

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Sept. 2001	Continue annual request for additional staff with a goal of making incremental steps towards meeting CWLA staffing standards.	Support and advocate for: 2000 supplement – 171 positions; 2002 – 100 positions; 2003 – 100 positions	Commissioner Jim Martin Governor Georgia Legislature	June 2004

Goal: Develop visitation opportunities in the least restrictive setting and in compliance with ASFA guidelines.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Review current policies and practices in accordance with ASFA guidelines.	Completion of policy and practice review.	Wilfred Hamm (all Services Units)	Sept. 2002
May 2002	Revise policy and practice according to need.	Implement revised policy.	Foster Care Unit	Oct 2002
April 2002	Develop community-based partnerships to enhance utilization of child friendly visitation centers.	Decreased use of agency office as a visitation site. Revise supervisory review tool to identify that “least restrictive” visitation was/was not appropriate for the case.	County Department Kathy Herren	June 2004 July 2002
April 2002	Develop training components to support visitation with child and family. Evaluation: Please see evaluation for Items 3 & 4, page B-3.	Development of curriculum for new worker training and veteran staff.	Geraldine Jackson White	Sept 2002

Goal: ICPC compliance with quarterly reporting requirements.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARK	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
April 2002	Review of ICPC policy compliance for quarterly reports to ensure appropriate contacts are being made.	Track ICPC approved placements to assure that quarterly reports have been submitted.	Foster Care Unit Local County Department	Sept 2002

APPENDIX L

Work Plan Detail – Item 20, Worker Visits with Parents

Goal: Reduce caseload size

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Sept. 2001	Continue annual request for additional staff with a goal of making incremental steps towards meeting CWLA staffing standards.	Support and advocate for: 2000 supplement – 171 positions; 2002 – 100 positions; 2003 – 100 positions	Commissioner Jim Martin Governor Georgia Legislature	June 2004

Goal: To have meaningful and purposeful visits between parents and case managers

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Revise current practice standards by establishing guidelines for frequency expectations of contacts with parents.	Completion of policy and practice review.	Foster Care Unit	Sept. 2002
Mar. 2002	Establish a standard for expectations for visits with parents to occur in the residence of the parent at least every other month.	Developed visitation opportunities in the least restrictive setting and in compliance with ASFA guidelines.	Foster Care Unit	Sept. 2002
Mar. 2002	Revise the Supervisory Review tools to assure that policy compliance and good practice are in place.	Revised Supervisory Review Guide.	Ed Fuller Doris Walker Kathy Herren	Sept. 2002
Mar. 2002	Develop training components to support work with the parents through “New Worker Training” and as on-going skills training course for veteran staff. Evaluation: Please see Evaluation for Items 3 & 4, page B-2.	Development of curriculum for new worker training and veteran staff.	Geraldine Jackson White	Sept 2002

Goal: ICPC compliance with quarterly reporting requirements.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARK	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Review of ICPC policy compliance for quarterly reports to ensure appropriate contacts are being made. Evaluation: Please see Evaluation for Items 3 & 4, page B-3.	Track ICPC approved placements to assure that quarterly reports have been submitted.	Foster Care Unit Local County Department	July 2002

APPENDIX M

Work Plan Detail – Item 21, Educational Needs of the Child

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Change Placement policy to require all counties to use the CPRS for each child coming into care.	Completion of policy change.	Foster Care Unit	Dec. 2002
Mar. 2002	Expand fields on Education Screen in CPRS to add the following: “Has the child had an educational assessment within the last 12 months?” “Does the child’s educational plan reflect and incorporate the findings of the most recent comprehensive assessment?” “Have the details of the child’s education needs been provided to the placement resource?” “If the child is below school age, has there been a developmental assessment?” “Is the child developmentally delayed?” “Have the child’s educational needs been provided to the boarding county if the child is placed out of county?” Evaluation: Please see Evaluation for Items 3 & 4, page B-2.	Fields added to CPRS Education Screen. FP/BP Assessment will cover this area during assessment. FP/BP standards will be revised to include this information so that caseworker can include on CPRS.	Kelli Stone FP/BP Technical Assistance Team, CAPS Section	Dec. 2002 Dec. 2002

APPENDIX N

Work Plan Detail – Item 22, Physical Health of the Child

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Jan. 2002	Georgia will put in to policy a descriptive usage of how the county mini – grants and the Safe and Stable Families Programs can be used to meet the health needs and provide services to children in CPS and Foster Care cases. This will encourage the use of these programs to add more resources to services families in each county.	Provide new policy and obtain approval.	Rebecca Jarvis and Linda Doster	July 2002
April 2002	Georgia will continue to require all providers to complete a Multi Discipline Team Meeting for each Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment to determine the appropriate health needs and services of all children entering foster care program within the first 30 to 60 days of the child entering care.	Review at each annual on-site review.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	Dec. 2002 and ongoing
July 2002	Georgia will complete technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to complete a comprehensive assessment and how to use the collected information to make the most appropriate health decision at the beginning of the child's stay in foster care. The FP/BP information will also be used to develop more effective case plans for the child and family.	Provide 11 county site training to staff and providers beginning in 7/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	Dec. 2002 and ongoing
July 2002	Georgia will complete technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers of the content of the comprehensive assessment and how to use the collected information to meet the health, mental health, dental and educational needs of the child and family.	Provide 11 county site training to staff and providers beginning in 7/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	Dec. 2002 and ongoing
July 2002	Georgia will complete technical assistance to DFCS staff and private providers as to how to use the collected information to meet the child's needs as it related to post substance abuse counseling, monitoring and support as a part of the early intervention process and/or in – home intensive treatment services.	Provide 11 county site training to staff and providers beginning in 7/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	Dec. 2002 and ongoing
June 2002	Complete a monthly county-by-county report as it	Complete a report as to findings	Dr. John Carter, Joe Wassell and	Sept. 2002

