

## INTRODUCTION

### **State Data Profile Toolkit**

The National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRC-CWDT) has developed the State Data Profile Toolkit as an aid to States. The goal is to provide technical assistance in the format of a user's manual that will:

- Identify the AFCARS and NCANDS elements that are used in the State Data Profile;
- Describe and explain the composites, components, and measures in the Profile;
- Explain the specific derivations for each of the data elements in the Profile;
- Provide an interactive exercise that the State can use to learn how to analyze their own profile and how to formulate relevant questions based on the specific results for an individual State Data Profile;
- Discuss the implications of the national standards with regard to outcome measures; and,
- Provide an explanation of Principal Components Analysis, weighted measures, and composite measures.

The Toolkit is comprised of eight sections as shown below.

Section	Content
1	Three-Chapter Training Curriculum
2	Example of State Data Profile
3	Independent Exercise (State Data Profile)
4	Quick Reference Guide to the CFSR Data Profile Elements
5	CFSR Glossary of Terms
6	Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
7	Related Federal Documentation
8	Explanation of PCA, Weighted Measures and Data Composites
9	Table of CFSR Data Indicators
10	Data Tools

Section 1, currently designed as a four-chapter training curriculum supplemented by PowerPoint slides, provides information on: the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process and changes between Round One and Round Two; sources of the data; an introduction to the data; and, how to read the State Data Profile. To supplement the training curriculum, an example of a State Data Profile for a fictitious state follows in Section 2. Section 3 presents an independent exercise that allows the reader to apply the knowledge obtained in the training curriculum by presenting another State Data Profile which should, in several instances, elicit specific questions concerning those data. The exercise includes an answer key.

The Quick Reference Guide to the CFSR Data Profile Elements (Section 4) is a comprehensive description of how each data element in the State Data Profile is derived. This should provide States with the answers as to where the data came from on their respective data profiles.

Section 5 provides a definition of many of the terms used in the CFSRs; while Section 6 answers many of the “Frequently Asked Questions” or FAQs. There is also a link to the Children’s Bureau website where the user will find the federal documentation associated with Round Two of the CFSRs. The two Federal Register Announcements concerning this round of CFSRs is included in Section 7. In Section 8, there is a generic discussion of Principal Component Analysis (PCA), data composites, and weighted measures. A table of the CFSR Data Indicators, the associated National Standards, and weights are presented in Section 9. Finally, Section 10 contains tools used to generate State outcomes.

### **Sources of the Data**

The State Data Profiles are designed and calculated using two national data collection systems.

#### **NCANDS: National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System**

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is a collaborative, voluntary information collection system that gathers and analyzes annual State statistics on abused and neglected children. NCANDS data are collected annually on a calendar year basis. NCANDS consists of two parts designed to collect State child abuse and neglect information at different levels of detail, which are the agency file and the child file.

P. L. 100-294, passed on 4/24/88, amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and directed DHHS to establish a national data collection and analysis program on child abuse and neglect. The first NCANDS report was in 1992 for 1990 data. As noted earlier, NCANDS submission is voluntary and the data are submitted on a Federal fiscal year basis. NCANDS consists of two reporting components, the *Child File* which provides case level data and the *Agency File* which provides aggregated counts for data elements not available on a case level basis.

The *Child File* holds case-level information from CPS agencies on children who are subjects of reports alleging child maltreatment. This information, for example, is necessary to fill in the Unique Children Counts on the State Data Profiles.

The Child File consists of the following data elements:

- Age and sex of victims;
- Types of maltreatment that the victims experienced;
- Services provided; and,
- Characteristics of the perpetrators.

The Child File collects four primary categories of data used in the Safety Profiles:

- The first category of data refers to the characteristics of a specific child who is the subject of an investigation (e.g., age, sex, race).

- The second category of data refers to the characteristics of a report of alleged maltreatment (e.g. report date, maltreatment type, maltreatment disposition).
- The third category of data refers to services, including placement of the child in foster care, associated with the maltreatment report.
- The fourth category of data refers to the characteristics of perpetrators of substantiated or indicated maltreatment (e.g., age, sex, race, and relationship to victim).

Currently the *Agency File* is a compilation of key aggregate data from States. The Agency File includes information that cannot be reported in conjunction with the case level data associated with the case level Child File. For example, a number of States report maltreatment fatalities in the Agency File which, for a variety of reasons, might be excluded from the Child File.

The Agency File asks each State to report a variety of aggregated statistics that cannot be computed from the Child File including:

- Screened Investigations;
- Maltreatment fatalities not reported in the Child File;
- CPS staffing; and,
- Preventive Services.

Forty-five States submit the Child File; almost all of them also reported aggregate-level data in the Agency File for items that were not obtainable at the child level, such as the number of CPS workers.

Five States report aggregate statistics through the aggregated data file, the Summary Data Component; four of these States are in the process of developing the Child File. (CM 2004).

#### AFCARS: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) is a federally<sup>1</sup> mandated system for collecting data on children in foster care and children who have been adopted under the auspices of the State child welfare agency. AFCARS data are submitted semiannually on a Federal fiscal year basis.

AFCARS consists of 2 files—the *Foster Care File* and the *Adoption File*.

Data are reported twice a year – every six months on a federal fiscal year basis. The dates are:

- Report Period A: October 1 - March 31 (Data are due no later than May 15)
- Report Period B: April 1 - September 30 (Data are due no later than November 14)

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<sup>1</sup> Title IV-E, Section 479 of the Social Security Act and 45 CFR 1355.40

AFCARS collects case-level data on all children in out-of-home care who are under placement, care, or supervision of the State child welfare agency, and on children adopted under the auspices of the State title IV-B/E agency.

*Foster Care File.* Depending on the State's structure and policies, the State's AFCARS data may include Tribal children, children covered by an inter-agency agreement, and youth over the age of 18 up to 19 and receiving a title IV-E payment. There are a total of 66 data elements.

*Adoption File.* The Adoption File contains case-level data on all children adopted with State child welfare agency involvement. This includes adopted children who were placed by the State child welfare agency, children receiving adoption assistance, and children for whom services are provided either directly or by contract or agreement with other private or public agencies. States may also voluntarily report on adoptions with no State child welfare agency involvement. There are a total of 37 data elements. *Elements from the Adoption File are not used in the State Data Profiles.*

#### Alternative Data Sources

Alternative data sources may be used in place of the NCANDS data only. AFCARS is the only acceptable data source for use in the State Data Profile. NCANDS is the preferred data source for the safety section of the State Data Profile.

Should those data be unavailable or incomplete for the review year, States must submit alternative sources for approval by the Regional Office at least eight (8) months prior to the on-site review. If no alternative data are available for the review year, the State may be found not in substantial conformity for those outcomes to which those data elements apply.

Other approved alternative sources of data may include:

- Completed NCANDS DCDC programming for year 2000, applied to year 1999 and prior data;
- Unconverted data in a legacy system;
- General statistics from any relevant database the State has available;
- General sources: paper reports, supervisor/management reports, paper-based event logs (hand counts); and,
- Submitting a sampling as a "last resort" source of alternative data.