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	relates to the initial assessment of the First Placement/ Best Placement Comprehensive Assessment and the identified types of placements needed and available and permanency plans of children.	from July 2001 – March 2002	Jill Andrew	
June 2002	Complete a monthly county-by-county report as it relates to the First Placement/ Best Placement Wraparound Services used for each child in foster care.	Complete a report as to the findings from December 2001 – March 2002.	Dr. John Carter, Joe Wassail and Jill Andrew	Sept. 2002
Oct. 2002	Georgia will complete an annual statewide review of the First Placement/Best Placement Program to include on site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases. This review will be similar to the federal on site review. Children, caregivers/families and other stakeholders will be interviewed. Fulton will be included at each annual review.	Complete at least 50 case reviews beginning 1/2003.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	May 2003
Oct. 2002	Georgia will complete an annual review throughout the state of the First Placement/ Best Placement Wraparound Services Program by completing on-site case reviews during the same time as completing the random selected case review in #8.	Complete at least 50 case reviews beginning 1/2003.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	May 2003
June 2003	Georgia will continue to assess the effectiveness and impact of the First Placement/Best Placement Program and Wraparound Services Program in reducing the number of children in foster care once the family's needs and services have been met.	Report to team.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	June 2004 and on-going
June 2003	If problem is predominantly institutional: Establish a larger state review group, which will include more stakeholders to review and provide technical assistance to counties and the annual statewide review of the First Placement/ Best Placement Program and Wraparound Services to include on site case reviews of 50 randomly selected cases.	Complete additional case reviews, if appropriate by 10/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston and Linda Ladd	June 2004 and on-going
Nov. 2003	Examine policy and training effectiveness for DFCS staff and private providers.	Within 60 days of completing additional on-site case reviews, provide a written report, if appropriate.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd and Linda Doster	June 2004 and on-going
Nov. 2002	Recommend additional training and policy changes.	Within 60 days of completing additional on-site case reviews,	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent	June 2004 and on-going

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
		provide a written report, if appropriate.	Houston, Linda Ladd and Linda Doster	
Jan. 2003	Test whether needs and services to children and families changes after training and policy changes.	Complete additional case reviews, if appropriate by 12/2002.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd and stakeholders	June 2004 and on-going
Jan. 2003	Identify if appropriate, other factors that may contribute to the needs and/services of children and families not being met while in foster care. Evaluation: Please see Evaluation for Items 3 & 4 on page B-2.	Complete a report to the team.	Merita Roberts, Joe Wassell, Betty Wrights, Millicent Houston, Linda Ladd and stakeholders	June 2004 and on-going

APPENDIX O

Work Plan Detail – Item 23, Mental Health of the Child

Goal: Identify or develop a uniform process to ensure that children have access to a statewide mental health assessment that is timely and comprehensive.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Assess First Placement/Best Placement process to determine if it can be made uniform and timely to serve as a vehicle for this purpose.		Doris Walker, Wilfred Hamm Dawne Morgan Juanita Blount-Clark Kelli Stone	Oct. 2002 (completed)
Mar. 2002	1. Using the CPRS, develop a process to evaluate completion of assessments for all children entering. 2. Assess and report current percentage of completed and timely assessments of children entering care.	Utilizing the same reporting procedure, the percentage of timely assessments completed will increase to at least 80%.	Doris Walker, Wilfred Hamm Dawne Morgan Juanita Blount-Clark Kelli Stone	Oct. 2002 July 2003
Mar. 2002	Select validated instruments for risk assessment as well as more comprehensive diagnostic assessments for mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse.	Completed list of approved instruments.	Doris Walker, Dianne Sacks, Wilfred Hamm Dawne Morgan Juanita Blount-Clark	Sept. 2003 (Completed)
Mar. 2002	Develop and enforce statewide multi-agency protocol for assessment, including necessary confidentiality safeguards. Determine utilization by all counties of approved instruments pursuant to protocol.	Development and enforcement of formal agreements between agencies to use common assessment protocol.	Doris Walker Wilfred Hamm Dawne Morgan Juanita Blount-Clark Governor's Action Group	June 2004

Goal: The statewide multi-agency protocol will include a formal communication process for dissemination of assessment findings for case plan development.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Develop a CPRS supervision tool to ensure comprehensive assessment findings are followed in the case plan and training. Determine percent of staff case plans that reflect strengths and needs identified in the comprehensive assessment.	Actualize ability to gather data through CPRS.	Wilfred Hamm Doris Walker Merita Roberts Field Directors County Directors, County Supervisors	June 2004

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
			Joe Wassell Juanita Blount-Clark Kelli Stone	

Goal: Case managers have the capacity to work closely with children and families in order to ensure sustained access to needed treatment resources.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Jan. 2003	1. Revise Case managers' job requirements to ensure focus on mental health needs of the child and family as defined in the comprehensive assessment (streamline and eliminate duplicative requirements). Job requirements will be more specific to meeting the needs of the family. 2. Conduct study of caseworker caseloads using only the positions actively working a caseload in order that a true and accurate caseload accounting can be made.	Funding appropriated to hire enough staff to keep caseloads manageable. Caseloads will decrease dramatically toward meeting CWLA standards.	Jim Martin Juanita Blount-Clark Juanita Blount-Clark Wilfred Hamm	June 2004

Goal: Development of a statewide vision for coordinated service delivery system to children and families.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Sept. 2002	Support the on-going development of resource lists, working with United Way and other existing resource databases.	Current and accurate Georgia resource listing becomes available.	Jim Martin Juanita Blount-Clark David Hellwig Normer Adams	Mar. 2003 (To be ongoing as resources are developed in the communities.)
Sept. 2002	1. Begin development of statewide database on children's mental health resources – focusing on needs identified (in assessment process) for which no service is currently available 2. CPRS will be amended to include data collection for recommendations made during the assessment process.	Improved cross-agency data on children's mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse needs become available and is used by multiple agencies when budget planning.	Jim Martin Juanita Blount-Clark Larry Singer Office of Planning and Budget John Hurd	June 2004
Sept. 2002	Identify through database the areas most in need of resource development and begin development strategies to meet those needs.	Agencies jointly identify critical systems gaps and recommend budget priorities as a system.	Jim Martin Juanita Blount-Clark John Hurd	June 2004

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Strengthen and make mandatory the Case Plan Reporting System to ensure that information about the child's mental health is documented to eliminate breaks in mental health services. Provide additional support and training so case managers can use the system effectively. Evaluation: Compare current numbers of Case Plans completed per month in CPRS and compare with the number of children entering care that same month. Conduct a structured assessment of quality on case plans in CPRS.	Issue a policy statement requiring all new 30-day case plans to be completed in CPRS. Strengthen training and support of CPRS. Examine existing case plans to assure appropriate use of data fields by case managers.	Juanita Blount-Clark Linda Doster Kelli Stone Consultation & Support Unit Mentor Unit County Directors County Supervisors	Within 1 year of acceptance of PIP
Mar. 2002	On the Health Screen in CPRS, add a required field that must be addressed if the "Date of Last Psychological Assessment" is not provided by the case manager. This functionality will be added during the re-write of CPRS. Develop a report to collect data from CPRS that will show case manager's appropriate use of these fields. Evaluation: Review the system to assure these fields have been added and provide the needed functionality. Review report to assure case managers are providing information in the Mental Health sections of the Health Screen.	During the re-writing of CPRS, assure this functionality is added in the business analysis.	Kelli Stone Kathy Herren	Within 1 year of acceptance of PIP

APPENDIX P

Work Plan Detail – Item 24, Statewide Information System

Goal: Build reliability and consistency in IDSONLINE

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
May 2002	Develop training component for web based testing and classroom curriculum.	Increase in data accuracy, increase in worker competency.	Professional Development Section, Kathy Herren	Jan. 2004
Jan. 2002	Develop an on-going communication component that identifies trends and problems against statewide reports.	Increase in data accuracy.	Kathy Herren Evaluation & Reporting Section	June 2004 and on-going
Jan. 2002	Establish deadlines for corrections to data prior to submission of AFCARS file.	Increase in data accuracy.	Kathy Herren	June 2004 and on-going

Goal: Increase competency skills of core user group

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Mar. 2002	Identify problems that currently exist in core user group.	Surveys that indicate problems and follow-up surveys that indicate increase in knowledge.	Kathy Herren Evaluation and Reporting Section	June 2002
Nov. 2001	Develop statewide training opportunities for managers.	Completed statewide training opportunities.	Kathy Herren	Nov. 2003

Goal: Enhance existing system to meet on-going data needs

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Jan. 2003	Merge the use of PSDS into IDSONLINE.	Completion of the merge and availability of historical data for screening.	Kathy Herren	Dec. 2003
Jan. 2003	Expand and create additional management tools for tracking based on available data.	Completion and expansion of management reports.	Kathy Herren	June 2004 and on-going

Goal: *Contingent upon SACWIS PAPD and IAPD approvals, to develop a Statewide Information System that is compliant with SACWIS requirements and supports the efficient, effective, timely and consistent provision of case management services.*

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
June 2002	Submit DFCS Case Management BPR PAPD – Planning Advanced Planning Document - to ACF for approval. Evaluation: ACF approval of PAPD.	Release received by ACF (6/14/02).	Carol Veihmeyer	August 2002 (60 day review period)
Sept. 2001	Complete DFCS Case Management Future State Design. Evaluation: DFCS Management Team approval, sign off of presentation by Juanita Blount-Clark.	Presentation to DFCS Management Team (5/02).	Carol Veihmeyer	June 2002 (scheduled DFCS Management meeting)
Oct. 2002	Field Demonstration of State Design and Revise FS Model/Design as required. Evaluation: Revised Plan	Evaluation of Model (11/02).	Carol Veihmeyer	11/02
Oct. 2002	Program Improvement Change Management Plan. Evaluation: Plans presented and approved by DFCS Management Team.	Improvement Plans developed.	Carol Veihmeyer	04/03
August 2002	Planning Contractor Procurement – new contract approved by ACF. Evaluation: Plans presented and approved by DFCS Management Team.	ACF approved SOW (8/02). Proposals reviewed. Selected vendor. Planning Contract in place (10/02).	Carol Veihmeyer	10//02
Oct 2002	SACWIS Technical Design Development. Evaluation: Present Detailed Future State Design for approval.	Detail Functional Requirements Detail System Requirements Information Architecture Hardware/Software Requirements	Carol Veihmeyer	02/03
Oct. 2002	Complete SACWIS Feasibility Study. Evaluation: Presentation of Alternatives and approval of system acquisition.	Completed System Alternative Analysis.	Carol Veihmeyer	11//02
Oct. 2002	Complete Cost Benefit Analysis. Evaluation: Presentation of Cost/Benefit.	Completed Cost/Benefit Analysis 12/02.	Carol Veihmeyer	12/02
Oct. 2002	Develop SACWIS IAPD/RFP. Evaluation: Approved IAPD and RFP.	Released IAPD and RFP.	Carol Veihmeyer	12/02

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
March 2003	Implementation Contractor Procurement – new contract approved by ACF. Evaluation: Approved Contract in place.	ACF approved SOW. Proposals reviewed. Selected vendor. Implementation contract in place 06/03.	Carol Veihmeyer	06/03
June 2003	Release I Evaluation: Release meets stated quality and performance standards.	Selected vendors working on release. Release piloted. Roll out plan approved. Release I operational Statewide.	Carol Veihmeyer	12/03

APPENDIX Q

Work Plan Detail – Items 35-37, State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

START DATE	ACTION STEP	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
August 2002	Conduct a statewide needs assessment of existing support services to determine gaps in service array and accessibility to include mental health, family violence, substance abuse treatment, and post treatment services, treatment continuum for sexual abuse, intensive in-home services, out of home services to include the immediate availability of foster homes, medically fragile foster homes, and therapeutic foster homes.	Compile and disseminate a report of findings.	David Hellwig Dianne Sacks Doris Walker County Directors County Supervisors Social Services Quality Task Force Consultation & Support Unit	December 2002
Jan. 2003	Collaborate with providers, stakeholders and consumers to address gaps in the service array and develop a continuum of services accessible statewide.	Funding and resource allocation plan to address identified gaps in service array and geographic accessibility.	Wilfred Hamm Sarah Brownlee Doris Walker Dianne Sacks David Hellwig Ann Dennard Smith	March 2003
June 2002	Compile and post a comprehensive web-based directory of existing local and statewide service resources. Resource Directories will be made available to all front line case managers and supervisory staff.	Monthly monitoring of web site to determine frequency usage.	Ann Dennard Smith Andy Barclay Normer Adams United Way 211	Dec. 2002 and on-going
Nov. 2002	Develop curriculum and deliver training to staff and providers to enhance capacity to assess underlying family needs that create safety concerns for children.	As a part of the Annual Qualitative Case Review, a representative sample of cases will be reviewed to determine if there is demonstrated improvement in case manager's ability to adequately assess underlying family needs as reflected in improved service coordination and outcomes for families.	Geraldine Jackson White TA: Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group	Feb. 2003 and on-going

APPENDIX R

Work Plan Detail - Item 42, The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Dec. 2002	<p>Explore the development of uniform licensing standards for all public and private family foster homes and child-caring institutions by establishing a committee to complete the following:</p> <p>A. Analyze commonalties and differences in DFCS and DHR office of Regulatory Services (ORS) standards/policy for licensure or approval of family foster homes and child-caring institutions.</p> <p>B. Identify what agency policy and legislative requirements need to be revised and implemented to establish uniformity.</p> <p>C. Identify the impact of uniform licensing requirements on staffing and other fiscal factors.</p> <p>D. Make recommendations based on information gathered in steps A-C above.</p> <p>Evaluation: A report documenting DFCS proposed changes and recommendations for the establishment of uniform foster family licensing standards, including legislative and fiscal impact.</p>	<p>Conduct a series of workgroups to begin reviewing and assessing DFCS and ORS policies and procedures for foster family homes between 12-2002 and 12-2003.</p> <p>Complete written report issued detailing commonalties and differences in DFCS and ORS policies/standards; recommendations for revisions and fiscal implications indicated.</p>	<p>DFCS; ORS; Field Directors Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children (GAHSC); Stakeholders; Legislation Team</p>	April 2004
Oct. 2002	<p>Review and revise as necessary DFCS policy regarding the local county departments' waiver of minimum standard requirements for foster homes.</p> <p>A. Develop workgroup to identify and resolve problem area.</p> <p>B. Revise and implement necessary policy changes.</p> <p>Evaluation: The Social Services (Foster Care) Manual is updated to reflect any new agency</p>	<p>Review present policy regarding the granting of waivers to determine compliance with ASFA (Final Rule) by 10/2002</p> <p>Revision and implementation of policy limiting the granting of waivers of the minimum standards waivers by DFCS</p>	<p>DFCS, Field Directors; Stakeholders, Social Services Quality Task Force</p>	April 2004

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
	directives regarding the granting of waivers by 7/2003	county departments by 7/2003.		

APPENDIX S

Work Plan Detail - Item 44, State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Goal: Expand placement resource options.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Jan. 2003	<p>A. Explore the feasibility of funding staffing strategies that incorporate the development of Regional Resource Development teams for the recruitment, preparation and approval, retention, re-evaluation, supervision and support of foster, adoptive and foster/adopt homes within the region.</p> <p>Evaluation: A decision is rendered by the Office of Planning and Budget regarding the funding of regional positions by April 2004.</p>	Meeting held with the Office of Planning and Budget to discuss the funding of positions for Regional Resource Development teams to meet family resource needs.	DHR Budget Office DFCS Director, DFCS SS Director, Foster Care Unit, Office of Adoption, Placement Res. Dev. Unit	April 2004
In effect until June 30, 2002	<p>B. Make funding available for private child-caring agencies to recruit, develop and provide on-going supervision and retention services to foster and foster/adopt homes, in a manner similar to services provided an existing contract between the Office of Adoptions and private child-caring agencies.</p> <p>Evaluation: Funds allocated and contracts established with private child caring agencies for services in the recruitment, development, supervision and retention of foster homes.</p>	Funding appropriated to contract with private agencies to recruit and develop foster and foster/adopt homes.	DHR Budget Office, DFCS Director, DFCS Social Services Section Director, Foster Care Unit, Placement Resource Development Unit, Linda Ladd	Presently in effect
Effectuated	<p>C. Increase per diem payments to private agencies that provide family foster care for DFCS.</p>	Payments to private family foster care providers increased to \$33.30 per day. Effect re-negotiation with private agencies to increase daily rates by 9/2003.	Juanita Blount-Clark GAHSC (members and non-members) Foster Care Unit DHR Budget Office DFCS Social Services Section Director, Treatment Unit	Oct. 2001
Oct. 2002	<p>Evaluation: Renegotiation of per diem rates effected by</p>			Sept. 2003

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Jan. 2003	<p>D. Explore the funding available for the development of a Foster Care Recruitment position, to operate in conjunction with the Office of Adoptions Recruitment Manager in providing leadership to Resource Development teams and private child-caring agencies in recruiting a continuum of placement resources (including foster, foster/adopt, adoptive and emergency placement homes) that reflect the specialized and individual needs (medical, therapeutic, teens, siblings, etc.) as well as the ethnic and racial diversity of children needing placement</p> <p>Evaluation: Decision rendered by the Office of Planning and Budget regarding the allocation of a Division Foster Care Recruitment position on the Division level.</p>	Meeting held with the Office of Planning and Budget to request the funding for a Foster Care Recruiter position at the Division (State) level to work in conjunction with the Office of Adoption in providing leadership to county RD staff and private agencies in the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive homes.	<p>DHR Budget Office, DFCS Director DFCS SS Section Dir., Juanita Blount-Clark, GAHSC (members and non-members), DHR Planning and Budget Office, Budget Office, DFCS Social Services Section Director,</p> <p>Foster Care Unit, Placement Resources Development Unit, Linda Ladd</p>	April 2004
Dec. 2002	<p>E. Develop a database of resources to be used in supporting families in the maintenance of foster, foster/adopt and adoptive placements across county lines.</p> <p>Evaluation: Database of resources developed in partnership with GAHSC and made accessible to state and private agencies and foster parents by 6/2003.</p>	Resource Directories developed and made available for use by DFCS and private agency Case Managers to support foster, foster/adopt and adoptive placements.	GAHSC and non-members, State DFCS, Office of Adoption, DFCS County Depts.	July 2003
July 2003	<p>F. Develop a protocol with privately operated shelters and child-caring agencies for the implementation of MOUs with county DFCS offices to increase the pool of emergency placement resources for children entering care and to address the broad range of placement needs, which include teen, sibling, therapeutic, and medically fragile care.</p> <p>Evaluation: Protocol developed for private agencies and shelters to implement MOU's with county DFACS agencies developed by 2/2004.</p>	Meetings with DFCS and private agencies to discuss development of protocol for the placement of children: 7/2003 – 12/2003.	GAHSC & non members, ORS, State Treatment & Foster Care Units, PRD Unit, DFCS County Depts.	June 2004

Goal: Improve the Retention rate among foster families.

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
Dec. 2002	<p>A. Evaluate the current foster parent preparation model (GPS:MAPP) for its effectiveness in the preparation and retention of foster, adoptive and foster/adopt parents.</p> <p>Evaluation: Report of evaluation and assessment outcomes developed and recommendations made regarding the effectiveness of the current foster parent preparation model (GPSD:MAPP).</p>	<p>Instrument developed and implemented in the evaluation/assessment of the effectiveness of GPS:MAPP in preparing and retaining foster parents.</p> <p>Additional preparation and training components developed as needed.</p>	DFCS. Office of Adoption	March 2003
Dec. 2002	<p>B. Assure foster parent participation in annual, competency-based in-service training.</p> <p>Evaluation: County or statewide system developed to track the status of required annual foster parent training by 4/2004.</p> <p>Evaluation: Additional in service training opportunities developed for foster parents.</p>	<p>Tracking and tickler system developed to track status of foster parent training by providing quarterly reports to counties of training hours completed.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for continued parent development provided on both the state and the local levels.</p>	<p>E & R, State and County DFCS</p> <p>State and County DFCS, Foster Care Unit</p>	April 2004
Dec. 2002	<p>C. Enhance county's capacity to retain foster parents by strengthening team/ partnership strategies between county departments and foster parents</p> <p>Evaluation: Guidelines to enhance the retention of foster parents developed and sent out to county agencies by 6/2003.</p> <p>Evaluation: Guidelines for completing exit interviews for foster parents developed and sent out by 6/2003.</p>	<p>State and local guidelines for the support and retention of foster and adoptive parents are developed.</p> <p>Guidelines for completing required exit interviews with foster parents developed for use by counties.</p>	<p>State and County DFCS</p> <p>State Foster Care, Placement Resource Development Unit, GAHSC</p>	July 2003
Effectuated	Provide supportive wrap-around services for crisis intervention to prevent placement disruptions.	Guidelines established and implemented for counties in the provision of wrap-around services for foster, foster/adopt	<p>Foster Care Unit</p> <p>County Supervisors Case managers</p>	Oct. 2001 (completed)

START DATE	ACTION STEPS	MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
		and adoptive placements to prevent placement disruptions.		

PIP Summary Table

In order for the State to be considered in substantial conformity on any given outcome, the outcome must be substantially achieved in 90% of the cases reviewed in the first review. In addition, the State must meet the national standard that has been established for any statewide aggregate data attached to that particular outcome.

Except where noted, the "Percent Compliant" figures in the table below represent the percentage of cases in file reviews in which the item was cited as a strength or the outcome was found to be substantially achieved.

Key Findings Relating to Safety, Permanency and Well-Being:

Safety	Percent Compliant	Substantial Conformity ?	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
S1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.	90%	No	Yes	May 2003	
Item 01. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	88%	Yes	No	Efforts will continue	Yes
Item 02. Repeat maltreatment (and maltreatment of children in foster care)	91.5% ¹ Foster Care: 1.08% (nat. std. = 0.57%)	Yes	Yes	June 2004	Yes
S2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.	77.5%	No	Yes	January 2004	
Item 03. Services to families to protect children in home and prevent removal	n/a	No	Yes	January 2004	
Item 04. Risk of harm to child	n/a	No	Yes	January 2004	

Safety	Percent Compliant	Substantial Conformity ?	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
Permanency	Percent Compliant	Substantial Conformity ?	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
P1: CHILDREN WILL HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATION.	71.4%	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 05. Foster care re-entries	96.4%	Yes	No		Yes
Item 06. Stability of foster care placement	70.4% ² Statewide: 92.3% (nat. std. = 86.7%)	No	Yes	May 2004	
Item 07. Permanency goal for child	71.4%	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 08. Independent living services	n/a	Yes Work is needed to explore Medicaid funds through age 21	No		Yes
Item 09. Adoption	53.8%	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement	40%	No	Yes	March 2004	
P2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS WILL BE	75%	No	Yes	June 2004	

Safety	Percent Compliant	Substantial Conformity ?	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.					
Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement	92.3%	Yes	No		Yes
Item 12. Placement with siblings	72.2%	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	66.6%	No	Yes	June 2004	Yes
Item 14. Preserving connections	89.2%	Yes	No		Yes
Item 15. Relative placement	100%	Yes	No		Yes
Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents	80%	Yes	No		Yes
Child and Family Well-Being	Percent Compliant	Substantial Conformity ?	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
WB1: FAMILIES WILL HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.	72%	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	n/a	No	Yes	January 2004	
Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning	n/a	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 19. Worker visits with child	n/a	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 20. Worker visits with parents	n/a	No	Yes	June 2004	
WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational	75.7%	No	Yes	Dec. 2002	

Safety	Percent Compliant	Substantial Conformity ?	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
needs.					
Item 21. Educational needs of the child	n/a	No	Yes	Dec. 2002	
WB3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.	63.2%	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 22. Physical health of the child	n/a	No	Yes	May 2003	
Item 23. Mental health of the child	n/a	No	Yes	June 2004	

Footnotes to above:

¹ Recurrence of Maltreatment: Georgia statewide aggregate data meets the national standard for recurrence, but fails to meet the national standard for incidence of maltreatment in foster care:

- Recurrence of Maltreatment:
State Aggregate Data Profile: 4.2%
(nat. std. = 6.1%)
File Review Data: 8.5%
- Incidence of Maltreatment in Foster Care:
State Aggregate Data Profile: 1.08%
(nat. std. = 0.57%)

² Stability of Foster Care Placement: Georgia statewide aggregate data meets the national standard, but the file reviewers found foster care stability to be a strength in only 70.4% of files reviewed. The discrepancy between the aggregate data and the file review data was resolved by the state accepting the indicator as not substantially achieved.

- State Aggregate Data Profile: 92.3%
(nat. std. = 86.7%)
- File Review Data: 70.4%

A "Review Team Rating" scored systemic factors. A rating of 1 or 2 is considered "Not in

Substantial Conformity". A rating of 3 or 4 is considered "In Substantial Conformity".

Key Findings For Systemic Factors

Factor	Review Team Rating	Substantial Conformity	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
Statewide Information System	2	No	Yes	December 2003	
Item 24. State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care	No	No	Yes	December 2003 for Release 1 (Contingent upon SACWIS PAPER and IAPD approvals)	
Case Review System	3	Yes			
Item 25. Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Item 26. Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Item 27. Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Item 28. Provides a process for termination of parental rights in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act	Yes	Yes	No		Yes

Factor	Review Team Rating	Substantial Conformity	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
Item 29. Provides a process for foster parents, pre adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Quality Assurance System	3	Yes			
Item 30. State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Item 31. State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Training	3	Yes			
Item 32. State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under title IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Item 33. State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP	Yes	Yes	No		Yes

Factor	Review Team Rating	Substantial Conformity	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
Item 34. State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-D that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Service Array	2	No			
Item 35. State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency	No	No	Yes	April 2004	
Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP	No	No	Yes	April 2004	
Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency	No	No	Yes	April 2004	
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	3	Yes			
Item 38. In implementing the provision of the CFSP, the state engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP	Yes	Yes	No		Yes

Factor	Review Team Rating	Substantial Conformity	Addressed in PIP	Completion Date	Strengths
Item 39. Agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Item 40. State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits or other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	2	No			
Item 41. State has implemented standards for foster family homes and childcare institutions, which are reasonable in accord with recommended national standards	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds	No	No	Yes	April 2004	
Item 43. State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.	Yes	Yes	No		Yes
Item 44. State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed	No	No	Yes	June 2004	
Item 45. State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children	Yes	Yes	No		Yes

Safe Futures and Title IV-B Advisory Committee Members, Staff Participants and Technical Advisors

Committee Members

Normer Adams, Executive Director
Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children

Sandra Alexander, Director
Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

Felicia Anderson, Community Representative
Cobb County Community Services Board

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Gail Hayes, Senior Consultant
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Judge Nina Hickson
Fulton County Juvenile Court

Shawn Huff, Associate Director
Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

Judge Sanford Jones, Chief
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Glossary of Terms

ACF - Administration for Children and Families is part of the US Department of Health and Human Services. ACF is responsible for child welfare and other services to families.

AFCARS - Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. AFCARS is a federally designed reporting system which makes it mandatory for state to collect, update and submit specific data on all children in the foster care system to the federal government.

ASFA - The Adoption and Safe Families Act (1997). This federal legislation expedited time frames to move children through the child welfare system into permanent living situations. It also reinforced and strengthened the child welfare reforms already in place as a result of PL 96-272 and focused on three national goals for children in foster care: safety, permanence and well-being.

CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocate. A volunteer appointed by the court to act as a lay Guardian ad Litem in protecting the best interests of the child in juvenile court proceedings.

CFSR - Child and Family Services Review. A federal review process of each state's child welfare system. All states must participate; each state's goal is to achieve substantial conformity in the areas of safety, permanency and child and family well being for outcomes and systemic factors.

CIP - Court Improvement Project. A project under the Supreme Court of Georgia to improve the overall functioning of the juvenile court system.

COSTAR - County Statistical Reporting System. COSTAR is Georgia's county based accounting system that tracks the purchase of services and Title IV-E expenditures on behalf of children.

CPPC - Community Partnership for the Protection of Children.

CPRS - Case Plan Reporting System. Georgia's web-based case plan/review system.

CPS Unit - Child Protective Services Unit. A unit within the Social Services Section of DFCS that provides specialized social services for children who are maltreated (neglected, abused or exploited) or who are at risk of maltreatment.

C&S Unit - Consultation and Support Unit. A unit within the Social Services Section of DFCS.

CWLA - Child Welfare League of America. The Child Welfare League of America is the nation's oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization committed to engaging people everywhere in promoting the well-being of children, youth, and their families and protecting every child from harm.

CWPPG - Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group. The Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group is a private, non-profit organization developed to assist child welfare systems to create, design and manage organizational change, which results in improved practice and outcomes for children and their families.

DFCS - Division of Family and Children Services (state-level).

DFACS - Department of Family and Children Services (county level).

DHR - Department of Human Resources. The state agency responsible for the administration of income maintenance, medical, social services, child support and community service programs.

DJJ - Division of Juvenile Justice. Georgia has signed an agreement that enables DJJ to draw down Title IV-E funds for community placements.

DOE - Department of Education.

E&R - Evaluation and Reporting Section. A section within DFCS that evaluates and provides reports on policy compliance and the services provided to children and families.

FC Unit - Foster Care Unit. A unit within the Social Services Section of DFCS that develops programs and policies to support the mission of Georgia's foster care program, which is to strengthen families, protect children from further abuse and neglect, and to assure that every child has a permanent family.

FP/BP - First Placement/Best Placement. A DFCS and private provider initiative established in 1998 to assess and provide services to children and families.

GAHSC - Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children. This association represents over 150 child and family serving agencies. They serve as partners to DFCS in MATCH, FP/BP, Youth Leadership Council and other programs.

GAL - Guardian ad Litem. An attorney appointed by the court to represent the best interests of the child in legal proceedings.

GPS:MAPP - Group Preparation and Selection: Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting. This is a model for preparing families to foster and/or adopt by involving them in group sessions designed for education, self-assessment and decision-making.

HW/SW - Hardware/Software

IAPD - Implementation Advanced Planning Document.

ICPC - Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

MATCH - Multi Agency Team for Children. A multi agency team including DFCS, DJJ, Mental Health, and parents that serve children with severe emotional issues.

MDT - Multi Disciplinary Team Staffing. A requirement of FP/BP assessments. The participants at the MDT staffing explore options for the child/family and make recommendations for case planning.

MOU - Memorandum of Understanding. A statement of agreement used by County Departments of Family and Children Services when formalizing service agreements for the purchase of service from an independent contractor or another agency. MOU's are used for purchase of service agreements with all providers of services, including Homestead Services, Parent Aide Services, Independent Living Services, or other similar services.

NCANDS - National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

ORS - Office of Regulatory Services. A DHR agency that approves, monitors and regulates childcare, child placement agencies and institutions.

PIP - Program Improvement Plan. A corrective action plan developed by the state to correct areas that are not in substantial conformity as a result of the child and family services federal review.

PRD - Placement Resource Development Unit. A unit within the Social Services Section of DFCS that recruits and retains placement resources.

PSSF - Promoting Safe and Stable Families Grant. Authorizing Legislation: Section 430, Title IV-B, Title IV-B, Subpart 2, of the Social Security Act as amended by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 and CFR 1357. The program was created in 1993, and reauthorize in 1997 and 2001 under the Adoption and Safe Families Act. The program formerly known as the Family Preservation and Support Services Program provides capped entitlement funding for states to build capacity and support the provision of services for children and families, including extended and adoptive families, who are at risk or in crisis. The program also includes a set-aside for the State Court Improvement Program that is instrumental in helping courts implement reforms necessary to comply with ASFA decision-making timelines.

QCR - Qualitative Case Review. A review process, which provides a detail examination of indicators of child and family status and system performance in a representative number of cases.

QTF - Quality Task Force (Social Services).

RAC - Regional Adoption Coordinator. A specialized state level staff member of the DHR Office of Adoptions assigned to one of the twelve (12) regions or service delivery areas around the state. Their major responsibility is to coordinate all services related to adoption for their assigned region. This includes recruitment of families, placement of children in adoption status and post adoption services.

SAAG - Special Assistant Attorney General. An attorney assigned by the State Law Department to provide legal services and consultation to local county departments.

SACWIS - Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems. Federal legislation by which states are permitted to access federal funds to develop statewide information systems to support child welfare programs.

SDM - Structured Decision Making. A CPS practice model and process that Georgia has adopted in its' intakes and investigations that structures decision making on how to evaluate abuse and neglect and the reoccurrence of maltreatment.

SOA - State Office of Adoptions. A DHR state agency created in 1997 as an initiative to make adoptions a priority for children in the states' care. It was developed out of President Clinton's initiative to double the number of adoptions by the year 2002. This Office is responsible for the administration and development of policy and programs related to adoptions in the state of Georgia.

SOW - Statement of Work.

TA - Technical Assistance.

TPR - Termination of Parental Rights. When parental rights are permanently severed and a permanent custody order is granted by the courts.

Title IV-B - A federal funding source for all children in foster care who are not eligible for Title IV-E.

Title IV-E - A federal funding source for children in foster care who meet certain eligibility requirements, including parental deprivation and financial need.

Approvals

The following State and Federal officials hereby approve the content of the attached Program Improvement Plan on this _____ day of _____, 2002.

State Commissioner of Human Resources

Hub Director/Region IV Administrator
Administration for Children and Families

Amendments

This section should only be completed in the event of re-negotiations in the content of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), pursuant to 45 CFR 1355 (e) (4). Copies of approved re-negotiated PIPs must be retained and distributed as noted above immediately upon completing re-negotiations.

The content of the attached PIP was re-negotiated on _____. The re-negotiated content of the attached PIP has been initialed by State and Regional Office staff with authority to negotiate such content and is hereby approved by the following State and regional officials:

State Commissioner, Department of Human Resources

Hub Director/Region IV Administrator
Administration for Children and Families

Original: Regional Office

Copies: State Department of Human Resources
 Division of Family and Children Services
 State Office of Adoptions